

## Care of your Phragmipedium Orchid

The Phragmepedium that you receive has been grown in moderate to high light greenhouse conditions with warm days and cool nights, but should adapt quickly to your home environment. In nature, Phragmipediums are terrestrial orchids, growing next to areas of water seepage, so that their roots are constantly wet or even submerged. Typically, they experience moderate to high light levels, and need plenty of light in order to bloom. Phragmipediums have thin grasslike leaves and no pseudobulbs, so need to be kept constantly moist. Phragmipediums are the only type of orchid that not only can tolerate standing in water, but actually thrive that way. A good way to grow Phrags is to set the pot in a saucer or tray with a layer of gravel and fill the tray with water so that the base of the pot is submerged. When watering, make sure that you use relatively clean pure water. Tap water in many areas of the country is fine, but do not use water with a high amount of chlorine or salt. If your water contains a high concentration of chlorine, letting it stand overnight will remove the chlorine. Never use water that has been artificially softened, as this adds salts. When watering, do not wet the leaves, but do flush the pot well once a week or so by running water through the medium and allowing it to drain. If plants are kept in a tray of standing water, wait until the water has evaporated to water again, or in cool weather give plants 3-5 days dry between periods in water. Rinse the tray periodically when changing or adding water. Phragmipediums do well in a mixture of fine fir bark, perlite, and horticultural charcoal. They should be repotted into new medium once a year even if they do not need a larger pot. During growing season feed Phragmipediums sparingly, no more than every 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> watering with a dilute solution of urea- free fertilizer. Feeding should be reduced or stopped when plants are resting or in flower.

Follow the above instructions, and your Phragmipedium should thrive. Most Phragmipediums bloom in spring. Flowering is initiated by an increase in day length, and will usually occur in normal home conditions. The flower stalk originates from the center of the leaf cluster. Each leaf cluster blooms only once. Phragmipediums produce many new growths around the original one, and will bloom in subsequent years from these growths.

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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