

Orchids

One of the most commonly gifted houseplants, these beauties can be a little scary to first time owners. Here are a few tips, just for you, to help you successfully grow and love them!

Light:

Leaf color is a good indicator if the orchid is getting the right amount of light. Direct sun can burn the plant, however, too little light will cause the leaves to be dark green and it will prevent flowering. The perfect amount of sun will result in the leaves being yellowish-green.

Water:

You will want to water orchids in the morning so they dry out by nighttime. Watering will vary depending on the plant's environment. You will need to water more often in a warm dry area than in a cooler, more humid spot. It is easy to rot the roots so use the finger test! Stick your finger down into the soil and if it's still moist, do not water. Most tropical orchids enjoy high humidity. You can place them by a humidifier, mist the leaves regularly, or place them on a tray full of gravel and water. If using the gravel method, make sure the water level does not reach the bottom of your pot or you risk rotting the roots.

Fertilizer:

Fertilizer on dry roots can burn them so be sure to water first and then apply fertilizer. Avoid fertilizers with Urea nitrate. Urea needs to be broken down in the soil and that doesn't happen with Orchid soils. It is best to fertilize once a week using the weakest recommend rate. This will help keep your Orchid happy and healthy.

Soil:

Most Orchids will want to be planted in an Orchid soil. Fertilome® has an Orchid mix that works great! If you have a terrestrial Orchid, they will like regular potting soil. Water should be able to drain quickly and there needs to be good air circulation for the roots, this will help prevent rotting. You also want to make sure there are bark pieces large enough for the roots to cling to so the Orchid will remain upright. Good signs for repotting are if the plant becomes too big and unbalanced, if roots are bursting out of the pot, or if the potting mix is no longer providing good aeration. Only repot your Orchid when it needs it because they do not like to be bothered.

Pests:

The key to good pest management is to inspect your plant regularly for anything unusual. Insects like mealybug, thrips and aphids are among the most common pests. These will usually be found on the flowers or the underside of leaves. Safer® Insecticidal Soap is a great product to control all of these insects. For mealybug, if there are only a few, you can also dip a Q-tip into

isopropyl alcohol and spot treat. The [St. Augustine Orchid Society](#) is a fantastic reference for pest and disease ID and solutions.

If you're prone to certain behavior with plants, follow the [Better Homes and Gardens](#) guide below to see what type of orchid would be best for you!

- **I tend to overwater:** Slipper orchids, such as *Phaphiopedilum*, *Phragmipedium*
- **I ignore my plants:** *Cattleya*, *Oncidium*, *Dendrobium*
- **My house stays cool:** *Cymbidium*, *Odontoglossum*, *Masdevallia*
- **My house stays warm:** *Vanda*, moth orchids, *Angraecum*
- **The air in my house is dry:** *Cattleya*, *Dendrobium*
- **My house doesn't get a lot of light:** Jewel orchids, *Paphiopedilum*
- **I only have a small windowsill for growing:** Mini-cattleyas, *Pleurothallis*, miniature moth orchids
- **I don't understand fertilizers:** Moth orchid, *Cattleya*
- **I'm afraid of orchids:** Moth orchid, *Dendrobium*
- **Best orchids to grow outdoors in summer:** *Vanda*, *Cymbidium*, *Cattleya*
- **My pet chews my plants:** Orchids with thick leaves such as moth orchids, *Cattleya*, *Vanda*

Enjoy your orchid and if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call or come in and we can assist you. And keep on the lookout for classes about Orchids.



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