

Wallsend Nurseries

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Bromeliads

Bromeliads are epiphytes which means that they usually grow on the branches of other vegetation such as rainforest trees. They do not really require a growing medium in cultivation but they can be tied to tree branches or perhaps potted up in some orchid mixture if this is more convenient. This will provide the free drainage required and make the plant manageable and easier to transport.

Being rainforest plants, Bromeliads like a cool moist atmosphere and a well drained root run. Hence the use of orchid mixture for potting them in since this is very free draining and at the same time offers good aeration to the roots.

Light is an important part of good Bromeliad culture. Bright light will provide the best foliage colour and flowering in most varieties. Once again, because most of them are rainforest plants and are protected by leaf canopy in nature, you shouldn't give them direct sun, rather, diffuse light is adequate. Full sunlight will result in sunburned plants and is to be avoided.

When watering most Bromeliads simply fill the centre of the plant which acts like a vase. You can add a very dilute fertiliser to the water if you like to aid growth and colour of the foliage. Garden Gold® or a similar slow release fertilizer can also be used and only needs to be applied every year or so during the growing season. In winter water every two or three weeks and in summer perhaps every week.

To mount Bromeliads to tree branches or pieces of wood simply tie them in place with stocking, fishing line, plastic thread, stainless steel wire or use "Liquid Nails®". Never use copper wire.

Guzmanias: require conditions which are a little warm, always kept moist and in full shade with good air flow.

Nidulariums: require little direct sunlight and seem to prefer almost full shade.

Vrieseas: require almost full shade, with adequate dappled sunlight. Under 70% shade cloth is very good.

Neoregalias: must have adequate sunshine in order to display good colour. Too little sunshine and the plant will be completely green but never place them in full sun as the plant will be irreparable burned.

Aechmeas: can take reasonable sunlight but never full sun. Some appear to like terrestrial conditions.

Orthophytums: and other hard leafed Bromeliads will often take full sunshine. One, the Ananas, is actually the plant we call the Pineapple and is edible.

Tillandsias: are those Bromeliads which grow at the tree tops and those with a silvery colouring require little watering since they absorb what moisture they need from the air. Those which are green are best grown attached to a tree or some bark and require a little more moisture than the silver ones.

More information is available at www.hunterbroms.com