

Sophronitis



These are miniature orchids which can be allowed to develop into quite large specimen plants. Probably the best known is the beautiful bright red Sophronitis Coccinea (pictured in this month's News letter). An adult flowering plant can be accommodated normally in a 5 cm pot! Their flowers have been described by one expert (I.D. James) as 'ridiculously large in relation to the size of the plant'.

Sophronitis is a small genus of about seven species which are confined to Brazil and Paraguay. This species and particularly Sophronitis Coccinea have been widely used in hybridisation to introduce their wonderful scarlet colour into other larger orchids. The leaves and pseudobulbs of the Sophronitis Coccinea resemble a miniature Cattleya.

Any good orchid compost can be used but small pieces of bark (if used) will be necessary bearing in mind that these are miniature orchids, which do well mounted on cork or in shallow pots.

Temperature: Winter minimum is 10°C - 12°C (One expert allows a minimum temp. of 48°F.

Watering: They should never become very dry BUT give carefully during winter. They, like most orchids, enjoy high humidity.

L@ht. These orchids enjoy bright light but NOT in direct sun. In fact some experts describe them as liking shade. A winner of the prestigious Butterworth Cup for the best example of orchid care in the U. S. A. says that Sophronitis need 'a cool greenhouse (48 °F min.), high humidity, bright light, constantly moving air and outdoors in the summer.

Feeding: I can find no specific feeding requirements from any source so presume the normal half strength fertilizer will do.

A well grown specimen size Sophronitis Coccinea is stunning with its scarlet flowers. I intend to give this one a try at the first opportunity! How about you? A word of caution! They have been described in two books as 'not easy' and 'rather difficult'! What a challenge!

Our society website can be found here:

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