

Species of the Month

July 2004



Tillandsia usneoides

Orchid Companion Plant

Easy growing epiphytic *Tillandsia usneoides* was once harvested commercially and used extensively for furniture and mattress stuffing. It is commonly found throughout the southeastern United States coastal plains from Virginia to Texas and southward to Argentina and Chile. This gray/green moss, commonly known as Spanish Moss, consists of long grayish filaments several feet in length, which hang in trees in great masses. The stems and leaves are slender, curly and covered with tiny silvery/gray scales that catch water and nutrients from the air. Spanish moss has no roots. The small yellow-green flowers are fragrant at night; however, it rarely blooms in cultivation. Spanish Moss is not really a moss, it is closely related to pineapples and bromeliads. It is an excellent plant to grow with orchids. Drape pieces over potted and mounted plants to increase humidity in the immediate area.

LIGHT

Full sun to partial shade.

TEMPERATURE

Warm to Intermediate; 55°F min. to 90°F

WATER

Water thoroughly as it approaches dryness and mist daily. Plants will grow better with RO water.

HUMIDITY

70% - 80% is preferred.

POTTING

No potting necessary! No repotting necessary!

FERTILIZER

No fertilizer necessary. The plants acquire trace nutrients from the air.