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growing guide

Orchid Care

Phalaenopsis Culture

Temperature: Phalaenopsis enjoy a fairly warm climate. The ideal night temperature is 62 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit and daytime temperature should be 75 degrees Fahrenheit and over. Since this temperature range is similar to that of many homes, it makes an ideal house plant.

Light & Shade: Light requirements for Phalaenopsis are fairly easy to attain. 1000 to 1500 foot candles seems to be the ideal intensity. If grown on a window sill, northern exposure proves to be the best, otherwise, diffused east or west light, no direct sun.

Watering: It is important to water your Phalaenopsis early in the morning. This insures complete water evaporation on the foliage, as well as the crown, by nightfall. Do not allow the root system to be dry at any time. Water the plant as it approaches dryness. Under most growing conditions watering is done at 5-10 day intervals.

Feeding: Phalaenopsis are known for their fast and continual growth. For this reason, it is important that they are fed on a regular basis. We recommend a half-strength solution of a (3-1-1 ratio) fertilizer every watering. During fall and winter months, this should be reduced to every second or third watering.

Humidity: Phalaenopsis are a monopodial growth without any pseudo-bulbs to help store moisture. For this reason, it is important to provide good humidity, 50-70% is considered ideal. However, if the plant is kept well watered, it will adapt to a lower humidity.

Flowering: If your Phalaenopsis is of substantial size (5-8" pot size), it is possible to flower it 2 – 3 times a year. After it has flowered the first time, cut the stem approximately half way back, just above the nearest node. From this node a new flower stem should emerge. Within 120 days, it should re-flower.

Potting: Because the Phalaenopsis is watered frequently, the potting material is usually ready for replacement once a year. Spring is generally considered the best time for transplanting.

Vanda Culture

Temperature: Vandas are basically warm growers. Daytime temperature should range from 65 – 95 degrees, nighttime 60 – 65 degrees. It is important to provide good humidity especially on warm sunny days.

Light & Shade: It is important to give Vandas a high degree of light. Terete leaf Vandas can adapt to full sun while strap leaf types do better

with some protection during the midday hours. We do not recommend Vandas for artificial light culture as there is not enough light intensity for successful blooming. If Vandas are grown in the home, a bright south exposure is best.

Watering: During the spring and summer months when Vandas are kept outdoors in bright warm areas, frequent watering is needed. Vandas should not be kept dry or moist over an extended period. Misting on warm sunny days is very beneficial.

Feeding: Vandas require a rather constant feeding during the spring and summer months. We recommend a balanced fertilizer 20-20-20 for best results. When feeding with every watering, a half-strength or less solution is best.

Potting: A coarse grade of potting material is best suited for mature Vandas. Chunks of coarse charcoal will do well. For younger plants use our multi-purpose potting mix in clay pots. Redwood baskets or slotted clay pots are ideal containers for mature Vandas. As Vandas become larger, they tend to get somewhat leggy. As the roots develop on the upper portion of the plant, you may remove the upper half and repot it as a separate plant. After this is done, the lower portion generally develops offshoots. When these offshoots develop roots, they too may be removed and repotted on their own.

Oncidium Culture

Temperature: Oncidiums do best in an intermediate to warm growing condition. A 55 – 60 degree night temperature and an 80 degree day temperature is considered best. Oncidiums will grow well in a normal home condition.

Light & Shade: Although Oncidiums are somewhat variable in their light requirements, most should do well with 2000 – 3000 foot candles of light. If grown in the home, an eastern exposure should give the best results. Oncidiums also do well under artificial lights. Plants should be kept about 6" – 8" from the lamps.

Watering: During the spring and summer months, Oncidiums should be watered frequently. We generally recommend watering twice a week during this period. But, this may vary with different growing conditions. Do not let the plant become totally dry between watering. During fall and winter months when there is less growth, curtail your water accordingly.

Important! When watering plants that were received in Baskets, Ceramic Pots, or Gift Foil, remove the potted plant from these decorative

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containers, drench thoroughly, let drain completely, then place back in container.

Feeding: We recommend a half strength solution of 30-10-10 fertilizer with each watering during the growing season (spring – summer). For fall and winter, this can be reduced to once every second or third watering.

Humidity: Oncidiums grow best with 50% – 80% humidity. However, most varieties will tolerate a lower humidity.

Potting: If your Oncidium is potted in one of the bark mixes, we generally recommend repotting once a year. If the potting material is still firm and the plant not overgrown after one year, you may hold off potting for an additional year. The best time to repot is when new growth appears, usually right after blooming.

Cattleya Culture

Temperature: The ideal temperature for Cattleya orchids is 80 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 60 degrees at night.

Light & Shade: Proper light is an important factor in growing Cattleyas. To attain good growth and flower production, Cattleyas should receive 2000 – 3000 foot candles. When Cattleyas receive the correct amount of light, the leaves will display a light green color. If the plants are grown at your window (especially southern exposure) they may need protection from direct sunrays through the months of March to August.

Watering: Basically Cattleyas should be watered as they approach dryness. This may vary from 5 – 6 days during sunny warm weather to 7 – 10 days during dark and humid weather. It is important to thoroughly drench the plant when watering. Do not at anytime let the plant stand in water. The Cattleya generally puts on most of its growth during the spring and summer months. At this time, watering should be increased. During winter months only enough water should be given to keep the pseudobulbs filled.

Feeding: Since most Cattleyas are grown in fir bark mixtures, fertilizing is a must. We recommend a high nitrogen fertilizer (3-1-1) for best results. During the growth period a full strength solution can be used every other watering, or half strength at every watering. During winter months when the plant is not in active growth, fertilizing should be curtailed to once a month.

Humidity: Fifty to sixty percent humidity is ideal for the Cattleya. However, a Cattleya in nature has dry periods, therefore they can be grown where humidity is lower.

Potting: We recommend repotting mature Cattleyas once every two years. The best time is in the spring when roots and growth develop.

Outdoor Growing: When Cattleyas are grown in the home under artificial lights or by a windowsill, it is recommended that they are summered outdoors. Care must be taken to protect the plants from direct sun during midday hours. A loosely-leaved tree usually provides the correct amount of light. In the Midwest area, Cattleyas usually can be kept outdoors until mid-September.

Dendrobium Culture

Temperature: Most Dendrobiums do well in an intermediate temperature zone. Day temperatures should be in 70 to 90 degree range. The best night temperature is 60 to 65 degrees. Low temperatures (below 50 degrees) may cause leaf drop.

Light & Shade: We recommend a fairly high light intensity for Dendrobiums. Generally, Cattleya light (2000 – 3000 foot candles) is most suitable. If Dendrobiums are grown in the home, an eastern exposure is best but a west or lightly shaded south window will do. Plants should be naturally erect without need of staking and of a medium olive-green color.

Watering: Dendrobiums require heavy watering during the growing season (spring & summer). As the new growth matures by fall, watering should be somewhat curtailed but not so much as to let the canes shrivel back.

Feeding: Dendrobiums as a whole require heavy feeding during their growth period. But as with the watering, feeding should be curtailed during the fall and winter months.

Humidity: Dendrobium orchids prefer 50% to 60% humidity. They may adapt to a lower humidity if plants are kept well watered.

Repotting: Repotting at the proper time is most important. For Dendrobiums, spring is the best time to repot. Make sure the new growth (with root action) has started before transplanting. Dendrobiums like to be somewhat root bound. Allow a very limited space for new growth. Use a coarse Fir Bark mixture that allows perfect drainage.

