

## Care of your Dendrobium Orchid

The Dendrobium that you receive has been grown in moderate to high light greenhouse conditions with warm days and cool nights, but should quickly adapt to your home. In nature, Dendrobiums are epiphytic orchids, growing on trees where they experience moderate to high light levels due to variable shading by the trees. Dendrobiums typically have thick, succulent stalks (canes) that are the main area for moisture storage. If the leaves and stalks are smooth and firm feeling, the plant is getting plenty of water. If the stalks become badly shriveled and/or the leaves drop at an inappropriate time, this means that the plant needs more water. Some shriveling of Dendrobium stalks is normal, and nothing to worry about. Also, some Dendrobiums lose some, most, or all of their leaves during the winter when they are dormant. At this time they should receive much less water and do not need fertilizing. At all times it is good to let Dendrobiums dry out completely between waterings, and never allow them to stand in water. Dendrobiums may grow roots that extend outside the pot. This is normal for an epiphytic plant such as an orchid. Never cut live roots from a Dendrobium or any other kind of orchid. Do not remove canes that have lost their leaves but are still alive. The bare canes help nourish the plant.

Dendrobiums do well in fine or medium fir bark or other chunky mixture that allows good drainage and some air to reach the roots. Many of the smaller Dendrobiums do well mounted. Some Dendrobiums (e.g., moniliforme) are traditionally grown in sphagnum moss, and grow well that way. During growing season feed Dendrobiums every 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> watering with a general-purpose fertilizer. If leaf tips turn brown, this probably means that the plant is receiving too much fertilizer, so cut back.

In general, follow the care instructions for orchids potted in a bark mixture, and your Dendrobium should grow well. Different Dendrobium species and hybrids require somewhat different care, and bloom at different times of year. Check specific instructions for the species or hybrid type that you have so that you can adjust watering, temperature and light to best serve its needs. The phalaenopsis type Dendrobiums produce a flower spike from the top of the cane. Nobile types produce flowers all along the cane. Each cane usually will bloom only once, but some Dendrobiums will bloom on the same cane for several years. At the end of the blooming period, one or more new canes will emerge from the base of the old one, and these new canes will then flower. Dendrobiums 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.

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