



Orchid Basics

Knowing which orchid you are trying to grow is your key to its cultural requirements. Orchids, like all plants, need a balance of light, air, water and food to grow and flower well.

Light

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

Air

Most orchids do not grow in soil. Orchid potting media should be open, with exceptionally good drainage, yet capable of holding sufficient moisture to support the plant's needs. **ferti • lome Orchid Mix** is ideal for orchids. A well-ventilated growing area discourages disease. Use of a ceiling fan set on low, or a portable oscillating fan directed AWAY from the plant, will provide gentle ventilation.

Water

Proper watering consists of two components; quantity and frequency. Water orchids just as they dry out. There's no magic formula because everyone's growing area is different. Humidity, air movement, potting medium (type and age) and light levels all play a role. 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) a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix.

When orchids are watered, they should be watered until it runs freely from the drainage holes. Not only does this soak the potting medium, but it also flushes salts that naturally accumulate. At a minimum, try to thoroughly water your plants at least once a month.

Watering frequency can be controlled by the choice of pot. For those who live in humid, rainy areas, clay pots, especially slotted pots are a good choice. Growers in drier climates, or those who tend not to water often enough, might want to use plastic pots to hold moisture longer.

Fertilizer

Orchids will grow and flower, given that their other requirements are met, for fairly long periods without fertilizer, but you'll get better results with some level of feeding. We recommend **Jack's Classic Orchid** liquid fertilizer (follow label directions).

Most experienced growers will agree that observation is the most important key to growing orchids well. Examining your plants on a regular basis will allow you to adjust and correct any problems before they become severe.