

## Care of your Cattleya Alliance Orchid

The Cattleya type orchid that you receive has been grown in medium to high light greenhouse conditions with warm days and cool nights, but should quickly adapt to your home. In nature, Cattleyas are epiphytic orchids, growing on trees where they experience moderate to high light levels due to variable shading by the trees. Cattleyas have thick, succulent leaves and large pseudobulbs, both of which store moisture. If the leaves and pseudobulbs are smooth and firm feeling, the plant is getting plenty of water. If the pseudobulbs become badly shriveled, this means that the plant needs more water. Some shriveling of pseudobulbs is normal, and nothing to worry about. It is good to let the plants dry out completely between waterings, and never allow them to stand in water. Cattleyas may grow many roots that extend outside the pot. This is normal for an epiphytic plant such as an orchid. Never cut live roots from a Cattleya or any other kind of orchid. Mature Cattleyas do well in shallow pots with medium fir bark or other chunky mixture that allows good drainage and some air to reach the roots. They also thrive when mounted. During growing season you may feed Cattleyas every 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> watering with a general-purpose fertilizer. If plants are not growing, they do not need to be fertilized.

Follow the general care instructions for orchids potted in a bark mixture, and your Cattleya should thrive. Different Cattleya type species and hybrids bloom at different times of year. A cue that your orchid is about to bloom is the emergence of a thin triangular shaped bud sheath from the top of the pseudobulb, in the fold at the base of the leaf. A young plant may, on its first attempt, produce a sheath that does not flower, but this is a clear sign that subsequent pseudobulbs will bloom. Never remove a bud sheath even if it dries out and turns brown, because often a bud will emerge from the dead looking sheath weeks or months later. Each pseudobulb will produce only one flower stalk. However, one or more new pseudobulbs will emerge from the base of each old one, and these new pseudobulbs will then flower. Cattleyas can be divided when there are enough growths to have at least 4 per division, or they can be grown into large specimen plants.

Many of the seedlings that we sell come potted in sphagnum moss because we have found that immature plants stay healthiest and grow fastest that way. They can usually continue to be grown in the moss for another year, but can also be potted into a medium of your choice or mounted.

Enjoy your orchid! If you have any questions about caring for your orchid, feel free to contact us by e-mail or phone.

[olympicorchids@gmail.com](mailto:olympicorchids@gmail.com)

206-229-7919