

# A Quick Introduction to Dendrobiums

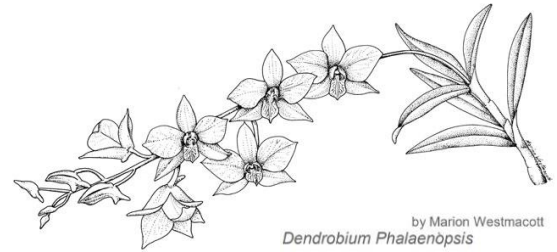
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SUBFAMILY: Epidendroideae

TRIBE: Epidendreae

SUBTRIBE: Dendrobiinae

GENUS: Dendrobium



Dendrobiums are a very widespread groups of orchids. They are the second largest genus. Only Bulbophyllum has more species. They are found in India, Tahiti, Japan, New Zealand and China. They exist from costal New Guinea which is wet and hot to altitudes of 10,000 to 12,000 feet in the Himalayas.

## In General

Keep dendrobiums in the smallest pot possible. I have seen 5 foot plants growing in 4 inch pots. Most plants from commercial vendors are overpotted.

Most plants do best with no fertilizer from Halloween to Easter. For some, as the *Dendrobium pierardii*, no fertilizer is essential.

Water and fertilize generously during the growth period.

Use well-drained, strong media that will last a long time. Most dendrobiums do not like root disturbance. Some that I have re-potted have pouted for 9 to 12 months before they started to grow again. There are always exceptions. I recently adopted and re-potted two that were rescued from a dumpster at an orchid show. These were blooming when rescued and continued to bloom for 3 months.

Unfortunately they do not have a label so I don't know what they are.

For bacteria and fungus problems do not use copper fungicides.

ALWAYS re-pot only when roots start to grow so re-establishment is fast. This usually occurs in

the spring. Re-potted plants usually do not start new growth until the roots are well established so be patient.

**LIGHT:** Most dendrobiums grow well in bright morning or afternoon light. They like light brighter than Cattleyas. I give them as much sun as they can take without damaging the leaves. Some species can grow in full sun so check individual requirements. Most do not grow well under lights. Plants under lights may produce good foliage but not bloom.

**TEMPERATURES:** The group is so large that it is impossible to generalize about temperature so check individual requirements. For some a cold dry winter rest is essential.

**WATER:** Evergreen dendrobiums can be watered all year long as with other orchids. The deciduous and hard-cane species ones usually require a dry winter rest period.

**FERTILIZER:** Dendrobiums require a high amount of fertilizer compared to other orchids. I water and fertilize heavily during the obvious growth season, especially the deciduous ones like *Dendrobium pierardii* and *Dendrobium anosum*. I adopted several deciduous ones last fall that I thought were dead except for a little green on the shriveled bulbs. With heavy watering and fertilizing this spring they are showing new growth. Once again, a well drained medium is required.