



## Moss: Today's most popular plants.



The year-round beauty of moss is quite obvious - even to the most casual observer. But it is the resiliency, reduced maintenance, and environmental soundness (no known pests/little to no disease) that make growing moss even more appealing. Moss can tolerate extremes in temperature and moisture levels. Even during periods with severe cold, moss, unlike grass, remains a dark green color. Excessive heat or lack of rainfall, also have no permanent effect. During these difficult growing periods, moss plants simply go dormant and lose some of their lush green appearance until a summer shower quickly restores it.

### Virtually Maintenance-free...

- No Mowing
- No Fertilizers or Pesticides
- No watering once established
- No Liming or De-Thatching
- Little to no weeding once established

Moss is becoming increasingly popular as an alternative to grass and other conventional groundcovers for shady areas. Not only is moss visually soothing, but it also requires little to no maintenance once established. By growing moss, gardeners eliminate the mundane chore of mowing grass, and free up more time to focus on what they enjoy most - gardening!

### Growing Environment - How to grow moss

The four factors that will most greatly impact the survival rate of re-located moss are:

- Adequate moisture
- Shade
- Humidity
- Soil pH/soil type

Obviously the most difficult to control is humidity. A mister helps eliminate this problem. If, however, the other three conditions are satisfied, then there is a very high probability of survival. In order to stack the deck in one's favor, the following guidelines **MUST** be followed in order to successfully grow moss:

#### 1. **Select the proper location for the moss garden(s)**

This is by far the most important consideration. Most mosses prefer a medium to fairly dense shade. Direct afternoon sun should be avoided. Full sun locations will not work if the moss was harvested on shady, wooded hillsides. Northern or eastern facing slopes in the woods are by far the best choice for growing moss.

2. **Amending Soil pH**

Mosses prefer growing on firmly packed acidic soils with a pH between 5.0 and 5.5. To amend soil pH, use a pH testing kit and a liquid sulfur powder suspension that is mixed with water to the desired concentration, and then sprayed over the moss gardening area prior to transplanting.

3. **Regular Watering/Misting**

This, with no question, is absolutely imperative if moss is to survive transplanting. The area must be kept moist at all times for at least the first three weeks following transplanting.

Presented by Vicki Payne, host of *For Your Home* on PBS and Create.

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