



# Orchid Care

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Whether grown indoors or out, orchids will require roughly the same care. Thirty to fifty percent humidity would be enough for most orchids. Most dwarf varieties do well indoors, as they require less humidity.

To humidify, place your potted orchid on a pan or clay saucer filled with gravel (small sized gravel is best). Add just enough water to keep the gravel moist. Do not let the bottom of the pot sit in water.

Temperatures required would be very close to that of the average home — 60 to 65 degrees at night and 65 to 80 degrees during the day.

While there are many species and hybrid orchids, the most familiar types are cattleya, cymbidium, and paphiopedilum, which are the corsage types.

## **CONTAINERS**

Clay pots, wire baskets, or small redwood tubs are all good for home growing.

## **POTTING PROCEDURES**

Orchids growing in 5, 6, 7 or 8 inch pots will probably need repotting every eighteen months. Orchids in larger containers will have to be repotted every three years. Be sure your pot or container has a large drain hole. Fill the bottom one-third of the pot with well-washed broken or chipped pottery.

## **THE POTTING MEDIUM**

Medium sized fir bark is fast becoming the most popular orchid planting material. Do not use soil. Osmonda (tree fern fiber) contains more nutrients than fir bark, but is more difficult to use in potting. When repotting with osmonda, soak it in water for several hours for easier handling.

When you pull the orchid from the old pot, remove as much of the old potting mixture as possible, being very careful

with the orchid's root system. Next cut off all dead root or partially dead roots (it will be black or brown) to live tissue, which is white. Position the plant in new pot and slowly work the new bark in and around the root system until all roots are covered. Water well.

## **WATERING ORCHIDS**

There is no single rule for watering orchids. Small pots dry out faster than larger ones. Any time you are in doubt, do not water. As long as the bark in the pots seems moist or damp, the plant is fine. When you do water, water slowly and thoroughly until water comes out the drain well. Do not let surplus water remain around the pot.

## **MISTING YOUR ORCHID PLANT**

Mist your orchids daily, if possible. Do this early in the day, so that leaves and stems will be dry by nightfall when light intensity is low. Misting early in the day will help you avoid most fungus problems.

## **FERTILIZING ORCHIDS**

Use a regular orchid plant food, beginning in March. Continue through September. Once each month is enough if you wet the planting medium well when watering.

## **INSECTS**

Insects of any kind might infest your orchids. Watch them closely and spray, if needed. Scale insects should be wiped off with a damp cloth. Consult your Heirloom Gardens Texas Certified Nursery Professional for all current recommendations.

## **FUNGUS AND MILDEWS**

Spray with Bordeaux mixture (copper sulfate and lime).