

# All About The Tillandsia

Tillandsia is the largest genus in the bromeliad family and more commonly known as the 'Air Plant'. They are found from the jungles to the rain forests to arid desert environments and from sea level to high mountain regions

Most tillandsia species use their root systems to attach themselves to trees or rock and absorb moisture and nutrients through their leaves. This classifies them as epiphytes. Since tillandsias are epiphytes, the mounting medium you choose is only limited by your imagination. These hardy plants are adaptable and tolerant to a wide range of environmental conditions and require minimal care.

**INDOOR/OUTDOOR CARE:** If your tillandsias are going to be in your home or office, care must be taken to provide enough light and correct moisture to maintain a healthy plant. Bright light or filtered sun is recommended. If these light conditions are not possible, use a broad-spectrum fluorescent light. Indoor tillandsia should stay healthy with a watering schedule of 1 to 2 times a week.

Air plants do exceptionally well in outdoor environments. A backyard tree, screened porch or pool patio will be the most likely areas to find the bright filtered light conditions that tillandsias love. Plants grown in humid, outdoor environments should only be watered once a week. In dryer climates, you may need to water them more frequently. If your plant leaves start to curl, this is a sign of dehydration. This can be corrected by submerging your plant in water for 15 minutes and then resume your regular watering schedule.

**FERTILIZATION:** Fertilize about once a month. Tillandsias have the ability to absorb and hold nutrients with their foliage and are very sensitive to over-fertilization. Use a good quality liquid or water-soluble fertilizer with a formula low in copper; a 10-10-10 houseplant fertilizer is best. High amounts of copper are toxic to the plants in the bromeliad family. Though fertilizing is not necessary for plant survival, it will increase the growth and vigor of your plant and its blooms.

**TEMPERATURE:** Tillandsias are very tolerant to a wide range of temperatures; most species can withstand near freezing. Although they prefer temperatures in the seventies (Fahrenheit), with increased water, air circulation, and shade, they can do quite well in temperatures nearing the nineties.

**BLOOM:** Tillandsia blooms range widely in shape, color, and bloom length. Some blooms will last only a few days, where as some can last as long as a year.