

Spanish Moss

Did you know Spanish moss isn't Spanish or a moss?



Spanish moss is part of the **bromeliad** family which places it in the same plant family as pineapples and succulent house plants. Spanish moss is actually native to Mexico, Central America, South America, the United States and the Caribbean where it can grow in a tropical



environment. Here in the U.S. **Spanish moss grows from Texas to Virginia** generally staying in the moister areas of the south.

If Spanish moss isn't Spanish or a moss, how did it get its name?

"Spanish moss was given its name by French explorers. Native Americans told them the plant was called Itla-okla, which meant "tree hair." The French were reminded of the Spanish conquistadors' long beards, so they called it Barbe Espagnol, or "Spanish Beard." The Spaniards got back at them by calling the plant Cabello Francés, or "French Hair." The French name won out, and as time went by Spanish Beard changed to Spanish moss."

Epiphyte: a plant that grows on another plant without directly gaining nourishment from it. **Spanish moss receives all of its nutrients and moisture from the air** and is not considered a parasite to the tree, it only uses the tree for support. The only damage it may cause is by breaking a weak limb. When the moss absorbs moisture its weight can increase tenfold. If there is enough bloated moss on a thin, weak, or dead limb it can cause the limb to break off.

Resurrection Fern

The *P. polypodioides* resides in the hardwood forests of southeastern United States in areas including Delaware, Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida. This fern can also be found in areas such as subtropical America and parts of southern Africa. The **resurrection fern** lives on the branches of large trees such as cypresses and can often be seen carpeting the shady areas on **limbs of large oak trees**. ... The **resurrection fern** gets its name because it can survive long periods of drought by curling up its fronds and appearing desiccated, grey-brown and dead. When it is exposed to **water** again, it will **"come back to life"** and look green and healthy. The plant gets its name from this supposed "resurrection," but it never actually dies during the process.



This fern is an epiphyte, or air plant, which means it attaches itself to other plants and gets its nutrients from the air and from water and nutrients that collect on the outer surface of bark. However, it is known to grow on the surfaces of rocks and dead logs as well. It is often found in the company of other epiphytic plants such as Spanish moss.