

## STANHOPEA



Stanhopea Saccata

### Stanhopea

These orchids come from the American tropics, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. There are about 25 species of Stanhopea.

These are intriguing orchids most of which are highly scented. It is a worthy plant to have in any collection but I would not recommend it for someone who intends to have only a small number of orchids. This is because the flowers last for such a short time - in my experience the maximum is a week but usually 4-5 days. It is also one of the very few orchids which has such a powerful scent that although at first it is welcome after a few hours it can be overpowering. Having waited for a whole year I move my Stanhopeas into the house but after only 24 hours or sometimes even less - they go back to the greenhouse because the perfume induces a headache and nausea. I hasten to add that this is a personal thing - what I find overpowering you may love to have around the home.

**Temperature:** These orchids can take quite a high temperature - up to about 35 C (95 F) for a short period but are best kept below 30 C (86 F). A minimum temperature of 15 C (59 F) should be maintained until the plant is in its dormant state when a cooler temperature can be maintained. I normally keep mine at 12 C (54 F) during the winter.

**Compost:** Plants have to be cultivated in baskets with room for the inflorescences to protrude through the side and bottom of the container. Moss and bark pieces are probably the best medium.

**Humidity:** This needs to be high when the plant is growing

**Water:** This should be plentiful when the plant is growing and roots should be kept moist without being wet. When the pseudobulbs are mature, less water is needed and the plants can be kept cooler.

**Light:** Stanhopeas like bright light but must be shaded from sun to prevent leaves from scorching. They are normally suspended from the roof of the greenhouse or conservatory. I have recently read an article which says give maximum light even at the expense of scorched leaves!

The plants normally flower in summer and in my opinion are always worth the yearly wait although in flower for such a short time. I think they have a high novelty factor.

Our society orchid website can be found here:

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

