

CHIRITA

Chirita is a large branch of the gesneriad family with about 150 species. In their natural habitat, they are found in China, Sri Lanka, India, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, throughout the southern Himalayan foothills and down through the Malay Peninsula. Most have flowers in shades of purple, often with orange or yellow raised ridges in the throat, but some have yellow or white flowers. The preferred natural habitat is shaded, rocky hillsides or limestone cliffs.

Temperature – Cool to warm, 45 to 80 degrees. Some varieties will tolerate cooler temperatures.

Light – Indirect light or partial shade. Grows well under fluorescent tubes.

Humidity – Prefers 50 percent or higher.

Watering – Keep soil evenly moist but not wet. Can slightly dry out without harm.

Fertilizer – Feed with ¼-strength liquid fertilizer at each watering.

Soil – Light, well-drained soil with added lime.

Propagation – Seeds, rooting offsets or stolons, or “putting down a leaf.”