

## **Caring for Your Mounted Orchid**

One or more of the orchids you ordered is mounted on a tree branch or cork bark slab. This is the most natural way to grow many types of epiphytic orchids since the roots are always well drained and exposed to the air as they are in nature. The roots will naturally grab the rough surface of the wood and attach to any small crack or other uneven part of the material. When an orchid is first mounted the roots are usually wrapped in some material that holds water, such as sphagnum moss. As the roots grow, they will eventually extend outside the moss covering. This is perfectly normal and desirable, and the exposed roots do not need to be covered up.

When you receive your orchid, unwrap it carefully, adjust the wire hook, which may have been bent for packing, and hang the slab in a convenient location where the plant will get an amount of light that is appropriate for the genus. If it has become very dry in transit, water it as soon as you receive it.

With a mounted orchid, there is much less chance of overwatering than with one in a pot, but it may need to be watered more frequently, especially in hot, dry weather. There are several methods for watering a mounted orchid. You can spray the entire mount (slab and plant) with water from a spray bottle (or gentle mist from a hose if outside or in a greenhouse). You can also pour water over the mount from a watering can, sink faucet, or other water source. Each plant can also be soaked individually for 5-10 minutes in a container full of water. Water the mounted plant whenever the moss around the roots feels completely dried out and rigid.

Mounted plants should be fed on a regular basis during their growing season with a fertilizer such as Grow-More urea-free orchid formula. The fertilizer solution can be applied via a spray bottle or by soaking each plant individually in fresh fertilizer solution. In either case, the mount should be wet before the fertilizer is applied, and it's good to briefly mist the plant with water again after fertilizing. You can feed once a week during spring and summer and once a month during fall and winter.

Most importantly, don't fuss too much, let the plant do the work, and enjoy the naturalistic beauty of your mounted orchid.

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