

Kingwood Orchid Society



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September 2007

BASIC ORCHID CULTURE THE CATTLEYA TRIBE

The Cattleya tribe includes Brassavola, Broughtonia, Cattleya, Diacrium, Encyclia, Epidendrum, Laelia, Sophronitis, Rhynocolaelia, Schomburgkia, etc., and their intergeneric hybrids [Blc, Ctna, Hksra, Slc, Pot, etc.]. Pure Sophronitis are cool-growers, they impart good color to their offspring and many of the descendants can be grown without special care.

Light

Approximately 40-60% shade. Under a tree, this means near the drip line if the tree is dense. Indoors, a bright east or west window is best. Shade cloth, self-explanatory. In a slat-house, spaces of even size with the slats will provide approximately 50% shade; wider slats, smaller spaces will increase the shade, and vice versa. Plants will enjoy more sun in winter, when the light is less intense and the temperatures are cooler, than during the summer.

Many plants from this tribe will tolerate even more light, such as the 30% or so shade provided by a pool enclosure, if acclimated gradually or put out in early spring [after any danger of freezing, but before the sun gets too intense]. Some, like reed-stem Epidendrum and Schomburgkia, can even take full sun. A few, like *C. intermedia* and hybrids with significant Sophronitis in the recent ancestry, want even more shade. To judge, watch your leaf color. In general, a medium green is a good sign. A deep, lush green indicates too little light, which makes for prettier foliage but inhibits flowering. A very light yellow-green is a sign of too much light [except in Schomburgkia, which are naturally quite yellow].

Water

Drench thoroughly, lots of water at each application, then allow to dry completely before watering again. Watering should be done early in the day so that foliage is dry before dark. [Wet foliage late in the day, tends to increase disease problems.] How often depends on the weather, as well as what you've chosen to pot your plants in. Generally, plants will need more frequent watering in hot weather than when it's cooler; mounts will dry faster than slat baskets, which will in turn dry faster than clay orchid pots. Plastic pots will retain water the longest. Also, a small pot will dry faster than a larger pot of the same type with the same potting medium. For potted plants, you can judge by the heft of the pot, a recently-watered plant weighs noticeably more than one which is dry all the way through. If you are not sure whether a plant needs water, wait another day! It is far easier to re-hydrate an under-watered plant than to grow new roots on one that's lost them all because of over-watering. **DO NOT USE WATER SOFTENED WITH SODIUM CHLORIDE!**

Potting

Clay pots with well-drained media, slat baskets, or mounts. Rhy. digbyana, many of the Encyclia, and most of the Schomburgkia, in particular, tend to do better on mounts if reasonable humidity is present. If using slat baskets, pot all the way to the top, for 2 reasons: (1) It will make it easier to secure the plant until it re-establishes in the new container; and (2) When it starts to outgrow the basket, the new growths will come over the top rather than through the sides. Pot with room for 2-3 years' growth [No more than 2 years if using a degrading medium such as bark; you can go 3 years in a non-degrading mix]. Repotting is best done

when plants are initiating new roots. Plants must be **SECURE** in the new container, not wobbling around with every breeze, in order to re-establish; otherwise, all their new roots keep breaking off. Use however many rhizome clips, pot rings, etc., necessary to achieve "zero-wobble."

Fertilizer

In most settings, any balanced fertilizer with trace elements will do just fine. Feed every 3-4 waterings. Over-feeding will produce soft, weak growths and may inhibit flowering. Be cautious of "bloom-booster" fertilizers; their occasional use can be helpful, but a steady diet of them will starve your plants of nitrogen, which they need to grow well.

Temperature

Warm to Intermediate [40-95F]. Although many cattleyas will easily tolerate lower temperatures, 40F is a good "alarm point," if for no other reason than that the weather forecasts are not 100% accurate, so a predicted low of 40F could easily turn out to be 35F in reality. If your temperatures remain above 95F for extended periods, you will probably need extra shade and air movement during those times.

DENDROBIUMS

The Dendrobium tribe is very diverse. Some sources separate them into numerous sections; for very basic purposes here, we'll use two: Year Round Growers and Winter Resters. Year-Round Growers These are sometimes called "evergreen," but this term is a bit misleading, because the Dens in this group (mostly the Phalaenopsis and Antelope types) do

lose the leaves on their older growths; they just don't do it as fast as most of the "winter-resters" which tend to lose all or most of their leaves each season. The growths [pseudobulbs] of a Den which grows year round tend to hold their leaves for 2-4 years.

For the most part, treat these just like Catt-Tribe plants. The one major difference is the minimum temperature: although they will usually survive 40F, temperatures below 55F will accelerate the loss of leaves from their older growths.

