

ORCHID CARE GUIDE



Orchid *Orchidaceae*

Famed for their beautiful blooms and impressive stature, orchids are often an intimidating plant for many plant parents. They're not as fussy as their reputation may imply, and like many houseplants, need a few simple conditions to not only survive, but thrive.

WATERING

The key to a happily watered orchid is making sure it drains well and the potting medium can dry out in between waterings. Sitting in water for too long can suffocate the roots and lead to root rot. The easiest way to tell when your orchid needs watering is to feel the potting medium with your finger and assess the moisture level. If you are unsure, don't water it yet.

SOIL

Typically tropical and epiphytic, orchids don't grow in regular soil. In the wild they grow attached to crooks and crevices high in the tree canopy, and need a potting medium that is very chunky and aerated with some moisture retention. Typical orchid potting mixes will include orchid bark, moss, perlite, biochar, and coconut fiber. Terrestrial orchids, like the jewel orchid, however, do grow in regular potting soil. Research your type of orchid to make sure if it is terrestrial or epiphytic.

ADDITIONAL CARE

Once your orchid blooms die back, it's time to prune! Don't be afraid, this will help encourage new growth, and allow your orchid to concentrate energy into the leaves, roots, and eventually new blooms. Once the flowers have faded or dropped, prune the stem down to ½" above the first or second node beneath where the first flower bloomed. This will help encourage new blooms and you can expect to see new flowers within 3 to 9 months, depending on the variety. When pruning, make sure to use sharp clippers that have been disinfected with an alcohol solution. If you notice any browning or yellowing on the stalks, they should be pruned down to the leaves as they will not produce more blooms. You can also take this time to inspect the roots for damage or rot and prune those away as well.

LIGHT

Orchids enjoy bright but indirect light as too much sun can damage their delicate foliage and flowers. Not enough sun can also be harmful as it can hinder your orchid's chances of reblooming. Orchid roots also enjoy access to light so choosing a transparent pot with a lot of drainage holes will greatly contribute to your orchid's happiness.

PLACEMENT AND TEMPERATURE

Being mindful of sun exposure, place your orchid near a west or south facing window. If there is too much bright sun shining through your windows, you can hang a sheer screen, or move your orchid a few feet back from the window. Regarding temperature and humidity, orchids prefer a range of 60-75°F and a boost of humidity which can be provided with a pebble tray or humidifier.

FERTILIZER

Always use a reliable orchid-specific fertilizer. Most will come in a liquid form that you can use when watering your orchid, or spray as a foliar fertilizer on the leaves. Always follow directions on your fertilizer and if you are unsure if it is time to fertilize or not, wait and don't fertilize yet.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Orchid blooms are shriveling up too soon

- Likely a temperature, moisture, or fertilizer issue
- Orchid not reblooming
- Likely not enough light, or it needs more fertilizer. Additionally, some varieties may trigger a bloom if they experience a 10°F decrease in temperature at night.

BOTANY