

# SAN LORENZO GARDEN CENTER

235 River St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 423-0223, Fax (831) 426-1260

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## Easy Steps to Orchid Care



### Pests

Pests can be identified by their damage. Chewed leaves may result from weevils, cattleya flies, sowbugs, springtails, snails, or slugs. Mottled or disfigured foliage usually indicates the presence of a sucking pest: scale, thrips, mealybug, or spider mites. Light infestations of many insects can be removed by hand or brushed away with a solution of soap and water. Only the microscopic insects (thrips and spider mites) or heavy infestations of scale or mealybugs that have invaded hard to reach areas of the plants will require

spraying with a pesticide. Snails and slugs, if not removed by hand, are best controlled with bait. Diazinon or malathion will usually control most pests.

### Fungal & Bacterial Diseases

These are usually noticed as a collapse of the plant's tissue, frequently with a water soaked appearance. Depending on the disease, the leaves, stems, pseudobulbs, or roots may be attacked. Most of these diseases need high humidity to thrive. Temperature also plays a part in disease problems. To discourage disease problems, it's best to water your orchids early in the day, ensuring that the plants will be dry by nighttime. If a plant does become diseased, isolate it from the others. Cut out the diseased parts using a sharp tool sterilizing between cuts. Treat the cuts with a recommended fungicide such as Bordeaux. Decrease watering and humidity while the plant is recovering.

### Virus Infection

Virus infections take many forms, but may be recognized by an abnormal patterning in the leaves or flowers. The patterning is often yellow or brown and sometimes looks water streaked. The color of the flowers may be streaked or patchy and may be malformed. The flowers will also last only a fraction of their normal life. The symptoms may be obvious or they may be subtle. Have a suspicious plant checked at the Agricultural Extension Service. There is no cure for a virus infection. The plants must be destroyed. Insects and cutting tools can spread the virus to other healthy plants.

### PLANT PROBLEMS

SYMPTOM	PROBABLE CAUSE	REMEDY
Leaves turn yellow	Too much sunlight or water. This is natural if only old leaves are involved.	Move plant to a cool place; withhold water for a few weeks.
Leaves turn yellow and fall	Natural with many deciduous types.	Withhold water; move plant to a cool place to encourage bud formation.
Leaves show black or brown areas	Too much sun or infection by a leaf-spotting disease if spot grows.	Move plant to more shade; or see text for disease control.
Limp leaves, soft growth at base of plant	Waterlogged potting mixture.	Withhold water; give plant a week with dry potting mix.
No apparent sign of new growth	The time is not right, In the plant's growth cycle, for new growth.	Keep potting mixture evenly moist; do not force plant with extra feeding or watering.
Plant refuses to flower	Proper growth cycle and day length not being observed.	Determine times of year for plant's natural growth and rest periods; keep plant in darkness at night.
Buds drop	Temperatures fluctuate too greatly.	Move plant to a location having more even temperatures.

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## Cultural Instructions For Cattleya Orchids



Cattleyas have earned the reputation as the "Queen of Flowers" and are known to the public as the ultimate in floral corsages. More than 50 of these flamboyant, intricately designed flowers are found growing wild in the foothills and mountains of Central and South America. While some species are offered by growers, the most popular plants are man-made hybrids derived from crossing Cattleyas with some of their close relatives to produce a wide range of colors, sizes, and forms.

### Light

Cattleyas and their relatives are among the easiest orchids to grow and can easily adapt to home growing by following a few simple rules. They require a good amount of light, so place in a bright window, but protect leaves from a leaf-scorching hot sun behind sheer panel curtains. Light need varies according to the time of day. Early morning sun, accompanied by high humidity and low-moderate temperatures is excellent. Protective shade should be heaviest at noon to early afternoon, more sun is allowed again after 3 PM. They thrive in maximum sunlight without excessive leaf burning temperature. A good guide to proper light is the color of the foliage, it should be light green, not dark green which could indicate too little sunlight.

### Humidity

Select a shallow dish or tray large enough to hold your plants, fill tray with gravel, shells, or colored aquarium stones. Fill tray approximately one-half full of water. The humidity caused by the water evaporating off of the rocks provides needed moisture surrounding your plants. Place the tray near bright window and arrange your plants on top of the stones. Never allow pots to sit in water- they should always be above the water level in the tray. Capillary action will absorb water into the pot, and keep plants soggy and sour thereby rotting the roots off the bottom of the plant if allowed to sit in water.

