

# CARE OF CYMBIDIUMS



These orchids grow at fairly high altitudes in many areas of the world e.g. China, India, Burma, Taiwan, and parts of Australia. We need to emulate their natural habitat if we are to grow these orchids successfully at home. They are among the easier orchids for beginners and their spectacular long lasting flowers makes the effort really worthwhile.

POSITION. Cymbidiums are best kept outdoors from May - September, bringing them in before the danger of frost. They need to be kept sheltered from hot sun. As we need to be in control of the watering it is best to shelter from rain as well. The plants need to be taken into a cool room during the winter. Taking them into a room, which is too warm, can result in the flower buds dropping, and you will have to wait another year to see the effort of your labour!

HUMIDITY. All orchids need humidity so stand pots on upturned saucers and stand on trays or in larger pots containing hortag, small pebbles or chippings and add water. In hot summer weather mist the plants regularly every day. This is not desirable in the winter.

WA TER: The plants require quite a lot of water in summer, roughly about a pint a week and

in exceptionally hot weather even two pints twice a week (providing the plants are in open bark which will drain immediately). In winter they need much less - about a half a pint every week to 10 days. The large amount of water is necessary in the summer to maintain very large pseudobulbs and to help with new growth.

TEMPERATURE: In summer the plants will tolerate temperatures up to about 85°F (30°C) and in winter they are happiest with a night temperature of 5 °F (1 °C).

FEEDING: These plants are quite hungry for orchids and need to be fed all the year round. They should be fed about every week to ten days and on the fourth feed plain water can be given to avoid any build up of undesirable chemicals around the roots. The plants seem to thrive on foliar feeding, and if using this method both sides of all leaves need to be sprayed. Any suitable half strength feed with do such as Tomarite, or orchid feed (in little yellow tubs obtainable from Nurseries or Garden Centres). They will benefit more by giving a higher nitrogen feed early in Spring to help with the growth of new pseudobulbs. By giving a feed such as Tomarite, Phostrogen or a special orchid feed flower booster from late June or beginning of July you will help to ensure that flower spikes are formed. These usually peep through sometime in August or September.

Standard Cymbidiums can become very large and take up lots of room but they are very beautiful and their flowers last for many weeks even when cut. The flowers are sometimes used in wedding bouquets or in a corsage. The plants are well worth a little tender loving care.

Miniature Cymbidiums (still quite large!) are now available which take up a little less room. When mature enough both types can be divided to provide new plants.

Our society website can be found here:

<http://www.cardiffandthevaleorchidsociety.co.uk/>