

BULBOPHYLLUM CULTURE

Being the biggest genus in the orchid family, this diverse and exotic orchid is becoming popular as orchid growers venture out of the regularly-seen varieties. The orchid is very wide-spread, from East and South Asia, Australia, South America, and Africa. Growing in the tropical climate, they can be found on tree trunks, rock crevices, or even on top of other plants. The vegetative forms vary a lot; a common trait is one or two leaves growing on top of an angled pseudo-bulb. The flowers are also in various forms, such as anemone, insect, antelope horn, cleaning brush, and carousel. Most of them have “hinged” lips that move to the tiniest vibration. The function of this mechanism is to push insects into pollinating the flowers. Some species also emit unpleasant odors (to most human noses) to attract insects. The blooming season usually starts from autumn to spring.

LIGHT: they grow and bloom well in a bright window with sheer curtain. In the home an east window, shaded south or west window are all ideal. Never allow direct sun to fall on these orchids.

TEMPERATURES: generally, temperature should be between 55 and 65° F at night and between 70 and 80° F during the day. However, cool-tolerant varieties should be grown between 45 and 65° F, and warmth-loving ones should be kept between 65 and 90° F. Fluctuating temperatures, over-watering and drafts can cause bud drop on plants with flowers ready to open.

WATER & FERTILIZER: plants should be thoroughly watered. Allow the potting mix to nearly dry out before watering again. One week is a good rule of thumb. If you are unsure, wait at least two or three days rather than over-water by watering too often. Water more in summer and much less in the winter. Some growers mount these orchids on cork slabs, tree fern logs, or coconut husks. Then, these plants need to be watered almost every day.

Using a watering can with the orchid in the sink works best. Pour at least one gallon through the pot to make sure the orchid is watered well. Remember, you can not over-water by pouring too much water through the pot, only by watering too often.

A balanced fertilizer, like a 20-20-20, should be applied on a regular schedule. It is best to apply fertilizer at 1/4 strength with every watering.

RE-POTTING: the best result is usually achieved by re-potting from spring to early summer. Bulbophyllum can be potted in any well-draining mix, such as fir bark and perlite. Sphagnum moss alone can be too wet for this orchid. However, it can be added into the medium or used as a surface dressing. Re-potting is done every 1 to 2 years once the potting medium starts to decompose. Mounted plants require no re-potting. However, they may need to be transferred onto bigger slabs/logs over the years.



by appointment
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