



Lycastes

Lycastes are cool growing orchids and will grow happily outside with Cymbidiums during frost free months. It is best to grow them by putting them in an area which can have a covered top and front, leaving the sides open for ventilation. They need to be moved inside as soon as they are in spike.

Light: They do not like direct sun so give about 50% shade. They like quite bright but a little less than for Cattleyas

Temp: These are tolerant plants and have done well between 5 - 6°C on some winter nights to the mid 30's C in the summer. For optimum quality try to keep them from both extremes. Cool the air with a fan and/or by misting in the summer and give more water and humidity.

Air Circulation: This is important as with all orchids. It helps to avoid fungal infections. Humidity needs to be below 80%.

Water: Keep plants moist but not wet, never let them become sodden. While the hard pseudobulbs are leafless the plant requires a cool, dry rest with only a little water given from time to time. When the new shoots appear, the plant should be given moderate shade and humidity but very little water until the roots are seen to be growing - then water abundantly

Feeding: Feed a high nitrogen feed from late winter to midsummer and a mixture rich in phosphorous and potassium from summer to late winter. Some people add a little magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) and chelated iron to the fertilizer will make plants grow more strongly.

Composts: Various mediums can be used. Some people prefer to crock the pot and then to have three layers of bark, large at the bottom, medium, and finishing with a layer of fine bark.

Some people only use a mixture of sphagnum moss and perlite. I have been very successful using this medium. I now have some Lycastes with a layer of large bark pieces followed by a layer of small pieces and the final layer moss and perlite. This seems to be successful too.

Pots: Round squat pots are best because the Lycaste root system does not go very deep but it likes to spread out.

Lycastes are supposed to be easy plants to cultivate and very similar to Cymbidiums so good luck with your efforts. Like Cymbidiums they are eye-catching a well worth a little effort.

Our society orchid website can be found at:

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