

**You will need:**

- Printer
- White paper
- Green paper (Or green markers or crayons)
- Scissors
- Container for your epiphyte



**What is an epiphyte?** A plant that grows on another plant but does not take nourishment or water from that plant. It uses the plant to help it reach sunshine and moisture without harming that plant. It is not a parasite like mistletoe because it does not contribute to the decline of the plant on which it grows.

Examples include air plants, orchids, bromeliads, and resurrection ferns. Resurrection ferns are found throughout the Southeastern US. They seem to like living on oak trees. They earned their name because they can survive droughts and appear “to come back to life” as they turn from brown to green when they can finally get some water.

**Directions:**

1. Download the **resurrection fern template** (page 3) and print.
2. Trace the template of the fern leaf onto your green paper or print several copies and color them green.
3. Cut out your fern leaves.
4. Assemble in your container. Now you have a cool illustration of an epiphyte, and it would make a nice Father’s Day gift.
5. **Bonus activity:** Go outside and look for some resurrection ferns. Is there a park or other green space that you can check out? The resurrection fern grows out of trees, logs, and rocks. Snap a photo but do not collect the plant. The fern is an important part of the ecosystem and should not be collected from the wild.
6. Show us your epiphyte on our Facebook page “Adventures in EdZooCation” or tag the North Carolina Zoo at #NCZOO or #NCZOOED.



Steps 1-3



Step 4



Air plant



Vanilla orchid



Both resurrection fern photos by Tom Potterfield, courtesy of NC State Extension website.

