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### *Tillandsia usneoides*

[Synonyms : *Dendropogon usneoides*, *Renalmia usneoides*, *Strepsia usneoides*, *Tillandsia crinita*, *Tillandsia filiformis*, *Tillandsia pendula*, *Tillandsia trichoides*, *Tillandsia usneoides* var. *cretacea*, *Tillandsia usneoides* var. *ferruginea*, *Tillandsia usneoides* var. *filiformis*, *Tillandsia usneoides* var. *longissima*, *Tillandsia usneoides* var. *robusta*]

**FLORIDA MOSS** is a festooning rootless, evergreen air plant (which grows independently on another plant). Native from south-eastern North America (specifically Florida) to Argentina, it has small yellow-green flowers.

It is also known as Air plant, *Bab-pan'yol* (Creole), *Barbe à l'arbre* (French), Black moss, Gray moss, Greybeard, Hanging moss, Long beard, Long moss, Louisiana moss, New Orleans moss, Old man's beard, Southern moss, Spanish moss, Tree beard, Usne-like tillandsia, Vegetable hair, Vegetable horsehair, Wool crape, and Wool hair.

The plant lives on dust, dew and rain absorbed through its hairs. It is spread by wind and by birds which use bits of it for nesting.

*Usneoides* is made up of the genus name *Usnea* and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning 'like plants in that (lichen) genus'.

North American Houma Indians used dried fibres for making rope and matting, and the Seminole tribe made cooking tools from the plant and also used it for tanning.

Apparently the Houma tribe took a plant decoction to ease fever.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century at least 5000 tons of the dried stems are used annually for stuffing and packaging in the United States. This stuffing is used in upholstery, pillows and cushions.

Medicinally, herbalists have used it in the treatment of piles.