

CARING FOR YOUR ORCHIDS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN SOMEONE SAYS A PLANT IS AN INTERMEDIATE OR A COOL GROWER?

Temperature Key:

Cool to intermediate = 48F min to 78F max

Intermediate to cool = 52 F min to 80 F max

Intermediate = 55F to 85F max

Intermediate to warm = 58F min to 88F max

Warm = 65F min to 85F max

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN SOMEONE SAYS A PLANT SHOULD BE GROWN DRY OR MOIST

Moist = water often do not let dry completely

Slightly moist = 2-3 watering per week, let dry slightly between watering; in warm weather water daily (possibly more than once)

Slightly dry = 1-2 watering per week or less, let dry entirely between watering.

Dry = 1 watering per week or less: let dry completely for a couple days or longer between watering.

Some orchids require seasonal differences. These are generally designated by growing season first/dormant season second.

WHY SHOULD I PUT A FAN IN MY INDOOR GROWING AREA?

Air movement is good for plants – it creates stronger growth and helps prevent diseases, especially bacterial rots and fungi. All plants grow better with a SLIGHT breeze. This helps cool plants during warm weather, and the movement of foliage helps to strengthen the plant. It also helps build stronger flower spikes. Fans are not necessary when plants are grown outdoors, but should be used for indoor growing areas. The main thing to keep in mind is that you are trying to replicate natural conditions from your plants native habitats – and the air is almost never still in those natural settings.

SHOULD I LEAVE THE LEAFLESS CANES ON A DENDROBIUM

Yes, leave the canes on any dendrobium so long as they are fleshy and alive. Even if they have lost all their leaves, they remain an integral part of the plant. The old canes act as a storage organ for the plant and it will continue to draw nutrients from the old canes. . Old canes can also send up new growths and in many species old canes will still bloom. In some species only the old canes bloom. Do not remove Dendrobium canes unless they are dry and brittle.

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ARE ORCHIDS HARD TO GROW IN MY HOME?

No, so long as you pick the right ones. If you can grow African violets you can grow orchids. All you have to do is match a plants needs with what conditions you can provide. They are no different than other plants. They need water, light, fertilizer, and air to grow. They are very hardy and thrive on benign neglect. More orchids succumb to overwatering, over fertilizing and low light, than those which are underwatered, under fertilized and given mourning light.

Most orchids are not that delicate or hard to grow plants that some people think they are. They are the largest group of plants in the world.

Enjoy these wonderful plants without fear. Despite rumors of exacting care, most are no harder to deal with than other house plants. Some degree of trial and error may be necessary to find the right plant for the right environment. We hope you get off to a happy start down the garden path into the world of orchids.