

(continued from inside)

VENTILATION: Orchids require good air circulation around them to keep them cool on warm sunny days and to prevent fungal disease problems. A small fan placed near the growing area with the window opened a crack (except in very cold weather) will supply good air movement.

HUMIDITY: A humidity range of 40-60% is suitable for orchids. Use a humidifier or put your plants on gravel in trays containing water. Both pots and roots should be kept out of contact with water; this prevents root rot and ensures that epiphytic roots will properly dry out. Mist your orchids frequently (several times a day) when humidifiers or gravel trays are not used.

FERTILIZER: Orchids thrive and flower better if they are regularly fertilized during their growing season, generally spring and summer. Use a complete water soluble orchid fertilizer twice a month according to the label directions. Every 8-12 weeks substitute fish emulsion for one of the feedings to replenish trace nutrients.

POTTING MIXES: Since most orchids are epiphytic, orchid potting mixes are made from lightweight materials such as fir bark, tree fern, perlite and charcoal, which hold some moisture but are mainly used for support by the roots. On the other hand, terrestrial orchids need potting mixes that retain a fairly even level of moisture. A good potting mix like Pro-Mix is recommended.

POTS: Orchids will do well in either plastic or clay pots. Clay pots dry out faster, so orchids potted in them will have to be watered more frequently. Whatever pot you choose, it must have at least one hole in the bottom for drainage and air circulation. There are specially-designed orchid pots available in both clay and plastic that have additional holes at the sides near the bottom of the pot.

Growing Orchids Outdoors

In late May, when all danger of frost at night has past, you might consider moving your orchids outdoors to a porch, patio or under a tree. At first they should remain out of direct sun and should be gradually acclimated to bright sun. When temperatures go above 90 degrees, mist the leaves several times a day to prevent sunburn or move them to a shady location. Bring your orchids indoors well before the first frost in the fall.

Grooming Orchids

Keep your orchids healthy by occasionally washing the leaves with a warm, soapy, wet cloth to remove both dust and most insect problems such as mealy bugs, spider mites and scale. Cut off dead leaves, faded flowers and flower spikes as needed. Always sterilize your cutting tools between cuts with rubbing alcohol or a flame. When you are repotting, cut away old, leafless pseudobulbs. If you suspect your orchid has an insect or disease problem bring it in (or bring in a representative sample); our staff is happy to offer a free diagnosis and recommendation.

It's easier than you think...

Both Phalaenopsis (an epiphytic or "air rooted" orchid) and Paphiopedilum (a terrestrial type orchid) are known for their long-lasting flowers and are great for beginners.



We have everything you need to help you have success with your orchids.



Shopping List:

- Orchid Food
- Fish Emulsion
- Orchid Mix
- Clay Orchid Pot

All About Orchids

Growing orchids in your home or office



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Orchids

Beautiful and exotic, orchids are very easy to grow and care for in a home or office. Their colorful flowers will often last for months with minimal care.

Orchids belong to the most diverse family of plants known to man. There are over 880 genera, 28,000 species and well over 300,000 registered cultivars currently documented. These numbers only begin to tell the true story behind the evolutionary success of modern day orchids. Orchids are the most rapidly (genetically) changing group of plants on earth and more new species have been discovered over the last few thousand years than any other plant group known.

Orchids are also one of the most adaptable plant groups on earth. While many are tropical jungle orchids that grow in the upper branches of trees, orchids can also be found growing in tundra, rain-forest, mountain, grassy plain, desert and swamp environments. There are even orchids that are native to Long Island.

Two kinds of orchids:

1. **Epiphytic or “air rooted” orchids** anchor themselves to other plants, tree limbs or rocky places for support. They do not harm the plants they use for support; they take their nourishment from the air, rain and debris that falls on them, storing water and nutrients in a pseudobulb (the thickened portion of a stem, but not a true bulb), therefore enabling them to survive short periods of dry conditions.

The roots have an outer layer of corky cells called velamen which protect the thin, living cortex within and allows the orchid to absorb water and nutrients rapidly from raindrops, while protecting the roots, stems and leaves from water loss during dry periods. Epiphytic orchids include Cattleyas and Phalaenopsis.



2. **Terrestrial orchids** grow on the ground in the top layer of moist humus or moss. They have no pseudobulbs to store water and nutrients. Their stems and leaves rise from an underground rhizome (a root-bearing horizontal stem, which in orchids usually lies on or just beneath the surface). Their roots must always remain damp. Terrestrial orchids include Cymbidium and Paphiopedilums.

Growth Patterns

Orchids are divided into two growth pattern groups.

1. **Monopodial orchids** have a central stem that continuously grows from the tip. Flowers are produced from the stem between the leaves, usually alternately from side to side. Phalaenopsis orchids are a good example.

2. **Sympodial orchids**, such as Cattleyas, possess a rhizome that sends out a shoot. This develops into a stem and leaves and eventually produces a flower. Sympodial orchids often have stems that expand into water-storage organs called pseudobulbs. Their leaves may also be thick and leathery to allow for water storage.



Caring For Orchids in Your Home

LIGHT: Plants should be placed in an east, south or west window and should be protected from direct noonday sun. Orchids are variable in their light requirements, depending on genera and variety. Plants that need high light, such as Cymbidiums, can be placed closest to the window. This protects other plants that need medium light, like Cattleyas, by blocking the direct sunlight. Other orchids, such as Phalaenopsis, prefer low light which can be attained by placing them a distance from the window. If only a south facing is available, a sheer curtain helps prevent scorching during months when the sun is low in the sky.

WATERING: Most orchids are well adapted to conserve water and should be cared for as such. Water orchids when the potting mix feels dry to the touch, usually about once a week. Soak thoroughly using water; since orchids are grown in a fast-draining mix, you need to allow time for the water to be absorbed, then water again, covering the entire soil surface. Allow excess water to drain away. An orchid mix should not be kept constantly wet, nor should it be allowed to dry out completely.

When watering orchids:

- ✓ Avoid wetting the leaves.
- ✓ If water gets on or trapped between leaves, remove it with a piece of tissue or cotton ball.
- ✓ Remove standing water in saucers within an hour after watering.
- ✓ Over-watering will cause damage. If leaves yellow or show signs of rot, hold off on watering for a few weeks.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT: Orchids may be grown under artificial lights. Provide artificial light only during daylight hours to initiate flower buds during the proper season, generally spring and summer. Varieties with lower light requirements do better in this type of culture. For best results use wide spectrum fluorescent tubes such as grow lights.

TEMPERATURE: Most orchids will do well at the normal daytime room temperature of most homes. A differential between night and day temperatures of at least 10-20 degrees is necessary for good growth. Most varieties will tolerate higher temperatures in the summer weather, but additional shade and misting is necessary to keep them cool. Occasional temperature-drops into the 50-degree range at night during the colder months will not harm these plants.



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