

Summer Orchid Growing Tips

Cattleya Alliance Plants

In most areas of the country, higher light and higher temperatures require more fertilizer and water for Cattleyas. If you are in one of the areas with extremely high temperatures cut back on the fertilizer since your plants will be stressed from the heat and will go into a period of very little growth until the temperatures moderate in the fall. Be sure to watch for fungal diseases as well as scale since both proliferate in higher temperatures.



Phalaenopsis or Moth Orchids

Phals are one of the warm growing orchids and as such are happiest during our summer months. They should be fertilized every week during these months so that they can achieve maximum growth to support spikes in the fall. Very high temperatures (over 90F) will cause leaf loss. So if possible try to keep your plants in areas where they are not exposed to these high temperatures. Be very careful of water in the crowns of plants to avoid rot and provide good air circulation.

LEFT: Heat stress is usually a function of, or accompanied by excessive light. Early signs are a bleached, withered appearance of leaves (top) followed by cell collapse (bottom). Additional shade and air movement can help prevent these summer problems.

Paphiopedilums or Slipper Orchids

Paphs generally like a little cooler temperatures than some of the other orchids. Even the so-called "warm growers" will not like temperatures above about 85F. Good air circulation is a must for these plants especially during warmer weather. Make sure that they do not dry out and that high humidity is provided if the plants are in warm areas.

Watch for fungal infections

Fungus infections are especially prevalent during the hot and humid summer months, especially on thin leafed orchids. If you notice spotting on the leaves of your plants, spray with a good fungicide such as Physan or Consan to keep the problem from getting worse. Be sure to spray both the bottom and the top of leaves for best results. Increase your air circulation around that specific plant if possible since poor air circulation is one of the causes of fungal infections.

Watch for new growth and stake inflorescences

Stake new inflorescences on most of the summer growing orchids such as Epidendrum, Dendrobium, Brassavola, Oncidiums and Phrags. It is a good idea to put in the stake as soon as you notice the inflorescence so that you can keep track of where it is and stake when the growth has reached about 4 inches. Be careful not to pinch the inflorescence because all the growth and flower development is nourished through the stem

Can I grow orchids outdoors?



Orchids grow well under trees during frost-free summer months.

Where winters are cold, orchids can be grown on the patio or under trees in the warmer months when frost does not threaten. This is often a wonderful solution for orchid growers in colder climates, and enables the plants to grow so much better than they would if left indoors all year. Growers in frost-free areas with cooler summer nights (below 60 F in August and after) can grow cymbidiums, one of the finest of all garden orchids. Where summer nights are warmer, many varieties of vandas and cattleya types are appropriate.