Winter-Resters

During the warm months, treat these like Catt-Tribe plants. In the fall, whenever the weather starts to cool, however, cease feeding altogether and taper off the water substantially. Water only if necessary to prevent severe shriveling of the pseudobulbs. Most will lose all of their leaves and, to the inexperienced eye, look quite dead by winter's end -- right before they burst into gorgeous, fragrant blooms! In general, these will welcome a dose of winter chill, and increased light during the cooler months.

THE ONCIDIUM ALLIANCE

The Oncidium alliance includes Ada, Aspasia, Brassia, Cochlioda, Miltonia, Miltoniopsis, Notylia, Odontoglossum, Oncidium, and their intergeneric hybrids [Alcra, Brsdm, Dgmra, Wils, etc.]. Another very diverse group, this alliance includes warm-, intermediate- and cool growers. some of the intermediates may also need to be summered indoors,

If you are considering a plant from this group, ask the grower about its heat tolerance.

For basic culture purposes, We divide them into two groups: the Thin-Leaved, and the Others [primarily, mule-ears (Psychopsis) and rat-tails].

The Thin-Leaved Oncids.

These tend to want just a little more shade than our Catts and Dens, and to stay considerably damper [but not soggy]. If you pot them in the same type of pots and media as the Catts, you'll have to water them about twice as often.

Adjust the pots and mix so that they can be watered [and fed] on the same schedule as our other plants. If you choose to water more often, you should also feed more often.

Others are more successful growing the others [mule-ears and rat-tails] with Catt-Tribe plants -- generally, mounted or in baskets for quick drainage. You'll

find them very intolerant of "wet feet."

The rat-tails, in particular, seem to appreciate [but not require] a dry winter rest; these can be grouped with your Winter-Resting Dendrobiums.

PHALS AND PAPHS

These are our shade-lovers: 70-80% shade. Under a tree, this means near the center, where the shade is heaviest and lasts through most of the day. Some will tolerate a little bit of VERY early morning sun. Both groups also want to stay more evenly moist than do Catts or Dens. Although there are some solid green leaved Paphs that will take heat, the mottled-leaf types are generally more heat tolerant. [the mottled foliage is interesting to look at even when they're out of bloom.] Paphs are also a bit more fussy about their water quality -- most city water is OK, well water may or may not be. The Paphs are also very light feeders either save them to last, when you feed, and add more water to further dilute the fertilizer solution, or feed them only every other time you feed the rest of your collection.

THE VANDACEOUS TRIBE

The Vandaceous tribe includes Arerides, Ascocentrum, Neofinetia, Rhynchostylis, Vanda, etc., and their intergeneric hybrids [Aranda, Ascfa, Ascda, Kag, etc.]. Diversity here, too. Although distant cousins to the Phals, and originating in the same climates, they grow quite differently:

Light

These are sun-lovers, but in varying degrees. The terete vandas [leaves are thin and round, like knitting needles] will enjoy full sun, and the semi-teretes can be acclimated to it. The strap-leaf types generally want 30-40% shade. Rhynchostylis and some of the miniatures want even a bit more shade than that.

Water

In high humidity, and especially in areas which, experience heavy rainy seasons, most vandaceous plants are best grown without potting media and watered daily in hot weather, every other day when it's cooler. Rhynchostylis gigantea is a major exception; this one does better with some potting mix, to keep it a little moister between waterings. The roots are actually "color-coded" -- they are white, or nearly so, when dry; they turn green when thoroughly saturated. Immediately after watering, they should be green; if they're not, you need to run more water each time.

Fertilizer

When watering every day, feed once a week; when watering every other day, feed once every two weeks.

Temperature

The majority of vandaceous plants like to be warm 55F is a good minimum. While some will tolerate cooler temperature, it tends to accelerate the loss of lower leaves, leaving unattractive bare stem, and we haven't found any that particularly want any winter chill. Many seem to actually enjoy very hot summers; some will "stress out" in prolonged periods above 95F. A second watering each day during the hottest parts of summer would be better to relieve this stress.

Change, Change, Change

There has been a change of the guard, to a small extent, but the one thing that never changes, it is September, and that means, *Dues* are due !!

Single (\$10.00)

Couple (\$15.00)

Dues can be paid at regular meeting or

:

If mailing dues in.

Please mail to:

Dick Cumberworth

23 Brady Road

Shelby, Ohio 44875

September meeting

Place Kingwood Center
Main House

Date September, 8th

Time 10 AM

Program Meet new officer's
Next years plan (?)
New committee heads

Refreshments . . . Rosemary Tanner &
Martha Meade

Come out! Renew old friendships, make new ones. All the years I've grown orchids, never met an orchids grower I didn't get along with! May have a difference of opinion,

But, Hey! How else do you learn?
Me?

Vary slowly!

August, resulted in a picnic at the home of Tom and Pat Stinson.

Sue and I were unable to attend, but, I was informed that I missed a really good day, informative and enjoyable.

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