

Orchid Care for Beginners

ORCHIDS, LIKE ALL PLANTS, NEED A **BALANCE OF LIGHT, AIR, WATER, FOOD AND TEMPERATURE** TO GROW AND FLOWER WELL

Place the orchid close to an **east, west, or lightly shaded south** window.

Without enough light, orchids may produce **lush looking growths but no flowers**

Not giving orchids enough light is the most common reason for failure to bloom

How much light is enough?

THE ANSWER TO THIS SEEMINGLY SIMPLE QUESTION IS "AS MUCH AS THEY WILL TAKE WITHOUT BURNING"

This means that the foliage should not be a lush, dark green.

Orchids grown under sufficient light will have **lighter, somewhat yellow-green** foliage and strong upright growths.

Temperature

ORCHIDS WILL BE COMFORTABLE WHERE YOU ARE COMFORTABLE

Typical home temperatures of **55–60°F (13–16°C)** at night and **75°F (24°C)** during the day are fine

Guard against excessively low or high temperatures immediately adjacent to glass windows

Water orchids properly

MORE ORCHIDS ARE KILLED BY OVER-WATERING THAN BY ANY OTHER REASON

Orchids should be watered **just as they begin to dry out.**

When orchids are watered, they should be watered **copiously.**

Constant wetness will cause the roots to rot, eventually killing the plant.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO DETERMINE WHEN A POTTED ORCHID IS ALMOST DRY:

- 1 The surface of the potting mix will **appear dry**
- 2 Dry pots will feel **lighter**
- 3 **Clay pots** feel dry
- 4 **Put your finger in the mix.** If it feels wet, it is wet. If unsure, wait one more day to water.

WATER SHOULD BE APPLIED UNTIL IT RUNS FREELY FROM THE DRAINAGE HOLES

- 1 This way the potting medium will be **soaked**
- 2 **Salts** that naturally accumulate will be flushed away
- 3 Water frequency depends on the potting medium: **Clay pots** are suitable for rainy areas, while **plastic pots** that hold moisture longer can be used in drier climates

ORCHIDS ROOTS NEED TO GET A GOOD AMOUNT OF AIR

- 1 This is the reason why, with the exception of a few terrestrial varieties, they do not grow in soil.
- 2 Orchid plants are intolerant of a stale, stagnant environment. You should strive for a dynamic atmosphere and **gentle air movement** must be provided at all times. For orchids grown in the home, this can be provided by an overhead **paddle fan set** on the lowest setting **directed away** from the plants.
- 3 There must be an **exceptionally good drainage**, yet capable of holding sufficient moisture to support the plant's needs.
- 4 For the sake of maintaining a good amount of moisture inside the pot, place the plants **on a tray of gravel or pebbles and water.**

The pot is placed on the pebbles above the water line

This helps to insure that the base of the pot is **not immersed in water**, increases **humidity** for the plant, and provides some **air circulation** under the pot

Orchids need to be fed regularly

Growers suggest using a "balanced" fertilizer such as **20-20-20.**

Orchids will do far better with **too little fertilizer** than with **too much.**

Feed "**weakly, weekly**" applying a diluted (**1/4 strength**) fertilizer each time you water.

Water first then follow with fertilizer solution.

Discover the best ways to grow your orchids and enjoy numerous benefits by joining the AOS today - www.aos.org/join



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