

Blooms

at Belle Mead

ORCHID CARE

Get the Light Right

All plants require sunlight, and orchids are no exception. Place the plant near, or on, a windowsill where it will receive a few hours of sunlight each day. In summer, too much direct light can damage the leaves, so provide filtered light. But during the short days of winter, allow the plant to receive as much light as it can get.

When the plant flowers, move it slightly away from the warm sunshine to prolong the blooming period. Orchids can bloom for weeks, sometimes months.

Indoor orchids grow in airy materials like fir bark, long-fibered sphagnum moss or lava rock. You should never place them in ordinary potting soil. Potting soil retains too much moisture and the plant roots will rot. Orchid roots prefer to be exposed to damp air pockets.

The roots also have an interesting habit of roaming outside the pot and dangling in midair. Let the roots wander and don't cut them off.

Hold Back the Water

Orchids need water only after their potting material has almost completely dried out.

The rule is to water the potted orchid thoroughly, but not frequently.

The easiest way to do this is to place the potted orchid in your kitchen sink and run the faucet over it until water flows out the base of the pot. You want to soak the potting medium and allow it to drain before returning the pot to the windowsill.

Then don't water it again until the potting medium is almost completely dry. Overwatering is the most common reason an orchid dies.

Not Too Hot, Not Too Cold

Tropical orchids are ideal for growing in homes since they enjoy the same comfortable temperatures as humans. Most orchids favor temperatures between 70 to 85 degrees during the day, and 10 to 15 degrees cooler at night.

Keep the plant away from cold doorways and heating vents. Basically, if you are comfortable sitting in a room, your orchid will be quite happy on a table alongside you.

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