

CARING FOR YOUR PLANT

- Air plants (also known as Tillandsia) come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Although these plants are unbelievably low maintenance, as they don't need soil to grow, they still need plenty of bright, indirect light and air flow to survive. They absorb nutrients through their leaves, so mist with water two to three times a week. A small spray bottle is perfect for watering.



Air plant plaques

Decorate small sunny nooks or bare walls with cute decorative hanging plant plaques.

WHAT YOU NEED

(Makes 3)

- 454g box of Super Sculpey oven-bake clay (in beige)
 - Baking paper
 - Rolling pin
 - Craft knife
 - Straw
 - Wooden skewer
 - Resene testpot paints.
- I used:
- Resene Wedgewood
 - Resene Mystery
 - Resene Wet N Wild
 - Resene Remember Me
 - Resene testpot paintbrush
 - Dry cloth (for rubbing)
 - Sandpaper
 - Resene Clearcoat UVS
 - Air plants
 - 1.5mm copper wire
 - Cord, for hanging



1 Make sure you have a nice clean surface to work with. Baking paper is perfect to lay underneath your clay to stop it from sticking and picking up unwanted bits. Knead and soften the clay first, then use your rolling pin to roll out three pieces of clay, each about 6-8mm thick. It doesn't have to be any specific shape but should be a suitable size to display your air plant. I wanted non-perfect, organic looking shapes.

2 Once you have rolled out the rough size of your plaque, use a craft knife to create a more accurate shape with curved edges. Smooth and round the edges with your fingers.

3 Use a straw to pierce a hole through the clay 1cm from the top edge. Use the wooden skewer to pierce another two holes approximately quarter of the way up from the base and roughly 2-3cm apart (see pic A). This will be to thread through the wire that will anchor your air plants on the plaque, so the exact position will depend on where you want your plant to sit. If you have a drooping plant, for instance, you will want your anchor holes to be near the top.

4 Preheat the oven to 130°C. Place your plaques on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake according to the manufacturer's instructions. These took 15 minutes. Take out of the oven and set aside to cool completely.

5 Now it's time to paint your plaques. To create our "reclaimed wood" look, follow these steps. Paint each plaque with two

coats of a Resene colour first, allowing paint to dry between coats (see pic B). Let dry. Then, using a mixture of contrasting shades of the same hue, paint on a rough pattern (see pic C). Let dry. Paint a final coat of colour on the top – I used two different shades of blue for the top layer (see pic D). When almost dry, start to rub back the paint with a dry cloth. Use sandpaper as well to cut into the top and second layers of paint (see pic E). This reveals the underneath shades. Don't be afraid to sand some areas right back to the original clay surface. This makes the wood effect even more realistic.

Note: If you don't get the desired effect the first time around, simply add another coat of paint, let dry and sand again lightly.

6 Wipe off any dust and seal with a coat of Resene Clearcoat UVS to protect your paintwork and make the plaque's surface more durable.

7 Attach air plants with copper wire, threading it through the small holes on the plaque and twisting wire ends together at the back. Thread and tie a length of cord through the hole at the top to make a hanging loop.

NOTE: When using a variety of shades in the same colour palette, it doesn't matter if they combine to make new and unique shades. This just adds to the dimension and beauty of your piece.

