

CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS

Cymbidium Orchids are easy to grow and flower if you treat them well. They are tough plants. In flower they will give you a lovely display for up to 2 months. They may be housed indoors while they are in flower. Water every 5 days or so, but do not allow to stand in a saucer of water and do not put it too near a source of heat. When it finishes flowering, follow the instructions below and it should flower at the same time each year. It should be even bigger and more spectacular next time it flowers.

These orchids are epiphytes, which means that in the wild they grow in forks of trees where they receive dappled sunlight all day. So in cultivation, the ideal position for optimum growth and flowers is filtered sun all day, e.g. a shade house with 50 - 70% shade cloth. This should be situated in an open position with no trees or buildings that will give shade. If this is not possible, give your Cymbidiums the most filtered sunlight per day or place them under a deciduous tree, on the northern side, so that they receive the most sun in winter yet are protected from hot overhead sun in summer. This will also protect them from light frosts. If regular or heavy frosts are prevalent in your area a solid cover, e.g. a clear fibreglass type of material cover will be necessary in winter. This is also a good idea when they are in spike or flower as it protects the blooms from rain and hail, etc.



To produce flower spikes, a temperature drop of approximately 10°C for a short period each day is needed in spring and summer. Watering in the evenings on hot days will achieve this. In some areas this drop occurs naturally.

WATERING: A rough watering guide can be given for the daily temperature:

If the temperature is under 20°C, water once a week depending on rainfall.

When the temperature is between 20°C and 30°C, water 2-3 times a week.

If the temperature is over 30°C, water every day, and twice a day if it is very hot.

However, other factors can affect drying such as hot north winds and dew fall.

POTTING MIX: It is easier if all of your orchids are potted in the same type of mix and pots. So, if you buy or win an orchid, it will pay you to re-pot it, using the same mix as your other Cymbidiums. This will help with the watering as they are more likely to dry out evenly. There is a wide range of potting media that can be used. The main thing is that the mix is free draining, as the roots do not like to be kept soggy or water logged. The medium should be slightly acidic - pH 6.0. Plain pine bark can be used or a mixture of pine bark, sand and marble chips. For small collections of orchids, a commercial Cymbidium potting mix can be used and is easier than mixing your own.

DIVIDING OR RE-POTTING: When dividing or re-potting your orchids, pot into a size pot that the orchid can stay in for three years. This is the time span for re-potting, even if the orchid does not need dividing, as the potting mix breaks down in this time and will hold too much moisture. Re-pot as soon as the flowers are finished or picked. Spring is usually the best time and before the end of November if possible. Autumn is also a good time. The main thing is not to re-pot when it is very hot or very cold. When dividing the plant, leave at least three green bulbs with leaves on the main division, as this is a good flowering sized plant.

FERTILIZING: Slow release fertilizers can be used every three months. If using other fertilizers in powder form that are mixed with water always use half strength and there is less likelihood of burning the plant. Use fortnightly except in winter when no fertilizer is needed.

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