

Kokedama

Bring a dose of green to your space with this free-form hanging moss accent.

Origin

Japan has long been the spiritual home of ornamental plants, as well as the country of origin for bonsai. Nearai Bonsai method is an art form many centuries old in gardening, the state where a plant has grown so compact and tightly that, when removed from its shallow base, it holds its well-grown roots and soil forming a compact ball.

Kokedama is an adaptation of this Bonsai method, where a plant's root system is simply wrapped in sphagnum moss and bound with string, transforming it into a sculptural art form. Loosely translated, 'koke' means moss and 'dama' means ball.

Kokedamas were born out of the Edo period (1603-1868) when Japanese society became sustainable and self-sufficient. This is a time of particular interest for Tablespoon of Earth, when the arts and culture became popular to the rest of the world.

They encapsulate the Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-sabi, which can be explained as an appreciation of the imperfections of nature and the transience of natural beauty. Characteristics of Wabi-sabi include simplicity, warmth, earthy, irregular, rough, natural, acceptance and observation. Kokedama are created as a reflection of the Wabi-sabi principles.



Water

The best way to determine if your plant needs water is to feel how heavy it is. When the ball feels light, there's a good chance it needs to be watered. Another sign that your plant needs watering is if the tips of its leaves start browning. Cut off any brown parts of the plant to keep the brown from spreading.

Watering your plant is simple. Soak the ball in a bowl of room-temperature water for about 10 minutes. Then transfer the ball to a colander for a few minutes to drain any excess water. When the ball doesn't drip anymore, it's ready to hang again!

Two indications that your plant is being overwatered or not fully drying are yellowing leaves and the presence of mold. If you find mold on your plant, don't fret! Simply trim the infected leaf or rinse off with a warm-soaked towel.

Light

Like most plants, a kokedama is going to need some light to thrive but not too much—since the plant is moss-based, it is more likely to dry out if sitting in direct light. To elongate your ball's life, pick a semi-shady spot in your home and keep a close eye on it. The amount of light you provide your kokedama depends on the type of plant. In general, display high-light plants in a bright window. Low-light plants don't need to be grown in a window. Instead, suspend them above your desks or tabletops. This makes them fun additions to offices. Hang kokedama in bathroom (the moss will love the moisture!), above a kitchen island, or as a centerpiece on a dining room table. For outdoor spaces, hang kokedama from a pergola, balcony, porch, or other desired shady area.

Wherever you display your kokedama, avoid spots with hot or cold drafts (such as from heating or cooling vents). These blasts of hot or cold air can make leaves turn yellow or brown prematurely, especially on more tender plants like ferns. Most houseplants appreciate a spot with average to high relative humidity, as well.

