



Air plants are highly suitable for terrariums – easy to make and easy to look after.

Terrariums – A Beginner's Guide



A detailed, step-by-step guide on how to make your own unique terrarium, or how to buy one wisely – the result of experience, continuous experimentation and extensive research.

This book communicates all the necessary information in a way which is easy to understand, with over 90 purpose-taken pictures and plenty of inspiration and ideas. The only book you need to create and maintain your own piece of horticultural art.



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The Growth Technology Promise

We are a British family business, making advanced, specialist products for thriving houseplants. We use the best quality ingredients to ensure the best results every time – no short cuts, no compromises. For all our products we consider first and foremost the plant's needs, sustainability for our environment, and value and convenience for the customer.

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Making the Most of Your Air Plants



By Dr Manos Kanellos,
plant physiologist and author

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Caring for air plants

Air plants or Tillandsias require warmth, air, water and light. These plants are robust and require less attention than other houseplants, but because they grow differently they need some special care.

Temperature

Air plants enjoy temperatures above 12°C up to a maximum of 30°C if humidity is high.

Light

Air plants enjoy bright but gentle light, so provide shade from direct sunshine especially in spring and summer. South-facing rooms are ideal, especially kitchens and bathrooms, but remember to place the plant behind a blind or net curtain so they are not damaged by direct sunlight. Air plants need natural light so they can colour – the more light the better the colour.

If growing your plants in an environment with artificial light then full-spectrum fluorescent lighting is best. You can also use halogen and grow lights. We would recommend a four-tube 48" T5 light unit, set on a timer for 12 hours per day.

Watering

When growing your plant indoors, because the air is dry you will need to put your plant in water for 2–3 hours every two weeks. Do this by completely covering the plant in tap water or filtered water at room temperature. Rain, pond and aquarium water work well too. When removing the plant from the water turn it upside down, gently shake and allow it to dry out almost completely before placing it back into the display pot or surface. Morning submersions are best rather than at night.

Air plants cannot get water from their roots like other houseplants, or draw on internal reserves like a succulent. Like other houseplants, air plants' leaves begin to curl more than usual or even turn brown as a sign that they require more watering. Remember, however, if you over-water your air plant, like many plants, it will die.

Humidity

The higher the humidity in the environment the air plant is being stored in, the more light it can tolerate. We would recommend using **Air Plant Myst** once or twice a week to provide adequate humidity.

An environment with good air circulation is also important to prevent fungal problems.

Feeding

To keep your plant healthy, feed using a low-strength fertiliser such as **Orchid Focus Grow** – orchids and air plants are both low nutrient requiring plants.

Include in the water when immersing, at the recommended rate for orchids. Use with every other watering, throughout the year. For best results also spray regularly with **Air Plant Myst**.

Flowering

Air plants may bloom from mid-winter through to late-summer, with each plant flowering just once in its lifetime. The flowers can last from several days to many months depending on the species, care and environment.

Orchid Focus is ideal for air plants as well as orchids



Air plants originate from South America and Mexico. They get their name because rather than growing in soil, they use their short, thin roots to attach themselves around tree branches and rocks.

There are several species of air plant; those with silver leaves tend to be the type of plant that needs less water and the greener species dry out quicker.



New plants

New plants are called pups or offshoots, and are produced at the base of the plant. A small number of species grow babies from the centre of the plant around the flower spike and other species' offsets are produced on 'stolons' or short stems. Most plants will produce between two and eight baby plants. The time between bloom and producing pups can be several years.

To remove baby plants from their mother plant, they should be a good size (between a third to half the size). Hold both plants at their bases and gently twist in a downward motion. The mother plant should not be discarded as it will still produce more pups. Pups receive nutrients from their mother so be careful not to remove them too early.

Problems & solutions

Browning or discoloured leaves

This is a scorch and occurs as a result of the plant overheating when behind glass, in direct sunlight, and/or when there is low humidity. If you increase the humidity in the plant's environment, provide more shade and use **Air Plant Myst**, all these will help.

Loss of leaves

Moulting leaves can happen when the plant has experienced a change in conditions or is under stress (due to e.g. lack of watering or being moved). It can also occur due to rotting; for more information please read below.

Rotting

Rotting usually occurs when water collects in the crown of the plant and if air circulation is poor. A sign that your plant is rotting is when the centre of the plant and/or the leaves turn black or dark brown.

Lack of fluids

Poor watering, low humidity and being in an area with high temperatures can dry out your plant and cause dehydration. Resolve this by increasing the frequency of watering, and start with soaking your plant overnight to try and revive it.

A note about copper

Air plants are sensitive to copper and we would suggest not using holders that are made from this material or using copper wire.



For more information on houseplant care, visit www.focus-on-plants.com