

GROWING BROMELIAD PUPS

Bromeliads are colorful blooming plants with long lasting, showy flowers. After flowering the mother plant goes into a slow decline, during which those unfamiliar with its method of reproduction will think it is dying and dispose of it. But don't toss that plant yet! Most bromeliad parents will produce several pups, varying in number from one plant to another. You may want to apply fertilizers to the mother plant soon after flowering to promote growth of pups.

Though the pups can be removed from the mother plant at any stage, it is best to detach them when they reach 1/3 to 1/2 the size of the mother plant.

Care for the plant as usual during the period after blooming to keep it healthy so it can produce pups. Allow the pups to grow to at least one-third, preferably half, of the height of the mother plant. Pups may put out their own roots, but it's not important that they do, as they root easily.

Hold the pup securely, and use a serrated knife or small saw to cut the pup away as close to the mother plant as possible. Lay the pup aside to cure the stem for 24 hours. Mix potting soil and perlite in a 50-50 ratio. Fill a clay or plastic pot with the mix to within 1 inch of the top.

Dip only the very bottom of the stem of the pup in rooting hormone if available, and stick into the pot. The potting mix must be damp while planting these pups. You may begin to see roots on pups, but even if they have not formed roots, mature pups can survive since they are epiphytic. Anchor for stability if necessary. Place these pots on locations with bright, but indirect sun.

Once the young pups start growing, you have to make sure that the right conditions are provided for their healthy growth. Keep the soil moist throughout the growing stage of the plant. Use distilled water for these plants. You may also use tap water that is kept open for some time, before watering. Keep in mind that over watering may cause rotting of the plant.

The plant should not be placed in direct sun. If necessary, use a humidifier, as the plant requires high humidity levels. You may also use weak fertilizer solutions (without lime), occasionally. It takes around one to two years for the bromeliad pups to attain full growth and bloom. It is said that blooming can be triggered in a mature bromeliad plant, by placing it in a clear plastic bag, along with a ripe apple. The ripe apple releases ethylene gas, that triggers flowering in plants.

