

BOOK REVIEW: TILLANDSIA II
by Bob Reilly

Tillandsia II is written by Paul Isley III. It was published by Botanical Press in the United States of America in 2009.

This book is largely a revision of *Tillandsia* which was written by Paul Isley and published in 1987.

Tillandsia is out of print and second hand copies cost well in excess of *Tillandsia II*'s purchase price. However, if you have *Tillandsia*, I suggest you look at *Tillandsia II* to see if there is enough new material in it to justify the purchase price.

Having said that, I have *Tillandsia* and consider it well worthwhile to purchase *Tillandsia II*.

The book opens with a description of tillandsias' physical characteristics and their cultural requirements. While the advice is generally useful, some care needs to be taken in its application to sub-tropical and tropical growing conditions. Further, many of the recommended growing aids, e.g. fertilisers, are not available in Australia.

The next chapter describes 61 species. In each case there is a description of the plant, its habitat and some advice on cultural requirements. The text is supported by excellent photographs of the flowering plant. Collectively, these species would make a good tillandsia collection. All are available in Australia.

The next chapter has photographs of flowering plants of over 70 tillandsia hybrids. This chapter is a major expansion of the corresponding chapter in the 1987 book. Several of the featured hybrids have been made by Australia hybridists. For each hybrid, there is a photograph of the flowering plant, but no other information. While this is a weakness, it is a reasonable trade-off, if the choice would have been to cover fewer hybrids (because of space constraints).

The next chapter has photographs of a range of additional species and hybrids. Most of these are tillandsias, but there are also ones of other genera.

The next chapter outlines a somewhat eclectic mix of people who have contributed significantly to tillandsia taxonomy. An Australian, Derek Butcher is last, (but not least I hasten to add!) in this line up.

There then follows chapters on tillandsia taxonomy, their evolution and biology. It concludes with a comprehensive glossary and index.

This book is probably best suited for the tillandsia grower who has some knowledge of the subject, but is looking to take their understanding to the next "level". Experienced growers will also find much of interest.

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