

## *Tillandsia Care*



**Light:** 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. A South, East, or West window would be best. Bright light or filtered sun is recommended. If these light conditions are not possible, a broad spectrum fluorescent light, such as an aquarium light, will provide short term light requirements for your plants. Monthly rotation of indoor plants with those grown in more favorable outdoor conditions allows for continued color and vitality of the tillandsia in the home or office. Air plants do exceptionally well in outdoor environments. A screened porch or pool patio would be the most likely areas to find the bright filtered light conditions that Tillandsia love. Even though many grow in full sun, as a rule, we do not recommend it. Early morning or late afternoon sun should be fine under more humid conditions. In hotter, dryer conditions, more shade and water should be provided.

**Water:** Indoor tillandsias should stay healthy with a watering schedule of 2 to 4 times a week. However, it may be necessary to water more often due to dryer, less humid air caused by air-conditioning or heating. Plants grown in humid outdoor environments should be watered 2 to 3 times weekly. In dryer climates, more frequent watering may be necessary. Saturate or soak the Tillandsia completely for 20-30 minutes – light misting is normally insufficient. After you soak the plant, shake so that it doesn't hold water at the base of the leaves and the center of the plant. Let them sit for 10-20 min upside down to drain. Allow to dry completely between waterings. If your plant's leaves start to curl and roll or wrinkle at the base (nature's way of conserving moisture), it could be an indication of dehydration. This can be corrected by completely submerging your plant in water overnight; then resume normal watering schedule. *Softer, greener-leafed plants will require more frequent watering and less light than gray or silver-leafed plants.* One last thing about watering your air plant; it is much better to water in the morning than at night. Air plants absorb the Carbon Dioxide from the air at night instead of the day time. If the plant is wet, it does not breathe well, therefore, unless it can dry quickly at night, plan on morning baths. Filtered water, bottled water, or rain water are all fine. Aquarium water works very well also.

**Ventilation:** Locate your Tillandsias in a well-ventilated area as they love fresh moving air. The movement of air dries plants between waterings, which helps to avoid any disease to over watering.

**Fertilization:** Fertilizing is not absolutely necessary to survival, but will increase the growth and vigor of your plants and their blooms. Tillandsias need a fertilizer that can be absorbed directly in to the plant via the leaves. Using ¼ strength Kelp fertilizer added to their soaking water 2-4x a month would be good, or it can be put in the misting water. Better yet, if you use pond water or aquarium water to soak your plants, don't even use a fertilizer. Soaking the plants in these waters is a natural fertilizer and can help revive plants that are in distress.

**Temperature:** Very tolerant of a wide range of temperatures, most species can withstand near freezing temperatures. Although preferring temperatures in the seventies (Fahrenheit), with increased water, air circulation, and shade, they can do quite well in temperatures well into the nineties.

### ***The two most common mistakes with Tillandsias.***

*Not enough light.*

*Not enough water.*