



HOW WE GROW ORCHIDS

Lore Nestel-Yu

All of my orchids are now grown indoors, the entire year as I had trouble with pill bugs and slugs eating the roots of the orchids when putting them outside. I am not sure if my Cattleyas will bloom this fall and next spring but all of the orchids are growing very well and many of the others have been blooming. The orchids are either under lights or in a south-facing window. Before adding the terrarium orchids to the terrariums, I soaked them in cold coffee to make certain no bush snails were also added. Coffee kills Bush Snails. Bush snails can wipe out a terrarium of miniature orchids (which happened to me once).

On the coffee stand:



In the mason jar:

I add distilled water to the jar about once a month and spray the jar once a week, always with distilled water. I do not do anything else to these as they seem so sensitive to fertilizer. This jar is under a plant light that is set for twelve hours. These are all happy here.



In the large glass cookie jar (behind the bowl):

The *Dracula papillosa* blooms multiple times a year and just keeps growing. I have not noticed the lotax blooming but it grows well. Both are in net pots, filled with small lava rock, sitting in bowls, surrounded by medium and moss. I add distilled water to each bowl three or four times a year. The roots grew into the water. The water in the pots last a long time, likely because the jar stays very humid. I add very diluted fertilizer probably once every eighteen months. The jar is not tall enough but the orchids are doing well so I just leave them be.

Dracula papillosa is probably the easiest 'Monkey-Face' Orchid to grow as likes the same temperatures as we do. I think the lotax might need a cold period to bloom but *papillosa* does not. It does need a terrarium, distilled water and air-conditioning.



In the bowl:

This started as a moss bowl with ferns and then I added the *Angraecum distichum* and, later, the *Leptotes*. The others were bits that broke off the mounts. I add distilled water every week and spray about once a week. This also shares the grow light. It is difficult to see many of the orchids. The *Angraecum* is mostly hidden under the ferns and some of the others are very small. I might have a piece of another *Bulbophyllum* in there, too.



In a gallon Pickle Jar that is sealed and very humid:

These two were nearly dead in a humid but more open setting and so I put them in the jar. Now and then I add some tap water but, mostly, it is ignored. Both of the orchids have completely recovered and are thriving. It is difficult to see the second Aerangis as it is further in the back.



With the Carnivorous plants under lights:
I am still not certain of how often to fertilize the Phrag and Paph but they seem to be fine. The Phrag is in red lava rock and both are watered with distilled water. The Phrag sits in water. I try to keep all the plants that prefer distilled water together.



In a community pot with *Jasminum grandiflorum*:

The Vanilla really likes the community pot with the Jasmine. This pot is watered with tap water and fertilized whenever I fertilize all the other plants. The window is a south-facing window. Somewhere behind this Vanilla and Jasmine combination is a small jar with a *Haraella retrocalla* that I forgot to include.



The south-facing kitchen window, a nice humid place:

Hanging in basket pots:

These are watered every day with tap water.

In pots:

The Phals get moved away from the window when it gets really cold in the window but, otherwise, they do really well there. Just tap water.

Mounted orchids:

These are watered every day with tap water. Many of these came already mounted from Andy's Orchids, but I mounted a few myself. The Encyclias (Ecuagenera) and the Cattleya aclandiae (Hausermann's) are quite large so I used twine to fasten them onto the cork.



BRANDON SPANNBAUER

- OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE TRIED VARIOUS METHODS OF GROWING ORCHIDS IN SEVERAL AREAS OF MY HOME
- CURRENTLY, I GROW THE MAJORITY OF MY COLLECTION IN THE BASEMENT UNDER LIGHTS ALL YEAR-ROUND
- I GROW THEM IN CLAY POTS ON THE BENCH AND HANGING ON WIRE RACKS





- YEARS AGO, I GREW IN THE LARGE SOUTH WINDOWS IN MY LIVING ROOM AND BEDROOM

- THIS OFFERED GREAT LIGHT, BUT THE HUMIDITY WAS A BIT LOW AND I HAD TO CARRY EACH POT TO THE SINK TO WATER THEM

- ALSO, MY COLLECTION GREW TO WHERE THIS WAS NO LONGER FEASIBLE BUT IS A GREAT OPTION FOR THOSE WITH A MUCH MORE 'MANAGEABLE' COLLECTION THAN ME



