

## Care of your Paphiopedilum Orchid

The Paphiopedilum that you receive has been grown in moderate light greenhouse conditions with warm days and cool nights, but should quickly adapt to your home. In nature, Paphiopedilums are terrestrial orchids, so they grow on the forest floor where they experience relatively low light levels due to shading by the trees under which they grow. These plants do not have pseudobulbs, so moisture is mainly stored in the leaves. If the leaves are smooth and firm feeling, the plant is getting enough water. If the leaves start wilting, this means that the plant needs more water. It is good to keep the plants moist at all times, but never 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. Even though Paphiopedilums are called “terrestrial” orchids, this does not mean that they can be potted in soil. Fine fir bark is a good medium, as is sphagnum moss, or a mixture of about equal parts of fine fir bark, horticultural charcoal, and perlite. The medium of choice will depend on your cultural conditions. Repot whenever the medium appears to be breaking down.

Follow the general care instructions for orchids potted in a bark mixture, keeping your plant on the moist side, and your Paphiopedilum should thrive. When feeding, use a urea-free fertilizer, diluted to half strength. During the growing season you can feed every 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> watering. Paphs do well in low light conditions, so are ideal houseplants. Different species and hybrids bloom at different times of year. Paphs produce a bud that comes up through the center of the leaf cluster and may take a very long time to mature. Each leaf cluster, or “growth” will produce only one flower or flower cluster. However, new growths emerge from the base of the old ones, and these new growths will then flower. Paphs can be divided when there are enough growths to have at least 3 per division, or they can be grown into large specimen plants.

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

Olympic Orchids

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

206-229-7919