



General Orchid Care



Phalaenopsis, Cymbidium and Cattleya are the easiest orchids to grow. The following hints will result in an impressive display on these showy blooming plants.

Light

Bright indirect light is the most critical requirement for orchids. Light green new foliage signify adequate light. Dark green foliage indicates a need for brighter conditions.



Humidity

Orchids like high humidity, but adapt well to most homes. Winter heating and summer air conditioning lower the natural humidity in homes. Correct this condition by sitting pots on saucers of pebbles partially covered with water, grouping the orchids with other plants or keeping your orchids in the bathroom or near a sink.

Water & Fertilizer

Orchid roots require air and must not be continually moist. Water thoroughly by flooding or dipping and allow to dry significantly before watering again. The frequency of watering will depend on soil, its condition, type of pot (clay requires more water) humidity and other factors.

Regular fertilizing is recommended with a water soluble orchid fertilizer. Follow package directions.



Temperature

Night temperatures for Phalaenopsis and Cattleya should be at least 60°F. Daytime temperatures that exceed 90°F can stress plants if humidity is low. Cymbidium prefer slightly cooler temperatures.

Potting

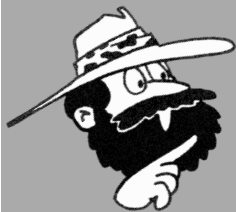
Small plants should be transplanted as they outgrow their pots and larger plants need to be repotted every two years. Unlike most plants, remember that many orchids will not bloom unless nearly pot-bound. Pot size is chosen to fit the root system. Soak bagged bark in water for a day or two before repotting. Repotted plants often require more frequent watering until the bark softens and starts to retain moisture.



Pests

Common insect pests like scale and mealy bugs can be controlled with appropriate insecticides—follow package directions.





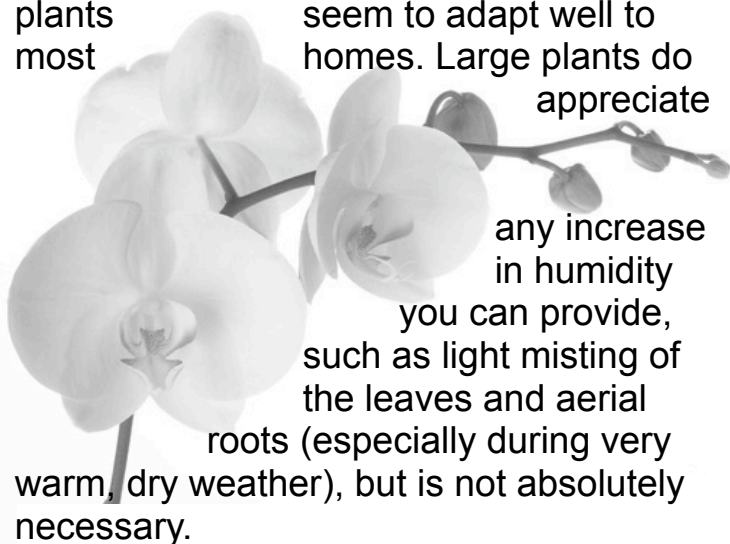
-Orchids- Phalaenopsis



Phalaenopsis orchids are the easiest of the common orchids to grow in the home. They give an unusually impressive display of flowers on a relatively small, attractive plant. These tips will help you to grow them well under indoor conditions.

Humidity & Temperature

Phalaenopsis like relatively high humidity (70% is about ideal) but large plants seem to adapt well to homes. Large plants do most appreciate



any increase in humidity you can provide, such as light misting of the leaves and aerial roots (especially during very warm, dry weather), but is not absolutely necessary.

Techniques such as placing the plant on a shallow container of pebbles partly covered with water, growing near other green plants that give off water vapor or keeping your orchid near a sink or in a bathroom can be useful.

Night temperatures should be at least 60° F, even better: 63°-65°F. Daytime temperatures are not as critical, but temperatures above 90°F may stress plants unless humidity is over 50%.

Air from a heating or air conditioning duct is extremely dry; restricting the amount of air movement across your plants will help to preserve the natural humidity. Do not use fans to increase air movement.

Light

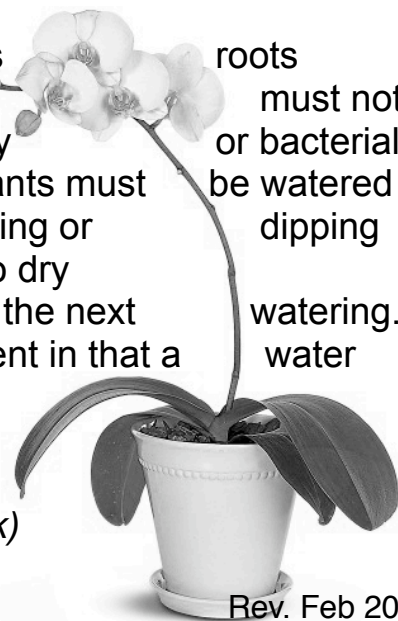
This is the most critical requirement, and one which may limit flowering. Light must be indirect or filtered strongly (direct sunlight may burn the leaves). It is impossible to have too much indirect light, so placing the plant near large windows is a good arrangement.

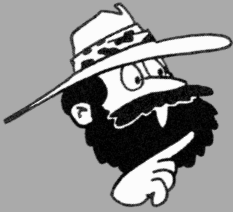
In quantitative terms, 500-800 foot-candles of light are required to allow most phalaenopsis to bloom. Plants grown about a foot below a standard fluorescent light will grow and bloom well on 16 hour days. A dark period seems to be required each night.

