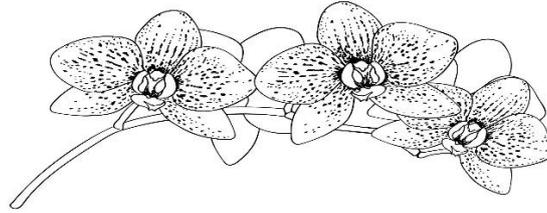


## How to care for Orchids



**Thank you for downloading this plant care guide. This guide is aimed at giving you some general information on how to care for your Orchid plants. Further information can be found online on numerous sites by searching: 'how to care for orchids'**

### **The natural habitat & characteristics**

- Plant group: Orchidacea with over 25,000 species
- Native to tropical regions of Central & South America, Africa and Asia
- Some found in colder climates in parts of USA
- Two types:
  - ❖ Terrestrial: grow on ground
  - ❖ Epiphyte: grow on other plants
- Typically, Phalaenopsis and Cymbidium are sold as indoor flowering plants in UK.
- Identified by the following characteristics:
  - ❖ All have three sepals, three petals & a column
  - ❖ Zygomorphic or bilateral flowers
- Roots of epiphytes will grow out of pots
- Orchids attract pollinators in different ways. Some produce nectar, others use visual mimicry to look like (and in some cases, smell like) female insects
- Some orchids self-pollinate

### **A Little Bit of Science**

- Roots contain chlorophyll and are naturally green.
- Photosynthesises (the process in which green plants absorb light converting carbon dioxide using the chlorophyll in their leaves to make glucose) using the Crassulacean acid metabolism (CAM) pathway
- Stomata (a pore on the leaf through which carbon dioxide is absorbed) is closed in CAM photosynthetic plants during the hottest and driest part of the day to help reduce loss of water and instead open at night to start the process of photosynthesis.



- Bright, indirect light
- East or West facing window is ideal
- Insufficient light will result in poor flowering
- Too much light can lead to leaf scorch
- Good air circulation to prevent bacterial & fungal growth
- Moist, well-draining
- Different growing media:
  - ❖ Bark
  - ❖ Moss
  - ❖ Rock
  - ❖ Cork
  - ❖ Charcoal
  - ❖ Sand
  - ❖ Potting Soil
- Shallow planting
- Hold plant over a bucket or sink and pour water so that it drains out the bottom
- Do not sit directly in water
- Use room temperature, preferably rain water
- Allow to dry out between watering
- Mist plants daily
- Dry leaves to avoid rot
- Repotting is not always necessary. Report if:
  - ❖ Outgrown pot
  - ❖ Pest infestation
  - ❖ Roots are rotting
- Repot when new growth can be seen and not when in flower
- If affected by mealybugs, scale or aphids wash off with insecticidal soap
- Wipe leave with a damp cloth to remove dust – use dry cloth to finish