



EUROPEAN TERRESTRIAL ORCHIDS CARE SHEET

OPHRYS / ORCHIS/ SERAPIAS/ ANACAMPTIS/ HIMANTOGLOSSUM



Very attractive European terrestrial orchids are always a huge temptation for any orchid grower. They are not hard terrestrial orchids to grow but maybe a bit challenging to bloom and they do require some extra care. Here are some tips on growing them successfully.

POTTING MEDIA: Most of the growers have a great success using 90% (YES REALLY) inorganic fast draining material such pumice, coarse sand and perlite. Rot is the biggest enemy, so fast draining mixes are the key! We do not suggest all perlite because the pot will be too light and blow over often. The other 10% should be organic potting material such as what you would normally use for your terrestrials, including some marble chips for calceolarious Ophrys, but do not use lime or seas shells since they are too alkaline. For Ophrys, they like pH of 6-7. We had grown our tubers in 90% inorganic mix for several years doing well. Past 2 years we switched to 100% pure coarse sand (the one from HD for pool filters), and we LOVE IT – our tubers grow much better, less rot, more blooms. We stick to using 100% coarse sand for all our terrestrials now!!!

POTS: Use white plastic pot so the sun doesn't bake the tubers and give them few hours of unshaded morning sun when growing outside – these grow really well on windowsills too. We

grow all ours under Sunblaster LED lights indoors with great success. Use only R/O or rain water, and very light organic fertilizer (suggested one to use is FISH MIX). Fertilizer should be used only when in active growth. Adding mycorrhizae (like Great White) is very beneficial too. If they have not sprouted by Halloween, you can start watering them (or start whenever they start sprouting). They hate salt in the water. Reduce water after flowering and stop completely by the time the leaves fade and dry up. We prefer to keep dormant tubers out of pots when they are dormant (easier checking on them) and we pot them only when we see sprouts starting. Pot size depends on size of tuber (some species have really small tubers, some are quite large) Usually, for smaller single tubers we suggest 3" pots, for larger tubers 4" pots. You can create a colony with several species together in large square plastic containers too. We usually pot sprouting tuber about 1inch deep. Light watering at the beginning of growing till growths are above media, after that you can water regularly try to avoid water being stacked inside the leaves for too long. When dormant, keep tubers in cool dry place, best is plastic container with paper towel inside or in paper bag in the vegetable section of the fridge, or fridge doors, or any dark cool place in your house. check for any rot, and from the end of August start checking bi-weekly for sprouting.

TEMPERATURE/HARDINESS: Frost hardiness depends on the species. Frost hardy up to -4°C (Mediterranean species of the Ophrys / Orchis group) or up to -18°C (Mid Europeans Ophrys/Orchis/Himantoglossum/Anacamptis). Outside garden culture is possible for some species in proper zones but we suggest to protect these from frost/snow. To avoid frosts damage give the plants some protection during the coldest months.

DETAILED STEPS FOR GROWING:

1. You will receive orchid tuber, either dormant or starting to sprout
2. Keep dormant tubers in cool, dry and dark place till you see signs of sprouting
3. Prepare your preferred potting mix (90% inorganic or 100% coarse sand), you can add dolomite powder/marble chips/mycorrhizae.
4. Pot sprouting tuber with the sprout upwards some 1" deep into lightly moist potting media
5. Lightly water till sprout is above media
6. Once growing above media, do regular watering (depending on conditions once or twice a week) and light fertilizing with organic fertilizer once a month.
7. Your terrestrial orchids should actively grow from late summer/early fall till spring/early summer. They can bloom anywhere between winter/spring
8. Towards the end of growing season, leaves start to yellow/brown and will drop. Reduce watering at that time, no fertilizing after blooming. When all leaves are gone, check your pots – collect fresh new tubers for the next season growing and store.

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