### Temperatures

Basically, Cattleyas enjoy the same temperatures as you; nights of 60-65°F and days of 70-85°F. They will withstand periods in the low 40's and as high as 100°F, but prolonged periods are harmful.

### Watering

Probably the most difficult part of growing Cattleyas for beginners is to understand when to water. Cattleyas can stand long drying periods- alternate well watered and drying out.

Many factors affect watering: pot size, potting medium, heat and sunlight. In short, they should be watered when the potting medium becomes dry. The pot will feel quite light when picked up. To determine moisture, insert a sharp wooden pencil about 3" into the bark near the center of the pot. Leave it for a few seconds, then twist. After you remove the pencil, examine it for moisture. If the wood is dry, water the plant thoroughly. Do not use softened water because of it's salt content. Always consider the needs of each plant by itself.

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## Cultural Instruction For Miltonia Orchids



Miltonia orchids are also known as Pansy orchids because of the resemblance of their flowers. There is an irresistible charm to the richly colored flowers, and their culture is easy in either the home or greenhouse. The beautiful flat flowers are borne on slender arching stems from the base of the most recently formed bulbs. They generally bloom spring and fall, and the flowers last up to a month on the plant. They are not a long lasting cut flower.

### Temperature

Milioniopsis like house temperatures from 55-60°F at night, and 70-75°F during the day. Brazilian Miltonias prefer warmer temperatures of 60-65°F at night and 70 -80°F during the day.

### Light

Grow near or in a window avoiding the direct hot rays of the mid-day sun. From 1500 to 4000 foot candles of light is preferred. Always adjust plants gradually to higher light intensities.

### Watering

During overcast days, water carefully and do not allow water to stand in the leaves or soft rot may occur. Water in the morning so foliage is not moist at night. Keep roots damp, but never soggy. Crinkled leaves are a sign of insufficient watering. Water thoroughly from the top of the plant, allowing water to flow freely through the pot and away from the plant. Never use soft water, and never allow the bottom of the plant to stand in water.

### Humidity

Miltonias enjoy moist air, requiring 40-50% humidity in the immediate vicinity of the plant. Humidity should be increased with higher temperatures. Humidity can be increased around the plant by placing the pot on a saucer filled with pebbles and water. Keep the water level below the top of the pebbles so that the orchid doesn't stand in water. Air movement is appreciated and cold drafts should be avoided.

### Fertilizer

Feed about twice a month during the time you see new growth developing using a high growth fertilizer. Once per month using the high bloom fertilizer at half strength during all other times is enough.

### Potting

Transplant Miltonias into fine bark allowing room in pots for about two growths. Repot every two years directly after spring blooming. If you divide, leave at least 3 bulbs in each pot.

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## Dendrobium Orchids



With more than 1400 species, the genus Dendrobium is one of the most diversified of the Orchid family. Originally from Southeast Asia the Dendrobiums have an extremely wide distribution from the Pacific Islands, to the Himalayans, Southern China, Japan, The Philippines, to Fiji.

All of the Dendrobiums are epiphytes, though they can vary considerably in their plant structure. Leaves may be flat, soft, tough, cylindrical, succulent, evergreen, or deciduous. The pseudobulbs may be ovoid, fusiform, smooth or wrinkled, in the form of long soft or tough canes, pendulous or erect. Generally the small rhizomes produce new pseudobulbs and root every year. Flowers are variable in form, structure, and duration but always display identical basic structure: petals and sepals of the same size and 2 lateral sepals joined to the base of the column forming a sort of dome or chin.

There are so many different original habitats for this diverse group that Dendrobiums have their own classification not based on taxonomy, but on the combined temperatures and water requirements both in nature and the greenhouse. The features of each Dendrobium species suggest the method of cultivation. Color, development, and texture of the leaves can indicate how much light the plant needs.

- If the leaves are deciduous or covered by a thick cuticle, the plants are adapted to dry conditions.
- If the leaves are soft & evergreen, assume that the plant has no need of a rest period.

Almost all Dendrobiums like strong bright natural light, but they must be protected from intense sun that could scorch the leaves. This much light is only needed during the active growing season.

During the summer, Dendrobium should be watered abundantly yet allowed to almost dry out completely in between. Good ventilation and intermittent drying of the roots is essential. Evergreen Dendrobiums should be watered enough to prevent the pseudobulbs from shriveling. Deciduous Dendrobiums should be watered sparingly when dormant. Humidity should be high when plants are growing and can be reduced while plants are resting.

