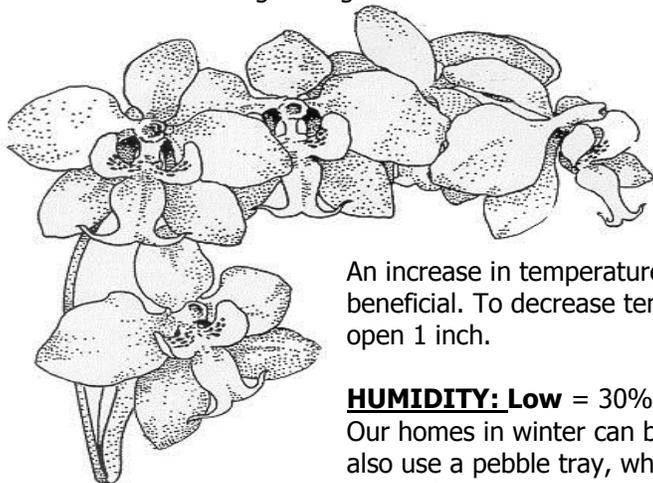


ORCHIDS

HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



New improved techniques of propagation have brought the Orchid from the realm of the rare and expensive to the now widely available and very reasonably priced. They are well worth any effort their care demands as one plant will carry dozens of exotic long lasting blooms at the same time.



CARE AND CULTURAL TECHNIQUES GUIDE **TEMPERATURE AT NIGHTTIME:**

Cool =	10 - 13°C (50 - 55°F)
Intermediate =	13 - 16°C (55 - 60°F)
Warm =	over 16°C (60°F)

An increase in temperature during the day of approximately 6 – 11°C (10 - 20°F) is very beneficial. To decrease temperature, place plants in a cool window or leave a nearby window open 1 inch.

HUMIDITY: Low = 30% to 50% **Intermediate** = 50% to 70% **High** = over 70%

Our homes in winter can be especially dry, and a humidifier is the ideal solution. You may also use a pebble tray, which is simply a deep tray (wider than the plant) filled with decorative pebbles and water. Place the plant in the tray to provide extra humidity, or mist the plant daily to increase humidity.

LIGHT INTENSITY: (check while holding your hand approximately 2 feet above the plants)

Low = Almost no shadow at all

Intermediate = A slight shadow can be seen, but not perfectly clear (bright but not direct on the leaves)

High = A sharp shadow should be seen. (full sun in winter, dappled light in summer)

WATER: Test the medium with your finger to see if it is cool and moist (or use a water meter). Always water early in the day using tepid or room temperature water. Be careful not to over-water.

Infrequent = Allow the pot to dry out completely before the next watering.

Frequent = Water the plant again as it is approaching dryness, but before the pot is completely dry.

Very Frequent = Water the plant when the surface of the potting medium is dry to the touch, even though there is still lots of moisture further down. (In time, you will be able to tell by the weight of the pot whether to water or not.)

FERTILIZER: Use about ¼ the recommended concentration of a flowering plant fertilizer such as 15-30-15 or an organic fertilizer.

REPOTTING: Repotting is generally done in spring or early summer. Plants that like very frequent watering will need more frequent repotting. Plants that like infrequent watering will need coarse ingredients. However, plants that like to grow in cool situations prefer to be potted in the mid to late winter. Neglecting to repot your Orchids may cause root rot as the planting medium decomposes.

GROWING TIPS: When growth is present on *Oncidiums*, *Brassia* or *Cattleya* (or anything that forms a pseudobulb) don't let the plant dry out for too long. Keep the plant more humid and water frequently to promote more vigorous growth for better blooming. Reduce watering to infrequent when growth is mature and the pseudobulb is fully formed.

If you are having problems blooming your *Phalaenopsis*, it may not be getting the change in day to night-time temperature that it needs. (See *Phalaenopsis* temperature requirements). For a second blooming on *Phalaenopsis*, trim the stem back to where the first flower opened (after all flowers have fallen off). A few branches of flowers might come from the dormant nodes below and give you another 3 months of blooming.

ORCHID VARIETIES AND THEIR CARE

BRASSIA – Same as for *Cattleya*, but cooler in the autumn and more frequent watering.

