

# ORCHID CARE INDOORS

## LIGHT

Indoor culture of most orchids will require some amount of supplemental light in order for them reach their full potential. This is because light from most windows tends to be extremely uneven at different points of the day. Some of the best supplemental lighting solutions for orchids are high output fluorescent lighting or full spectrum High Intensity Discharge (HID) lights.

## TEMPERATURE

Most orchids fall into two categories; cool growing and warm growing. Cool growing orchids prefer 65-80 degree days and 50- 65 degree nights. Warm growing orchids prefer 75-85 degree days and 65-75 degree nights. Orchids will flower more regularly when given a 10-15 degree differential between night and day temperatures.

## POTTING

There are two different growth patterns that all orchids fit into:

### 1. SYMPODIAL

This simply means that all new growth will sprout from the base of the plant (the rhizome), and the plant will only bloom on the new growth(with the exception of Dendrobium). Examples of sympodial orchids include Cattleya, Dendrobium, Cymbidium & Oncidium.

### 2. MONOPODIAL

This means that all new growth will come from the top of the plant. Examples of this type include Vanda, Phalaenopsis, & Angraecum.

Your potting strategy will depend upon your orchid's growth habit. Monopodial orchids should be repotted **after** they complete their bloom cycle. Sympodial orchids should be repotted when they are growing, ideally when the new growth is about half mature.

#### Note:

**In most cases you should never repot an orchid while it is in bloom.**

## HUMIDITY

All orchids are going to benefit greatly from being in at a somewhat humid area (50%-70%) because most orchids grow in rainforest or sub-tropical environments. You can use a humidi-tray or a seedling tray filled with pea gravel, lava rock, hydroton etc. to add humidity to your growing area. You can also use a vaporizer or humidifier to add humidity to a small growing area.

## FERTILIZER

For most orchids in their vegetative phase use a product higher in nitrogen (N) than phosphorus (P). For flowering use a fertilizer with a higher amount of phosphorus than potassium.

**Note: Avoid using products containing urea for use on orchids.**



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**CATASETUM-** This is a symodial deciduous orchid that follows a three step growing cycle: grow, bloom then rest. Water & Fertilize fairly heavily(.6-.8 EC) during the time that it is growing new leaves. As the pseudobulb matures, gradually decrease water until the leaves yellow and fall off. From this point you do not want to water it until it initiates new growth unless the pseudobulbs shrivel up severely. Catasetums grow in fairly bright light (approximately 3000 footcandles), and will appreciate a **Medium Drainage Mix** since it likes a lot of water during its growth phase, but likes to dry out upon completion of flowering.

**CYMBIDIUM-** This group is made up of cool growing sympodials that can take a lot of light. This group lends itself extremely well to indoor culture. Cymbidiums will take 3000-5000 footcandles and like to stay fairly moist. A **Low Drainage Mix** will be perfect for smaller cymbidiums. For larger cymbidiums mix 1/3 **High Drainage Mix** & 2/3 **Medium Drainage Mix**.

**CATLEYA-** Cattleyas are one of the more popular types of orchids. Most all Cattleyas come from Mexico and South America. They can tolerate heat extremes and can take cooler temperatures than most other warm growing orchids. Cattleyas like bright light (3000-4500 footcandles). Cattleyas do not like to stay wet for very long so allow them to dry between waterings. Use a **High Drainage Mix** for Cattleyas.

**DENDROBIUM-** Dendrobium is the exception to the rule for sympodial orchids because it can bloom off of old growth. Do not take dead looking canes off of your plant unless they are obviously dead! Dendrobiums can be a peculiar orchid to repot because they like to be extremely potbound. Do not increase pot size unless the roots will not fit in the existing pot. Dendrobiums take medium to bright light (2500-3500 footcandles) and like to dry out between waterings. A **High Drainage Mix** will work best for Dendrobium.

**MILTONTIA-** A cool growing sympodial orchid that is particularly sensitive to light and heat, Miltonias should never exceed 80 degrees for any extended period of time. They can take low to medium light (1750-2250 footcandles) and like to stay fairly wet. Our **Medium Drainage Mix** will work best for Miltonias.

**ONCIDIUM-** These are one of the more commonly bred and cultivated orchids. Oncidiums are warm growing sympodial orchids. However these orchids are often bred with other genera, making the common temperature and light needs of the plant slightly change. In general Oncidiums and related genera take 2000-3000 footcandles and like dry slightly between waterings. A **Medium Drainage Mix** is ideal for Oncidiums and related genera.

**PAPHIOPEDILUM-** These are sub-tropical lady slippers that have a sympodial growth habit. Paphs are fairly sensitive to fertilizer salt build-up. This can be remedied by adding charcoal into your mix and/or rinsing with **Clearex**. Paphiopedilums take low light (1000-1500 footcandles) and like to stay fairly wet so that their root hairs do not dry up. A **Medium Drainage Mix** will work well for Paphiopedilums.

**PHALAEOPSIS-** Common name "Moth Orchid". They are the most commonly bred of all orchids. Phals have a monopodial growth habit. They are one of the only orchids that falls into the mega-therm category meaning that these orchids never want to be below 65 degrees and can take temperatures up to about 90 degrees. Phalaenopsis grow best around 2200 footcandles and like to stay fairly wet, but not overwet. A **Medium Drainage Mix** is perfect for Phalaenopsis.

**PHRAGMIPEDIUM-** These are the cloud forest lady slippers. They are cool growing sympodial orchids and like to stay bright, wet, and cool. They grow best around 3750 footcandles and are most comfortable between 50-80 degrees. A **Medium Drainage Mix** is ideal for Phragmipediums.

**VANDA-** These are warm growing monopodial orchids. There are two crucial factors in Vanda culture; light and humidity. Vandas can benefit during their vegetative phase from an all purpose fertilizer (20-20-20). Vandas take 3000-4500 footcandles, and like to stay moist but never wet. A **High Drainage Mix** is ideal for Vandas and related genera.