

Care of your Cymbidium Orchid

The Cymbidium that you receive has been grown outdoors o in full sun conditions with warm days and cool nights during summer and/or in an intermediate temperature greenhouse, but should quickly adapt to your yard, patio, or home. In nature, Cymbidiums are terrestrial orchids, so they can grow in a “terrestrial orchid mix”, fir bark, or just about any other well-draining medium. Seedlings require more moisture, so are potted in sphagnum moss in net pots to allow for drainage. These plants have pseudobulbs that store moisture and perform photosynthesis. If the leaves are light to medium green, smooth and firm feeling, the plant is getting enough water. Some yellowing of old leaves is normal, but if the leaves start yellowing excessively, this may mean that the plant needs more water. Cymbidiums like lots of water, so it is good to keep them moist at all times, but do not allow them to stand in water. When watering take care that no water is standing in the crown of the plant, as this could lead to rot. You can remove excess water simply by tipping the plant so that it runs out, or by blotting with a tissue or paper towel. Cymbidiums are extremely hardy plants and can be grown outdoors year round in many parts of the country where winter temperatures do not drop below freezing.

Follow the general care instructions for orchids potted in a bark mixture, keeping your plant on the moist side and providing direct sun, and your Cymbidium should thrive. Cymbidiums are heavy feeders, so you can fertilize with any balanced fertilizer every other time you water, or provide a time-release pellet form of fertilizer such as Nutricote during the growing season. Cymbidiums do best in high light conditions, tolerating full sun all day long once acclimated to it. Different species and hybrids may bloom at different times of year, but in general, blooming season is in the winter. Most Cymbidiums need high light during the growing season and a cooling period in fall in order to produce spikes. A drop of 20 degrees or more in nighttime temperatures is ideal. Cymbidiums produce a spike that comes up from the base of the pseudobulb and produces many flowers. Each pseudobulb typically produces only one spike. However, new pseudobulbs emerge from the base of the old ones, and these new growths will then flower the following year. Cymbidiums can be divided when there are enough growths to have at least 4 per division, or they can be grown into large specimen plants.

Phaius is a similar type of terrestrial orchid that can be grown outdoors, but it needs partial or full shade rather than direct sun to do best.

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

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