



Orchids

Choosing a variety, how to water and fertilize.

What are orchids?

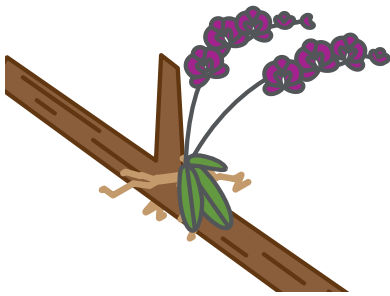
Orchids are a flowering plant that can be found growing wild from the rain forests of British Columbia to the jungles of Asia. In our climate, orchids are well loved houseplants. Though often are labeled as “tricky,” with a few easy-care tips orchids can have a long life of continual blooming in your home.

What you will need.



Top tip! Always discard excess water that drains from your orchid. Never allow orchids to sit in a pool of water, this will cause root rot.

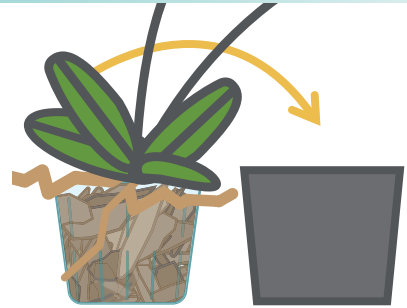
About the orchid.



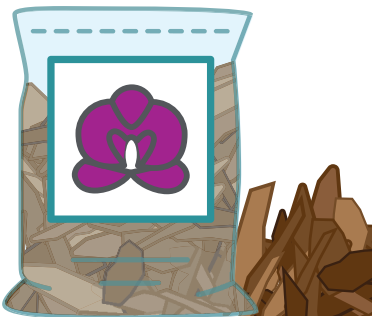
Most orchids are epiphytic and grow on the surface of another plant. Terrestrial orchids are less common and grow from “pseudobulbs” in the ground.



All roots work to stabilize the plant and collect water. Unlike potted roots, aerial roots (as found on epiphytic orchids) live on the surface above the growing medium.



Overwatering is the top way houseplants die. Orchids require excellent drainage and are planted in slotted pots to avoid root rot. Then these slotted pots are nested in decorative cover pots.



Use an orchid bark mix as the growing medium—this will mimic growing on trees.



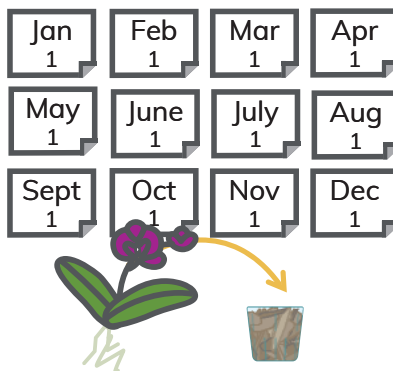
Tip! Don't repot until the pot is filled primarily with roots and little growing medium.



Some orchids can produce up to 30 blooms on one flower spike—support this weight, and avoid spike breakage, with orchid stakes and clips.



A “keiki” is a baby orchid. It's an exact clone of, and grown asexually on, a mother plant.



It may take up to 12 months for a keiki to be large enough to be removed and repotted on its own.



Tip! Research your plant. Each variety of orchid can have very different care requirements.

Choosing an orchid.

Fun fact! There are over 25,000 documented species of orchids.

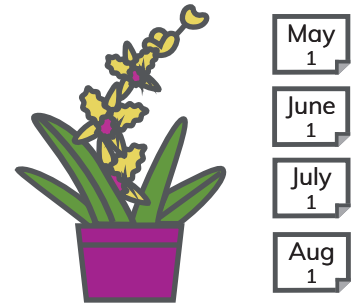
To successfully care for your orchid it is good to know the variety and what it needs to be happy. Choose a variety best suited for your environment and skill set. The four most common orchid varieties are cattleya, dendrobium, cymbidium and phalaenopsis.



1. **Cattleya** range in size from dwarf to very large.



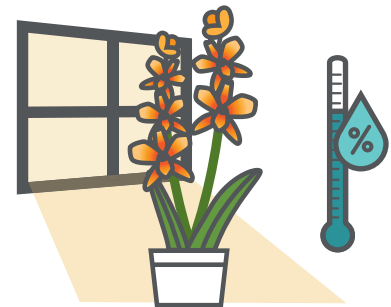
They require warmth and lots of sun, and produce 1–2 flower spikes per year.



Fun fact! Orchids have the longest lasting flowers, up to 4 months.



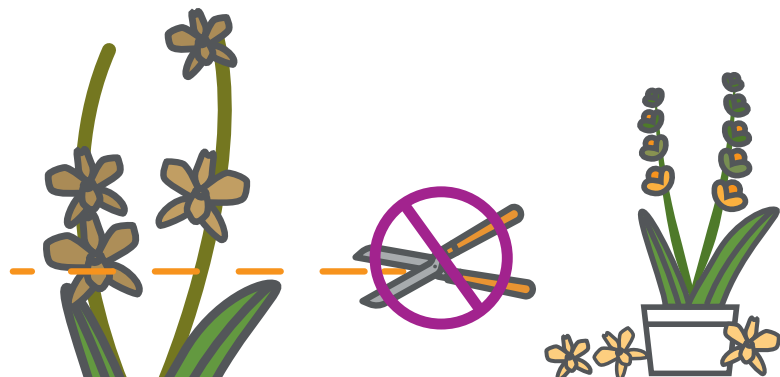
2. **Dendrobium** come in many sizes and variety of colors. They grow a few spikes with flower clusters in rows.



