

PAPHIOPEDILUM CULTURE

This group of orchids with long-lasting flowers are mostly found in the tropical forests in East and Southeast Asia. They grow on either the forest floor or lime stone crevices. Some have beautiful tessellated leaves that can rival foliage houseplants (so called mottled leaf type); some have large flowers with plastic-like texture that last for months (complex type); others have flowers resembling birds of prey with 12" wing span (multi-floral type). They are called "slipper orchids" because of the unique pouch-shaped lips. The pouch does not catch and dissolve insects like the carnivorous pitcher plants. Instead, they trap insects for pollination purpose.

LIGHT: generally they like semi-bright conditions in the home; in an east or west window, or near a shaded south window. Never allow direct sun to fall on these orchids. The mottled leaf type requires lower light, complex type prefers medium light, while multi-floral type enjoys higher light.

TEMPERATURES: it should be 60 to 65° F at night and 75 to 85° F or more during the day. Fluctuating temperatures and drafts can cause bud-drop on plants with flowers ready to open. Mottled leaf type is not too picky about temperature. However, both complex and multi-floral types need day-and-night temperature differentiation to initiate flower spikes.

WATER & FERTILIZER: water must be available at the plant's roots constantly. They need a moist medium — but never soggy. It is fine to let the plant become almost dry once in a while. Watering once a week is a good rule of thumb. If you are unsure, wait a day or two rather than over-water by watering too often. Water more often in summer and less in winter. Mottled leaf type needs constant moisture. Complex and multi-floral types prefer to be dryer in winter.

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 should be applied on a regular schedule. It is best to apply fertilizer at 1/8 strength with every watering. Care must be taken to avoid burning of the fleshy, hairy roots with too much fertilizer.

RE-POTTING: your paphs should be re-potted at least every two years, or as the medium decomposes. Mixes can vary tremendously; most are fir bark, with varying additives, such as perlite and sphagnum moss. Moisture retention with excellent drainage is needed. You may divide a large plant by cutting it into clumps of 3 to 4 growths/fans. Do not over-pot; an average plant should fit into a 4 to 6 inch pot. Young mottled leaf type can be re-potted more often, about every 8 months. Complex type can be re-potted about every 2 years. Mature multi-floral type should be re-potted less often, about 3 years or so, to prevent interrupting blooming cycle.



by appointment
Orchidaceae, Inc.
2022 Wallula Avenue
Walla Walla, Washington 99362
(509) 525-9566
www.orchidaceae.com