

Bromeliads

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Some bromeliads are grown for the beauty of their foliage, while others are admired for the beauty of their flowers. A few, such as the popular *Aechmea fasciata* and *Vriesea splendens*, belong in both categories. These dual-purpose plants are cultivated for both their attractive foliage and bold flower-heads. Beginners often feel that these spectacular plants must be too difficult for them to grow. It is true that it takes patience, skill and warmth to induce a large-leaved specimen to flower, but foliage types and plants in flower are surprisingly easy to care for.

LIGHT:

Most Bromeliads require a brightly lit spot away from direct sunlight. Pineapple and the Earth Stars will thrive in full sun.

WATER AND SOIL:

Most bromeliads have cups that hold water. Water should be placed among the lower leaves of plants kept inside the home. Excess water in the center cup can cause the plant to rot and damage the flower. Changing the cup water and misting the foliage also help prolong the life of your plant. The plant cup and soil should be allowed to become almost dry between watering. The frequency of watering will vary with conditions. Use rainwater in hard water areas. Mist leaves in summer.

Many different soil mixes will work as long as they are very well drained and allow air to reach the roots. We recommend ½ perlite and ½ peat moss mixed thoroughly. Pots must have drain holes to drain water. Repotting is rarely, if ever, necessary. To add decoration by using another container, it is best to leave the plant in its original pot and then place it in your decorative container.

FERTILIZE:

Your Bromeliad needs very little plant food inside your house as there is very little light. We recommend Peters 20-20-20. Fertilize at the rate of ½ tablespoon per gallon of water once a month. The more light you have, the more you need to feed your plant. In a greenhouse, this can be as much as one tablespoon per gallon of water every two weeks.

PROPAGATION:

Offsets appear at the base of the plant. When the offset is several months old, remove it with some roots attached and plant shallowly in seed and cutting compost. Keep warm until established.