Fertilizer should be applied every other week in summer or while plants are actively growing. A 20-20-20 or 30-10-10 diluted in half strength and applied in the proper manner. Never forget to pre-water the plant so that too much fertilizer doesn't burn it. No fertilizer is needed if the plants are dormant.

Repotting is only needed every 3 to 4 years. Use the smallest pot that can hold the roots. The best time to transplant is in spring, just after new growth begins. Do not transplant while plants are dormant. Use a straight medium grade orchid bark for the potting medium. Many growers attach the Dendrobiums to bark or slabs and grow them as epiphytes as well.

Kelkeis are young plantlets that form on old shoots. When the roots are 2-5 inches long, they can be removed and planted. Once a keikei has formed on a shoot, it is not able to produce and more flowers. Dividing is not recommended unless there is a minimum of 3 pseudobulbs left, or flower production will be hindered.

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## Cultural Instructions For Phalaenopsis Orchid



Phalaenopsis or Moth Orchids are considered one of 'the easiest orchids to grow and blooms quite readily in the home. The long lasting mass of flowers bloom in perfection up to 3 months, at which time the spent flowers can be removed from the stalk to the first node below the first flower. Many times the stalk will send out another set of flowers.

### Light

Moth Orchids will grow indoors placed in any bright window, but without any direct hot sun which could sunburn leaves. Provide 100 to 1500 foot candles of light, about like African Violets.

### Temperatures

Moth Orchids love moderate heat, night and day, the same temperatures as we like ourselves. Occasional deviations are not harmful, except when in bud; chilly temperatures may cause the buds to drop off.

### Humidity

Moth Orchids enjoy moist air. Humidity should be increased with higher temperatures. The ideal, humidity is between 55 to 75%, with as much air movement or ventilation as possible while avoiding cold drafts. Humidity can be increased around the plant by placing the pot on an inverted saucer filled with gravel and water. Keep the water level below the top of the gravel so that the pot is not sitting in water. Morning misting of foliage is good, especially when it's hot.

### Watering

Water frequently enough to keep continually moist below the surface of the potting mix. Water from the top of the plant avoiding any standing water in the crown where the leaves join together as this could cause rot. Let the water run through the pot as this moistens the mix and prevents a build up of salts at the root zone. Moth Orchids do not like to be soggy, and the leaves should be dry at night, Never use soft water.

### Fertilizer

Fertilize at least once a month. Use high growth fertilizer during the first six months after bloom, then switch to the high bloom fertilizer, then back to high growth fertilizer at half strength when plants are not developing new foliage.

### Potting

Seedlings should be repotted as they outgrow their pots. Mature plants should be repotted every year or two after blooming into a larger pot, if needed, using a fresh orchid bark of medium to fine grade. Cut off inactive stub below roots, place plant in center of pot, working bark between and over roots so that plant is firmly anchored in the pot. Water sparingly until new roots are well started. It is normal for roots to grow over the side of the pot. Healthy roots will have a "silver glow" and green tips.

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## Cultural Instructions For Cymbidium Orchids



Cymbidiums can bloom anytime from late Nov. to June, according to variety. They initiate spikes from Aug. to Nov., flowering about 4 to 5 months later. As soon as practical, stake the flower spikes. To get the deepest, clearest colors shade the flowers when in bloom. Be careful about temperature differences while plants are in bud or the buds may yellow and drop off.

### Light

Cymbidiums are not tropical orchids and may be grown outdoors in most areas where heavy frost and freezing do not occur. They should be placed in an area where they receive filtered sunlight and adequate air movement.

Ample light is one of the most important factors for successful flowering -full morning sun or the equivalent is recommended.

### Temperatures

Cymbidiums will stand a great deal of heat and cold. Temperatures as low as 25°F, for short periods, will not seriously damage the plant, although some leaves and the flower spikes will show frost damage. With ample moisture and air movement, temperatures as high as 100°F will have no effect. Most important; nighttime temperatures of 45 to 50°F are necessary during the fall and early winter for the plant to set bloom spikes.

### Watering

Cymbidiums should never be allowed to dry out completely. On the other hand, they do not like to be kept soaking wet and will promptly loose their roots from rot. Water thoroughly then allow the plant to become almost dry before watering again.

### Fertilizing

Use a high growth fertilizer every other week during the growing season (February to October). During the winter months, every 3 weeks using a high bloom fertilizer to initiate flower spikes. Cymbidiums are heavy feeders, so it is important that they are fed regularly.