- I USED TABLES IN FRONT OF THE WINDOWS AND THE TREES OUT FRONT PROVIDED SHADE FROM DIRECT SUNLIGHT



- IN THE SUMMER I WOULD ALSO GROW ON THE PORCH WITH A SHADE CLOTH COVER
- THIS WAS A GOOD OPTION TO GIVE MY PLANTS BETTER LIGHT BUT SOME YEARS THERE WAS FAR TOO MUCH RAIN AND I LOST A FEW PLANTS TO ROT





- CURRENTLY, I MOVE ONLY A COUPLE PLANTS TO MY COVERED FRONT PORCH WHERE THEY DON'T GET RAINED ON
- HERE IS MORE LIMITED ON SPACE AND THERE'S THE HASSLE OF MOVING THEM UPSTAIRS BUT THEY BENEFIT FROM THE STRONGER LIGHT OUTSIDE AND THERE'S NO MORE ROT ISSUES

- MY BASEMENT SETUP
- I HAVE TWO 10 FOOT TABLES THAT ARE MADE FROM WOOD AND SUPPORTED BY CINDERBLOCKS
- OVERHEAD, I USE BOTH LED AND FLUORESCENT LIGHTS THAT ARE ON A TIMER
- THERE IS A WIRE SYSTEM ALONG THE WALLS WHICH ALLOW FOR HANGING PLANTS AND WIRE RACKS TO ELEVATE SOME CATTLEYS CLOSER TO THE LIGHTS
- OVER THE 11 YEARS THAT I'VE GROWN DOWN HERE, THINGS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING CHANGED AND UPGRADED



- THE FRONT TABLE HAS FLUORESCENT LIGHTING AND THIS IS WHERE THE MAJORITY OF MY MEDIUM SIZED CATTLEYS LIVE
- I ALSO HAVE A CLEAR TOTE THAT I USE AS A STANDING REPOTTING STATION AND DOUBLES AS A PROPAGATION BOX FOR MY HOUSEPLANTS, AS IF I NEED MORE PLANTS



- DOWN HERE THE HUMIDITY IS HIGHER THAN THE MAIN HOUSE AND CAN FLUCTUATE FROM 35-65% DEPENDING ON IF THE HEAT OR AIR-CONDITIONING IS RUNNING
- THE TEMP IS ALSO HIGHER THANKS TO THE LIGHTS AND HAS THE ADDED BENEFIT OF A WIDER DAY/NIGHT TEMPERATURE RANGE THAT WAS MUCH HARDER TO ACHIEVE UPSTAIRS



- I HAVE WIRE RACKS TO ELEVATE THE CATTLEYS CLOSER TO THE LIGHTS AND I CAN ALSO HANG POTS OFF THE SIDES
- THE TOP IS COVERED WITH PLASTIC LIGHT PANELS TO PROTECT THE LIGHTS AGAINST SPLASHING WATER
- I ALSO GROW HOUSEPLANTS BELOW THE ORCHIDS WHICH NEED MUCH LOWER LIGHT



- 3-4" POTS FIT WELL ON THIS ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT RACK
- PLANTS ARE KEPT HERE UNTIL THEY GROW TOO TALL OR NEED TO BE IN A LARGER POT



- THE SECOND TABLE IS WHERE THE MAJORITY OF MY COLLECTION IS KEPT
- THEY ARE ALSO HUNG ALONG THE WALLS ON LANDSCAPING METAL FENCING
- LED LIGHTS ARE MUCH BRIGHTER AND SUITABLE FOR THE CATTLEYAS



