

Growing in Alpine Grit

I am gradually transferring my orchids to growing them in a medium of grit to which nothing is added. This I obtain cheaply for a local builder's yard or purchase alpine grit. It does need to be lime free. I use an indicator which when red means I need to water and after watering it turns blue, thus taking all guesswork out of the 'to water, or not to water' problem. Having heard from a member of the U.K. Internet Orchid Club that this is what he uses with great success, I with some trepidation, but a couple of ailing orchids into this medium and within weeks saw a big improvement and in a few months, new growths were emerging. Now whenever I buy a new orchid I transfer it to this medium and below you will see pictures of two orchids that previously I had little success in growing i.e. Miltoniopsis and Paphiopedilums. Now those orchids I used to find difficult the Odontoglossums and the two already mentioned, are amongst the easiest for me to manage. My advice is give an ailing orchid a try in this type of medium and see what happens. They do need watering more often but not that often. When I go away for a week or more, I water well before going and then stand the pot in a dish with about an inch of water in the bottom and over the last year my orchids have flourished.

Miltoniopsis grown using this method:



Here is one of my favourite Pahps, thought to be Paphiopedilum moquettianum:



and a photograph showing the grit it is growing in:



This is a recent cutting of an Epidendrum potted up in alpine grit:



I hope you agree that these are looking healthy orchids and will maybe have a try at growing one or two using this method. I use a watering indicator to help me decide when to water but these are not strictly necessary as it is really quite impossible to overwater this medium as water runs straight through.

Our society orchid website can be found here:

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