

Caring for your Air Plants (Tillandsia)

Tillandsia are a form of epiphytic plant which rely on their leaves to absorb water and use their roots only to attach themselves to other plants. Their leaves absorb water through small hairs called trichomes, which give Tillandsia leaves their unique appearance, often making them look as if they are covered in a white or gray fuzz.

LIGHT: Tillandsia need bright light and some sun. A bright east window is best, or a bright west window with late afternoon sun. Too much sun in a southern window can burn the plants. Do not keep Tillandsia in a dark corner.

WATER: Water your Tillandsia once a week by soaking them for an hour in a bowl of water. After soaking, turn them upside down to drain so that water does not sit for a long time in the bases of the leaves as this will rot the plants. You may feed your Tillandsia once every three months by adding a dilute amount of a liquid orchid fertilizer to their soaking water.

DISPLAY: Display your Tillandsia in any kind of container which does not absorb water and does not block the sun on their leaves. Use shallow ceramic bowls with dry river stones, or marbles; do not keep them on moist material such as moss. Tillandsia can also be hung in the window with fishing line.

RESOURCES:

Air plants : the curious world of Tillandsias / Zenaida Sengo. Portland : Timber Press, c2014.