

Caring for your Oncidium Alliance Orchid

The Oncidium type orchid 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. It may have slight spotting or irregularities on the leaves, but this is normal, and nothing to worry about. In nature, Oncidiums are epiphytic, so they experience moderate light levels due to shading by the trees in which they grow. However, they can tolerate a wide range of light levels. You will see that the leaves are relatively thin but that they grow from fleshy pseudobulbs, which are the primary storage area for moisture. If the pseudobulbs are smooth and firm feeling, the plant is getting enough water. If the pseudobulbs become badly shriveled, this means that the plant needs more water. Some shriveling is normal, and is nothing to worry about. Many Oncidiums will produce “stacks” of pseudobulbs, with some growing high above the medium. This is normal, and the roots will eventually grow down and enter the medium. Never trim live roots from an Oncidium or any other orchid. Your Oncidium can tolerate a broad range of light levels and temperatures, but flowers best with medium to high light and a cooling period in the fall.

Follow the general care instructions for orchids potted in a bark mixture, and your Oncidium should thrive. Oncidiums also take well to mounting, especially the small ones that like to “stack” or “climb”, such as flexuosum. When the plant blooms, it will usually produce one or two spikes per pseudobulb and that pseudobulb will not bloom again. However, toward the end of the blooming period, one or two new growths will develop from the base of each blooming pseudobulb and these will bloom the following year. A good time to repot is when the new growths have just started. Oncidiums typically bloom in summer through fall or early winter. Flowers last for many weeks or months. Oncidiums grow quickly and can be divided when there are enough pseudobulbs to have at least 4 per division.

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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