



CATTLEYAS

These wonderfully showy orchids come mostly from Central and S. America. They are mainly epiphytic plants and many of them are scented. Flowers seem to last around 4 - 6 weeks and are certainly worth the wait. They flower on a 9 month cycle so with luck our plants should flower twice in the year.

Temperature: As Cattleyas come from the tropics they need to be warm
Winter Minimum 55 F
Summer maximum 85 F
Kept between these temperatures they should be well suited

Compost: A good open compost is essential and the plants are best grown in pots or baskets. Many an ailing Cattleya when transferred from pot to basket will make a good recovery, provided the humidity can be kept reasonably high. In the U.K. therefore, best results are obtained when growing in a greenhouse or conservatory. One idea with compost is to crock the bottom of the pot, then add large pieces of bark (), followed by () medium pieces and finish with small pieces of bark.

Watering: The general rule seems to be plenty while growing, ease off gradually with a rest in winter only watering occasionally to prevent pseudobulbs from shrivelling. Just a drop too much in winter can lead to rotting pseudobulbs, especially if the plant is in a large pot where they can remain quite damp at the bottom. Plants can be misted in summer. *Always* allow the plant to just dry out before watering again.

Light: Cattleyas like plenty of light but not direct sunlight as this will cause scorching. The plants become stressed if their leaves become hot to the touch. In U.K. during the darker days of winter Cattleyas will benefit from the weaker winter sun as long as the leaves do not feel warm to the touch. A Cattleya expert believes the number of flowers produced is entirely dependent on the amount of winter sun to which the plant is exposed.

Feed: A good general feed should be given but not in winter when the plant is resting. Whilst the plants are dormant very little water should be given. This normally occurs immediately after flowering and it is best to keep the plants almost completely dry for a couple of months and then water sparingly until new growth starts.

These magnificent orchids come in a range of wonderful colours. When large enough they can be propagated by diving the pseudobulbs. They are worthy of a place in every orchidist's collection. Our Society website can be found here:

<http://www.cardiffandthevaleorchidsociety/>