CATTELEYA - **Temperature** – intermediate. **Humidity** – Low to intermediate. **Light Intensity** – intermediate. **Water** – infrequent **Fertilizer** – See *Phalaenopsis*. **Repotting** – See *Phalaenopsis*, but use only coarse grade ingredients.

CYMBIDIUM - **Temperature** – cool. **Humidity** – low to intermediate. **Light Intensity** – high, gradually accustom plant to higher light but not so high that it burns the leaves. **Water** – very frequent. **Fertilizer** – use 15-30-15 in the spring and summer months, 25-10-10 in the winter. Stop fertilizing in early September and leave plant outside for a chill, no lower than 40 – 45°F at night for a week or two if possible to promote blooming. Begin fertilizing again in January with 25-10-10. **Repotting** – see *Phalaenopsis*.

DENDROBIUM - (Deciduous Type) same as for *Cattleya*, but frequent water in summer and none at all in winter. High humidity in winter.

ONCIDIUM – Same as for *Cattleya*.

PAPHIOPEDILUM – (Slipper Orchid) - **Temperature** – Those with strap leaves, (plain green and narrow), and soft textured mottle leaf types like to be grown in warm conditions. Types with hard-textured mottled leaves and short, wide, plain green leaves prefer to grow in cool, intermediate conditions. **Humidity** – intermediate to high. **Light Intensity** – for plain green leaves, intermediate; for mottled leaf types, low light. **Water** – frequent. **Fertilizer** – see *Phalaenopsis*. **Repotting** – see *Phalaenopsis*.

PHALAENOPSIS – (Moth Orchid) - **Temperature** – Warm: To promote blooming, decrease the nighttime temperature in September or October for 3 to 4 weeks to initiate new flower spikes. **Humidity** – Intermediate to High **Light Intensity** – Low. This orchid is an excellent choice for growing on a fluorescent light stand. Use the four tube system, 3 cool white and 1 specially designed plant light such as a 'grow-luxe' wide spectrum. A window with an east, south or west exposure is suitable with protection from the strong sun, from early March through to October. This plant prefers bright indirect light. **Water** – Frequent: Water the plant through the top of the pot thoroughly.

Fertilizer – Use a 25-10-10 Orchid Fertilizer from April to August for leaf growth. Use a flowering plant fertilizer such as 15-30-15 from September to March to help blooming. Follow the directions on the package for Orchids. **Repotting** – Should be done after the plant has bloomed. Repot every 2 or 3 years, usually in spring. Use a moisture retentive yet free draining potting medium. The medium must allow lots of air back inside the pot immediately after watering. If the potting medium remains soggy and wet, the roots will suffocate and rot. We suggest a mix of medium grade Orchid bark and perlite. Use some sort of chunky drainage material such as styrofoam "peanuts" in the bottom of large pots that are over 6" in size. A potting medium that we have had great success with is a mixture of 1/2 coarse perlite, 1/4 fine charcoal, 1/8 rockwool and 1/8 Orchid bark. Add the ingredients together and wet down while mixing. When using this potting material, be sure to avoid compacting the medium, which may result in the loss of essential air spaces. Tap or vigorously vibrate the pot to settle the medium in around the roots snugly. For pots larger than 6", add some extra drainage material. (Use more drainage material proportionately with each increase in pot size.)

PHRAGMIPEDIUM - **Temperature** – intermediate. **Humidity** – intermediate to high. **Light intensity** – intermediate. **Water** – very frequent. **Fertilizer** – as for *Paphiopedium*. **Repotting** – see *Phalaenopsis*, but repot every year or two.

ZYGOPETALUM – Same as for *Cattleya*, but cooler in autumn and more frequent watering. Do not mist your *Zygopetalums* as cold water produces spots on the leaves. Water that remains in the centre of new growth can cause rot. Watering at the base of the plant is preferable.

HUMBER NURSERIES LTD.

Ontario's Largest Garden Centre

8386 Hwy 50, Brampton, Ontario L6T 0A5

Ph: 416.798.8733 (TREE) Ph: 905.794.0555 Fax: 905.794.1311

www.humbernurseries.com humber@gardencentre.com

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