### Potting

The potting medium should hold moisture yet drain freely. Orchid bark in a medium grade or a commercial orchid potting mix is acceptable. It is best to transplant into the same potting medium as they were grown in. Divisions can be made at this time, keeping 3 to 5 bulbs with roots in each division. They can be repotted every two to three years as soon as practical after blooming. When dividing, flame all cutting tools to avoid spreading diseases, and seal all cuts with tree seal paint. Leafless backbulbs, if hard, may be sprouted in a dry flowerpot, then planted when the roots are 2" to 3" long. After potting, keep plants on the dry side for a week or two to allow any damaged roots to heal.

Miniature Cymbidiums will thrive side by side with Standard Cymbidiums, but can tolerate higher temperatures. The smaller stature of these plants makes them more manageable for small spaces indoors. 100 or more flowers on one plant is not uncommon.

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## Cultural Instructions For Paphiopedilum Orchids



The Lady Slipper Orchids are exotic, wax-like richly colored orchids whose blooms last for weeks. They are ideal for home growing. The blooming period usually begins in November and goes through March. A few types bloom during the summer months.

Lady Slippers have no bulbs, but are made up of attractive, glossy, dark green leaves arising off of short, enclosed stems. After leaves are fully formed, the flowering stem rises from the center of the newly developed growth.

### Temperatures

Paphs are divided into 2 groups, warm and cool growers. The attractive mottled-leaf types come from warmer zones and do best with a night temperature not below 60°F and a day temperature of 75-85°F. The plain dark leaf types come from cooler areas and require night temperatures of 50-60°F and day 70-80°F. The critical period which determines whether or not cool growing paphs will bloom is about March 15 through June 15. During this time, it's important to keep night temperatures between 55-60°F.

### Light

Paphs require less light than many orchids, thereby lending themselves more easily to home growing. Place in any bright window but protect from hot mid-day sun. Leaves should be a fairly deep green color, if yellowish it could be too much light. From 750 to 1500 foot candles is ideal (Like African Violets).

### Watering & Fertilizing

Paphs must be kept continuously moist, but not soggy and waterlogged. Always check the moisture below the surface to determine the need for watering. Water from the top of the pot and let water flow through the pot, draining thoroughly. This allows for sufficient moistening of the bark and prevents a build up of salts. Do not let water sit in the leaf axils, and the leaves should be dry by night. Never use soft water. Use high growth fertilizer during the summer and switch over to high bloom during fall.

### Humidity

A shallow tray, containing stones and water aids in surrounding the plant with needed moisture. Do not let plants stand in water.

### Potting

Paphs should be repotted every two or three years, and may be divided at the same time. Repot right after blooming, wash old mix from roots, remove any dead roots, and trim excessively long roots. Keep at least 3 to 5 mature clumps in each division. The base of the growths should not be planted any deeper than ½" deep into a fine grade orchid bark. Keep the mix barely damp for about three weeks, until roots begin to grow, then water normally. Paphs are mostly terrestrial (ground growing) but they do require more aeration through the potting mix than most plants.

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## Epipendrum, The Reed Stem Orchid

Reedstem Orchids can be grown outside in a protected location along the coast. They should be sheltered from frost and hot afternoon sun. A porch or patio is an ideal location. These plants are good companions for Cymbidiums and can be grown under similar conditions.

### Potting

Potting can be done when the plant out grows its pot. Knock the plant out of its pot. Cut off any soft roots, good roots will have a green center when cut. If roots are broken, cut off broken parts. Use a mixture of 1 part small lava rock and 2 parts small orchid bark as the potting medium.

### Watering & Fertilizing

When watering, use a half strength fertilizer every time you water. If the directions say to use 1 tsp. fertilizer per gallon of water, instead use ½ tsp. per gallon of water. Plants like to be misted and sprayed on hot summer afternoons. The bark should dry out between waterings.

Old Flower Spikes appear after blooming. DO NOT cut them further back than the first node. The stalk may produce another bloom spike or keikei (a baby plant). Keikeis may be removed and planted after the roots are at least 3 inches long.

Colors that are available are red (the most common), orange, white, purple, lavender, and golden orange. Many of these plants grow from 3 to 5 feet tall yet there are some varieties using Epipendrum conopseum as a parent which keeps the height down to 1 to 2 feet.

**If You've Never Tried An Orchid Before, These Are An Easy & Rewarding Orchid To Start With!  
Enjoy.**