

PSYCHOPSIS CULTURE

This small yet popular genus used to be in the *Oncidium* family due to similar vegetated forms. It is native to rainforests in West Indies, and northern part of South America. They grow on tree branches where they are shaded and protected. The mule-ear shaped leaves store water for the dry season; they may turn reddish brown when over-exposed. The flower is very unique; 3 thin petals erect like antennas, and the other 3 are puffy and wavy like the sleeves from a Mariachi music performer. Some people called it butterfly orchid because of the resemblance of antennas and wings. The flower spike bears one blossom at a time. However, the same spike can produce flowers on and off year round for years to come. Therefore, never cut the spikes off unless they shrivel and turn yellow.

LIGHT: these butterflies prefer medium to bright light. Most will thrive with at least several hours of bright light a day. In the home, east, south or west windows are ideal.

TEMPERATURES: this group generally prefers 55 to 60° F at night and 80 to 85° F during the day. Short periods of warmer day temperatures may be tolerated, especially if humidity and air movement is good and nights are cool.

WATER & FERTILIZER: Psychopsis need to be watered on a regular basis. Watering should be thorough; wait until plants almost dry out before watering again. One 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 in summer and less 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 1/4 strength with every watering.

RE-POTTING: Psychopsis reacts to re-potting poorly. At the same time, it does not tolerate decomposed medium. Therefore a well-drain mix should be used to decrease the re-potting frequency and keep the mix stays fresh longer. Most grower prefer medium-grade fir bark or tree fern with varying additives—perlite and sphagnum moss. Moisture retention with excellent drainage is needed. Do not over-pot; an average plant should fit into a 4 to 6 inch pot. The best time to re-pot is when new growths put out new roots, usually in springtime. Potting a mature plant at the wrong time may setback the plant indefinitely.



by appointment
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