

# ORCHID CARE BASICS

## LIGHT

Orchids need well lit homes. Direct sun will burn, so make sure light is bright and indirect. Skylights, window sills, greenhouses and even fluorescent lights are best.

## WATER

Orchids must not sit in water. Orchids like well drained media composed of bark, Perlite, and charcoal. When you buy a new orchid start by watering it only once per week. Tap water is fine but you will need to flush the excess salts out of the media at least 2X monthly using distilled water. (See schedule.) Water your orchid immediately when you bring it home to begin your schedule of watering. Try not to water the plant or its leaves only water the media. To determine how much to water next time you should familiarize yourself with the weight of the pot. This will be an important indicator of how much to water weekly.

## FERTILIZER

Remember to use 1/2 the recommended dosage. A 20-10-10 or a completely balanced fertilizer 20-20-20 is a good choice. Good fertilizers include: liquified seaweed, Fish Emulsion, Super Thrive, or Shultz's Orchid Expert. Never apply fertilizer to a dry plant. Be sure it has been watered first. As you become more experience you will be able to recognize the new growth and know that you should begin fertilizing at the recommended dosage. As the growth matures to 2/3rd its full height you will want to taper your fertilizing to 1/2 strength. A rule of thumb is that when growth is stable and resting so should you be. Do not fertilize when the orchid is in bloom or not actively growing. Now that you have your orchid on a schedule mist 2-3 times weekly. You will want to mist the whole plant but not the blooms. Orchids love humidity.

| <b>WEEK</b> | <b>1</b>                | <b>2</b>                             | <b>3</b>                | <b>4</b>                             |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|             | Water<br>&<br>Fertilize | Distilled<br>Water<br>&<br>Fertilize | Water<br>&<br>Fertilize | Distilled<br>Water<br>&<br>Fertilize |

## REPOTTING

Rule #1 do not repot an orchid in bloom unless absolutely necessary. If you repot while in bloom the buds and blooms will fall off. To begin soak the new orchid medium in water for a few hours. Next tilt the orchid pot on its side. Allow bark chips to fall out. With the other hand gently pull the orchid out of the pot. Do this gently because sometimes roots adhere to the sides of the pot. Clean old bark chips from the root system. Now inspect the roots. With sterilized scissors trim roots that are dead. Dead roots are brownish and feel hollow when squeezed, or are mushy. Healthy roots are silver in color, firm, and usually have a green tip. It is a good idea to spray roots with a Consan 20 fungicide to prevent root rot. After you have sprayed estimate how much bark to put into the bottom of the pot so that the orchid is at the same level as before. If your orchid is monopodial (arising from the center) (Phalenopsis, Vanda) then you will center the plant in its new pot. If your orchid is sympodial (new growth arises from a side) (Dedrobium, Odotaglossum) then you will want to plant the newest growth in the center of the pot. This allows for a few years of growth before you will need to repot. Stake your Orchid for support with bamboo or decorative stick. Back-fill to within an inch of the top of the pot with more media. Do not water for 24hrs. The water soaked media is adequately soaked for the first 24hrs after repotting.

If you have any question please call, write or drop by:

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