They require lots of bright sunlight and high humidity.



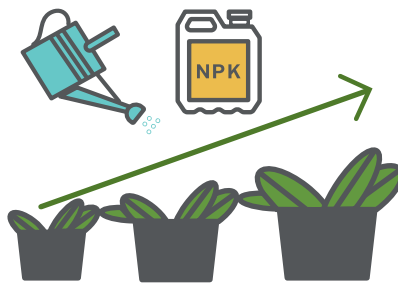
Dendrobium prefer high phosphorus fertilizers.



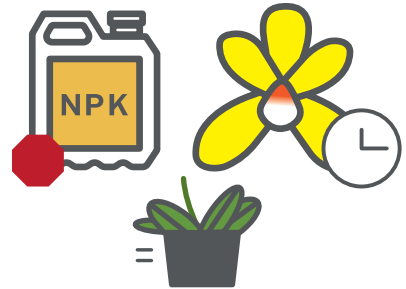
Tip! Do not cut off spikes that have bloomed (until it shrivels up), because new blooms can sometimes form on old spikes.



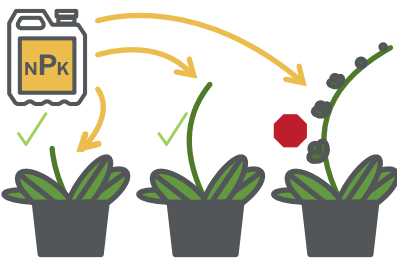
3. **Cymbidium** orchids, like many other orchids require bright light, and cooler evenings to bloom.



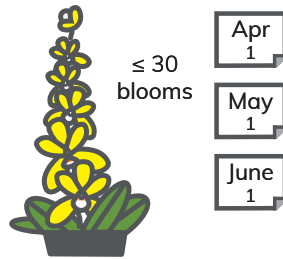
When actively growing, water regularly with a balanced fertilizer.



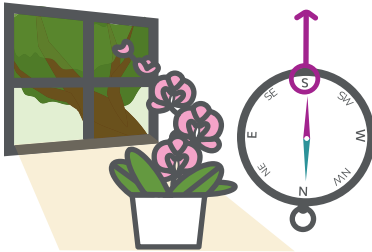
Stop using fertilizer just before its blooming season. This will encourage flower spike production.



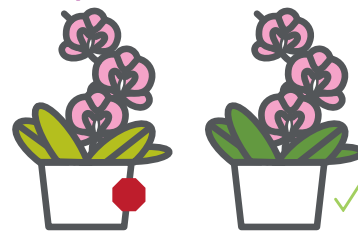
When the spike develops, use a high potassium fertilizer until you see the bloom buds form.



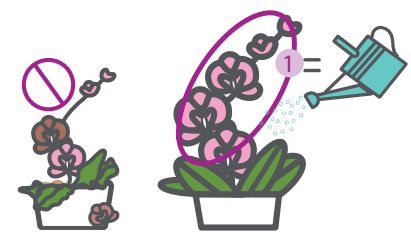
Fun fact! Cymbidium orchids can produce up to 30 blooms on one spike, which can last for up to three months.



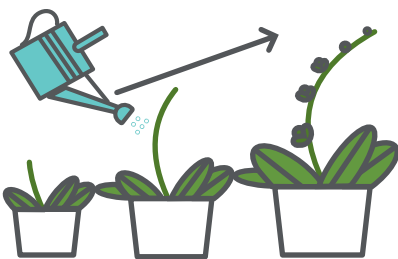
4. **Phalaenopsis**, commonly called the Moth Orchid, like lower-light, and prefer an east facing or shaded south facing window.



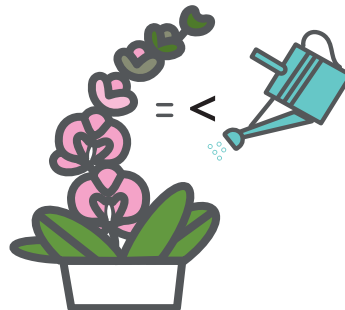
A healthy plant will have deep green foliage (and may have red/burgundy stripes on the backs of the leaves).



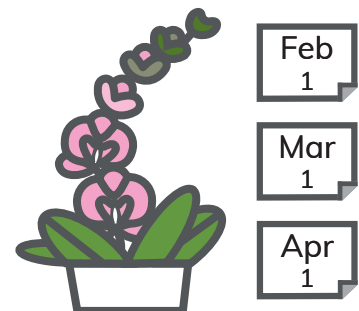
The Moth Orchid has a lower tolerance for drought because it grows from a single stem.



While actively growing, water when needed to keep the growing medium moist.



While flowering, avoid direct light and reduce watering to keep blooms for longer.



Moth Orchids typically bloom in late winter to early spring.