

## ORCHIDS TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The following is a list of things that have been proven successful over the years to help promote good growth and flower production. Do not change anything you are doing that is working, only consider a change if you are not happy with the results. Most orchids grow and flower no matter what you do so remember these ideas are only for those plants that prove stubborn to grow or flower.

Lift the pot to see if the media is dry before watering. Use a balanced fertilizer such as a 20-20-20. Water and fertilize less often in the winter or periods of cloudy weather. At least once per month use pure water with nothing added to rinse out any salts. Many growers use a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 30-10-10 in the early spring to promote growth. About once per month try using a bloom booster fertilizer such as 6-30-30 to promote flowering. This can be done throughout most of the year. During the winter months when plants are not in active growth withhold fertilizer completely or at least cut back on the amount. Plants do not need as much at this time of year and you may burn roots.

If a plant is not blooming as it should the first thing to try is giving the plant more light. Give most orchids as much light as possible just short of burning the leaves. Yellow coloring or spots of sunburn indicate too much or possibly too intense a light. Give your plants good quality and quantity of light all day long not just in the morning or afternoon for an hour or two. Remember leaves should always feel cool to the touch. If this doesn't help the plant to bloom try using a bloom booster fertilizer along with magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) at 2 tablespoons per gallon.

Most orchids can develop several types of bacteria and fungal problems. Air movement is the best solution. Place a small fan near your plants, this should prevent any of these problems. If you do notice what appears as a soft area on the leaves try using neem oil to reduce the spread of an infection. For bug problems first try an Insecticidal Soap or Ultrafine Horticultural Oil. Follow the instructions carefully. Any bug problem will take at least four applications over a one month period to do any good.