



WHAT ARE AIR PLANTS?



Tillandsias are a type of epiphyte (pronounced “epee-fight”) which means “upon a plant” because they typically grow off of tree branches. “Phyte” is the botanical term for plant, “epi” means on top.

- Air Plants are called **Tillandsias** and they grow up in the air rather than in the soil!
- Air plants don’t actually live on air, like some people think. They need the same things other plants do- sunlight, water and nutrients.
- Air plants are found in tropical areas like rainforests where frequent rain and humid air provide enough water plus plenty of sunshine.
- They don’t require much in the way of nutrients, but what they do need, they get through their leaves from rain, dew, dust, decaying leaves and insect matter.



AIR PLANTS ARE IN THE BROMELIAD FAMILY



Can you find the bromeliads that are growing on these trees?

- Air Plant is the common name for members of the *Tillandsia* genus, which belongs to the Bromeliad family. Tillandsias, the largest group of the Bromeliad family, grow by clinging to trees and extracting excess moisture from the air.
- They are native to the Americas, from the Southeast US to Argentina and grow in diverse environments from jungles to deserts and mountains.
- Air plants' most famous cousin from the Bromeliad family is probably the pineapple. But unlike pineapples, air plants get their water and nutrients without normal roots.



COMMON TILLANDSIA VARIETIES



Tillandsia argentea



Tillandsia juncea



Tillandsia brachycaulos



Tillandsia xerographica

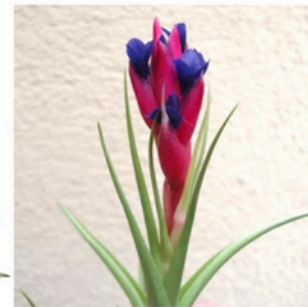


Tillandsia ionantha

Can You Match Your Air Plants With Any of These Pictured Here?



Tillandsia aeranthos



Tillandsia funkiana



BROMELIADS



Spanish Moss

There are many other plants in the Bromeliad family. ***Which plants pictured here have you seen before?***



Tillandsia



Common Bromeliads



Pineapple



HEALTH BENEFITS OF PINEAPPLE



Pineapple is a member of the Bromeliad family. Here are more interesting facts:

- *A pineapple can take up to 3 years to grow into a new plant.*
- *Only one pineapple is produced by a single plant in a single season.*
- *A pineapple plant can stay alive and continue giving fruits for up to 50 years.*

- Pineapples originated in South America, where early European explorers named it after its resemblance to a pinecone.
- This popular fruit is packed with nutrients, antioxidants and other helpful compounds, such as enzymes that can fight inflammation and disease.
- Pineapple and its compounds have been linked to many health benefits, including aiding digestion, boosting immunity and speeding up recovery from surgery.
- Pineapple may help to reduce the risk of cancer and help ease arthritis symptoms.