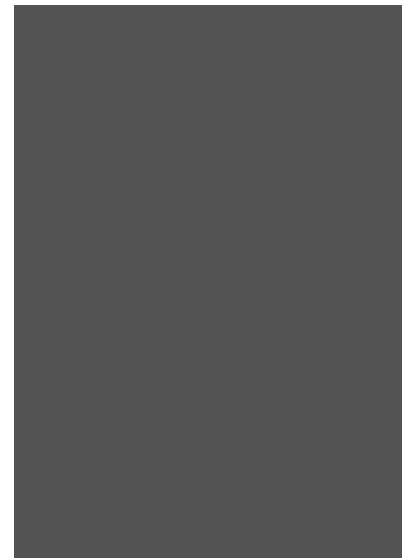
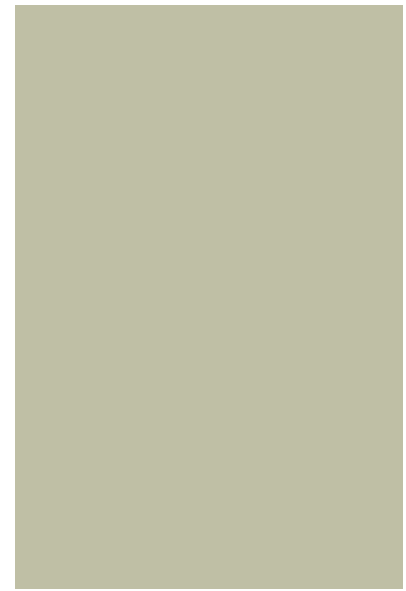
- CLAY POTS WITH A CHUNKY BARK MIX ALLOW THE ORCHIDS TO DRY OUT MORE QUICKLY
- IF A PARTICULAR PLANT NEEDS MORE MOISTURE THEN I ADD SOME MOSS TO THE MIX



- I WATER WITH A HOSE USING TAP WATER. THE TABLES ARE SLANTED AND RELEASE WATER ONTO THE FLOOR TO A DRAIN
- THERE ARE DIFFERENT WANDS DEPENDING IF I WANT TO FERTILIZE OR DRENCH
- BECAUSE THE WHOLE COLLECTION GETS WATERED TOGETHER, I NEED TO CHANGE THE MIX OF EACH POT SO THAT THEY DRY AT RELATIVELY THE SAME RATE
- THIS IS MADE EASIER BECAUSE I GROW MAINLY CATTLEYSAS SO THE CARE IS RELATIVELY THE SAME BUT LARGER POTS NEED MUCH CHUNKIER MIX TO DRY QUICKER



- ONE DOWNSIDE TO WATERING EVERYTHING AT ONCE IS MAKING SURE YOU'RE NOT OVERWATERING SOME PLANTS WHILE OTHERS ARE VERY DRY
- THE LARGER POTS HAVE VERY LITTLE MEDIA OR LARGE CHUNKS OF NATURAL CHARCOAL SO THEY DRY FASTER
- SMALLER POTS ARE TOPPED WITH MOSS TO STAY MOIST LONGER



- ALONG THE SIDE I HANG MANY SUPPLIES
- WATER BOTTLES WITH TREATMENTS: FUNGICIDE, INSECTICIDE, ALCOHOL, SOAPY WATER, ETC
- VARIOUS GRABBERS AND LONG HANDLED HOOKS TO REACH AND HANG PLANTS
- WIRE HANGERS & RING STAKES



- ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE I HAVE ANOTHER WIRE WALL
- IT IS SLIGHTLY SHADIER FOR PHALAENOPSIS
- IT IS BACKED BY WOOD SO ROOTS AND PLANTS CAN ATTACH TO IT. I DIDN'T REALLY ANTICIPATE THIS BUT THEY CAN BE REMOVED WHEN THEY HIT THE CEILING
- IT CAN GET OUT OF HAND SOMETIMES







- ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE I HAVE RANDOM SUPPLIES THAT I NEED TO ORGANIZE
- THERE IS A FLOOR FAN THAT IS CONSTANTLY MOVING TO PROVIDE AIR CIRCULATION



- BENEFITS

- HAVING THE ENTIRE COLLECTION IN ONE AREA HAS MADE ORCHID KEEPING MUCH MORE MANAGEABLE FOR ME
- WATERING IS ALSO MUCH FASTER
- SPACE: GROWING VERTICALLY HAS ALLOWED FOR MUCH MORE SQ FT OF GROWING AREA

- DOWNSIDES

- SO MANY PLANTS IN ONE AREA PROMOTES PESTS WHICH IS A CONSTANT BATTLE
- THERE ARE ALSO WEEDS THAT HAVE EXPLODING SEED PODS THAT ARE HARD TO CONTROL
- SPACE: I HAVE COMMANDEERED HALF OF THE BASEMENT

- ANY QUESTIONS? THANK YOU

