

Air Plant Care and Pet Safety Checklist

FitInFlow.space · Based on Penn State, UF/IFAS and University of Vermont Extension and the RHS. Updated October 2026.

1. The soak-and-dry routine

1. Fill Room-temp rainwater, bottled or rested tap water	2. Submerge About 20 to 60 minutes	3. Shake Tip out water caught in leaves	4. Dry upside down 1 to 4+ hours, bright airy shade	5. Return Only when fully dry
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Avoid softened, filtered or distilled water. Water in the morning so plants are dry by evening. Keep blooms dry.

2. Gray or green?

Gray, fuzzy (xeric): dense trichomes, from dry places. Brighter light, dries quickly, soak less often. e.g. <i>T. xerographica</i>	Green, smooth (mesic): from humid places. Filtered light, more frequent moisture. e.g. <i>T. bulbosa</i> , <i>T. brachycaulos</i>
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3. Quick problem check

What you see	Likely cause	Fix
Dark, mushy base	Rot from staying wet	Dry faster; save healthy pups
Leaves curl inward, feel light	Thirst	Longer or more frequent soaks
Crispy brown tips	Too little water or direct sun	Trim tips; adjust water and light
Bleached patches	Sunscorch	Move out of direct sun
Pale, no growth	Too little light	Move closer to a bright window
White fluffy spots	Mealybugs or aphids	Isolate, rinse, remove by hand
Mother fading after bloom	Normal	Look for pups at the base

4. Pet, child and display safety

☐ Plants out of reach of cats that chew ☐ Glass globes on stable shelves ☐ Fertilizer stored safely
☐ No copper wire or treated wood ☐ Glue never covers the whole base ☐ Never collect air plants from the wild
Pet swallowed a plant or decoration and seems unwell? Call your vet or ASPCA Animal Poison Control: (888) 426-4435 (fee may apply).

5. 8-week watering log

Week	Date	Soak or mist	Minutes	Dry by evening?	How it looks / feels
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Air plants are grown for beauty, not air cleaning: research shows houseplants have a negligible effect on indoor air quality (Cummings and Waring, 2019).