

DIY Kokedamas

Kokedama translates to “moss ball” in Japanese and has been around for centuries, akin to bonsai gardening. A decorative way to display many different kind of plants, kokedamas are easy to make and maintain.

Your typical kokedama is either a hanging or a free standing style. Clear fishing line can be used for a more “invisible look” or decorative string or twine can be used to add texture and color.

You can get even more creative once you have more experience. You can adhere your kokedama to a branch, driftwood, metal, or pretty much anything that can get wet. You can also add multiple plants or tiers of kokedamas. Just make sure you have a sturdy line and hanger.

Materials Needed:

- Two shallow saucers, dishes, or trays
- Water
- Spray bottle
- Preserved green moss or sheet moss
- Indoor potting soil or bonsai soil
- String, fishing line, twine, or rope
- Plant(s)
- Gloves (optional)
- Scissors



Planting Directions:

Start by laying out your preserved moss flat into a shallow saucer and pour water on it, enough to reconstitute it.

In a separate dish, pour some potting soil in a little mound and mix with water to make it into sticky mud. Unpot your plant of choice, start to form the root ball and soil into a ball shape. Use the sticky mud to coat around the root ball and shape.

Once the ball is in the desired shape, place it in the middle of the moss you have in the other saucer. Make sure your string is close by and ready to wrap. Carefully start to bring the sides of the moss up around the ball to cover all of the soil. When you get the moss all the way around, start to wrap the string around the top of the ball near the

plant (but not too tight wear it will strangle the plant) and tie. Continue to wrap the string tightly around the entire ball, still keeping it in the ball shape until the moss is securely wrapped around the kokedama base. Tie the string off and cut back the string tail.

If you used the green moss, you can keep the kokedama shaggier and woodsy looking, or you can trim back the moss with scissors for a more shorn look. Sheet moss is already a short pile moss, so it won't be as necessary to trim.

You can display your kokedama freestanding in a dish or you can hang from additional string. I like to hang at three equal points, which is more balanced and secure.

You can also tuck in some decorative moss, twigs, or other decorations that are waterproof under the string or pin into the moss using floral pins.

Care and Maintenance:

When your kokedama feels light in weight and dry, it is time to water. Every home is different when it comes to light and temperature, so it's good to check at least once or twice a week on watering needs. If you have a succulent kokedama, you can let it dry out a little more than other foliage plants. When it is time to water, place the kokedama in a bowl of water, about halfway up the kokedama, and let it sit for about 30 mins - enough time for the kokedama to soak up a good amount of water. Squeeze out any extra moisture or let it drip over the bowl, sink, or shower before placing or hanging back in its home. You can also spray the moss with water every few days to boost humidity.

If your kokedama plant starts to peek roots through the moss, there are a couple of ways to address it. You can wrap more moss around the ball and tie more string around to cover the roots. Or you can snip the old string, take off the existing moss, make more sticky mud to cover the plant root ball, and recover with moss, wrap and tie.

You can fertilize if you see active growth, but somewhat similar to a bonsai, you don't necessarily want to encourage a ton of growth that you will have to manage. If you do decide to give your kokedama a bit of vitamins, you can dilute the fertilizer to the manufacturer's specifications and add it to the water when you soak your kokedama.



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