

Orchid Care Sheet

The Phalaenopsis Orchid is the most common variety grown in the house. This orchid is an epiphyte which grows its roots on tree trunks under the canopy in the rain forest. They collect moisture and nutrients from the air. In our homes we place them in pots with orchid mix and enjoy them. The most common colour of the Phalaenopsis Orchid is white. They also come in shades of purple, and sometimes yellow.



Care:

Light: Medium to bright light.

Water: Let dry slightly then water well. Do not let sit in water.

Fertilizer: Feed once a month with all purpose fertilizer or a flowering plant fertilizer.

See inside for more care instructions.

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Other Types of Orchids:

Oncidium Orchid:



Oncidiums produce numerous small flowers that are clustered on tall stems with long slender leaves. Their flowers last for about 3 to 4 weeks. Fairly easy to

grow just make sure they receive extra humidity.

Cattleya Orchid:

Cattleyas have large flowers that last about 4 to 5 weeks. They only flower on new growth



which takes about 8 to 10 months to develop. Cattleyas require full sunlight and like to be root bound



Lady Slipper Orchid: (Paphiopedilum)

Lady Slippers produce 1 to 3 blooms that last about 3 to 4 weeks.

These orchids require special attention, especially extra humidity.

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Fertilizer:

Your orchid should be fed plant food regularly. There are different ways to feed orchids. We recommend an all purpose food or a flowering plant food. Choose one of these foods then either use it twice a month mixed at half strength, or once a month at regular strength. There are other specialty orchid fertilizers available which are also suitable, just follow the label for feeding.

Temperature:

Your orchid likes temperatures around 18°C. to 25°C. (65°F. to 85°F.) Generally if your house temperature is comfortable for you, then your orchid is happy. It is best to never expose your plant to temperatures below 10°C. (50°F.) or above 38°C. (100°F.). Transporting orchids in cold (freezing) weather is safe when wrapped and never left in an unheated vehicle.



Light:

Medium to bright light plant. The ideal location is morning sun (East Window) or late afternoon sun (West Window). A South window is okay except in the summer when there is too much direct sunlight. Never expose your plant to direct sunlight, since this may cause burns and harm your plant.



Watering:

The timing between watering depends on how much light and humidity your orchid receives as well as the time of the year. Orchids like to dry slightly, then be watered well. Drain any excess water away. If you leave your plant sitting in water you may cause the roots to rot. Orchids prefer humidity and misting the leaves on a daily basis will help to increase extra humidity for your plant -usually morning is best. It is important that the leaves be dry by evening to prevent rot. Another way to increase humidity is to use a pebble tray. To do this, use a larger saucer, fill with rocks, pebbles or even a smaller upside down saucer. Set your plant on top and fill with water. The water will evaporate and create more humidity. The key with using a pebble tray is to make sure the water level is never touching the bottom of your pot, since that would create root rot.

Flowering & Re-blooming:

Each time a Phalaenopsis orchid flowers it sends up a new flower spike. When the flowers are finished, cut the old flower spike back to just under where the first (oldest) flower opened. Sometimes this spike may send a bonus side spike from lower on the stem. These side spikes will grow out of the nodes on the flower stem. The nodes look like little leaves over the stem. Think of these as bonus flowers because some plants will send one or two up and some will not. To cut the rest of the spike back just wait for it to turn yellow or brown and cut it back in stages as it dies.

Orchids usually flower once a year, but tend to take a break to rest once in a while. Usually around January or February Phalaenopsis send their new flower spike out, during the shortest length of natural daylight. If your plant refuses to flower, holding off on the fertilizer for two to four feedings in the fall will sometimes help force your plant into flower. Just remember it still needs to be watered. Another trick is giving a slight temperature change over night, making it slightly cooler.



Repotting:

Generally the Phalaenopsis orchid requires repotting every 2 to 3 years. At this time you may need to simply replace the orchid mix or repot into a larger pot. Make sure not to use potting soil. There are different types of potting mediums for orchids -which type you choose is personal preference. When you repot your orchid trim off any decayed roots. You can place some of the air roots in the pot or keep them out as they were.

Plant Problems:

Poor watering practices are the #1 killer of most orchids. Root rot is caused from watering too often or being left to sit in excess water. The roots will start to rot slowly, then the leaves will become droopy and wrinkled to compensate for rotting roots. To try and cure, take plant out of the pot, remove damaged roots and replant in new orchid mix. Then change watering habits.

Dehydration is caused from not enough water or timing between watering is too great. Leaves will droop and become wrinkled. To try and cure this water thoroughly draining excess water away and mist frequently.