Water & Fertilizer

Phalaenopsis roots require air and must not be wet continuously or bacterial rot will develop. Plants must be watered thoroughly by flooding or dipping and then allowed to dry significantly before the next watering. Dipping is convenient in that a water soluble fertilizer (30-10-10) can be used.

(Continued on back)





-Orchids- Phalaenopsis



Water & Fertilizer Continued

Most mature plants will need water about once a week. However, as the bark breaks down it will hold water longer. When this begins, either lengthen the time between watering or repot the orchid (see below). Freshly repotted plants may need slightly more frequent watering.

A complete 30-10-10 water soluble fertilizer can be used according to the package directions.

If your water has high salt content, plants should be thoroughly flushed by repeated heavy watering or repeated dipping (using fresh water for each dip) about once a month. If flushing, omit using a fertilizer that watering.

Note that too frequent watering can be harmful and if continued long enough, even fatal, while under watering rarely does more than set the plant back. Recovery from under watering is almost always assured by increased watering.

Repotting

Phalaenopsis are more tolerant of repotting than most orchids, and seem to be stimulated into active root growth by the newer, drier bark. Repotting should be done about every two years, before the bark in the root zone breaks down and becomes too wet. This will encourage continued good health. Failing to repot will result in severe damage or death for the plant.

When repotting, remove the plant carefully from the pot, trying to avoid damage to the roots (roots will not attach to the sides of plastic pots, unlike porous containers).

Carefully remove all old bark and cut

off all dead roots, mainly at the bottom of the plant stem. Any dead or damaged roots can be trimmed back to live tissue.

Choose the smallest reasonably sized pot that the roots will coil into. Leave some space for bark. Unless it would leave the plant with too few leaves, leaves below a healthy root can be removed.

The plant should now be held centered upright in the pot with the lowest leaf slightly below the rim of the pot.

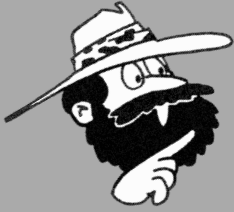
All bark should be soaked for several hours then dried until the surface is no longer wet to the touch. Use within a few days or soak again. To store, allow to dry completely and store in a container that allows good air penetration.

Add bark to the pot and between the roots (a stick or pencil helps). The final level should be just below the lowest leaf. Firmly press and eliminate any air spaces.

Freshly repotted plants usually require watering a little more frequently (approximately every 4-5 days) for the few months.

Pests & Diseases

Insects and bacterial and fungal infections are the main threats to Phalaenopsis. The latter two are rarely found in home culture as the low humidity discourages these organisms. Avoid water standing on the leaves for any length of time (especially at night) and you should have few problems. Scale and woolly aphids (mealy bugs) are common, but hand removal will usually control them if few plants are affected. Commercial insecticides may be used (with appropriate caution) if needed. Be sure to follow label instructions.



-Orchids- Cymbidium



Cymbidium orchids are one of the most popular orchids grown because of its tall arching flower spray, ease of care and long lasting blooms. Cymbidium flower between November and May, with peak bloom in early spring.

Water & Fertilizing

Cymbidium should be watered roughly once a week, with more frequent watering in warm weather and the active growing season

following blooming. Water less frequently in cooler weather, and adjust according to growing conditions-season, temperature, light, soil and other factors. Never allow your plant to stand in water, and be sure not to over water, as it can rot the roots.

Fertilize with a high nitrogen formula such as 30-10-10 every other week during the spring and summer after blooming. Reduce feeding to once every three weeks during the fall and winter with a balanced 20-20-20 fertilizer.

Light & Temperature

Although Cymbidium enjoy a cool environment, they are able to tolerate extreme highs and lows for short periods of time. As a rule, if you are comfortable where your orchid is, your orchid will be too. A daytime range of 75°-80°F and night

temperatures in the 50's is ideal, with somewhat cooler temperatures preferred during the flowering season.



Morning sun and indirect afternoon light are best. Leaf color is a good signal for correct lighting. Dark green foliage can indicate inadequate lighting, while golden-green leaves are a sign of proper sun. Direct sunlight should be reduced when the orchid is blooming.

Repotting

Repot when the bulbs are crowded against the edge of the container or when the mix feels compacted rather than porous and provides inadequate drainage.

With proper potting, this should occur about every three years. Repotting should happen after blooming. Cut off the dead spikes, fill the pot with a good orchid mix and plant to the same level as the previous pots.





-Orchids- Cattleya



Cattleya orchids come in a variety of plant and flower sizes. Many miniature types bloom twice per year and are popular for their bright, bold colors and free-flowering habits along with lovely forms. They are well known as the "corsage" orchid. They can be successfully be grown as a house plant if these simple instructions are followed.

Light

Cattleya thrive on a great deal of light- as much as you can give them in a bright window without scorching the leaves.



Color of the leaves should be light green (as opposed to dark green which indicates insufficient light). Early morning light rather than hot afternoon sun creates best results.

Humidity & Temperature

Select a shallow tray or dish, fill it with gravel, pebbles, or marbles, then fill it half full of water. Place plant on an inverted pot so that it does not sit in the water. The moisture evaporating off the rocks will

provide humidity for the Cattleya to thrive.

Keep cattleya at 60°-65°F at night and 70°-80°F during the day.



Water & Fertilizer

Cattleya roots do not like to be kept moist. They enjoy being thoroughly watered and then left to thoroughly dry out. The pot will feel quite light. Generally, 6"-8" pots will require water every 5-7 days in hot weather. Do not use softened water, as the salts will kill your plant.

We recommend fertilizing with a water soluble 30-10-10 formula twice a month.

Potting

We recommend repotting your orchid every two years. As orchid bark breaks down, it will retain too much water. Use medium bark and repot after blooming and new growth begins. Good drainage is very important.

