

Caring for your Stanhopea Type Orchid

The Stanhopea type orchid that you receive has been grown in moderate light greenhouse or shadehouse 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, Stanhopeas are epiphytic, so they experience moderate light levels due to shading by the trees in which they grow. 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 firm feeling, the plant is getting enough water. Many orchids of this type have ridges on the pseudobulbs, and this is normal, not a sign of dehydration. However, if the leaves dry out and the pseudobulbs become badly shriveled, this means that the plant needs more water. Usually the roots will grow down into the medium, but if pseudobulbs form at the edge of the pot the roots may extend over the side. Never trim live roots from a Stanhopea or any other orchid. Your Stanhopea can tolerate a broad range of light levels and temperatures (about 40-100 degrees F), but flowers best with cool to intermediate temperatures and medium light in the summer.

One of the odd features of Stanhopeas is that the flower spikes are pendant, sometimes even growing downward through the medium to exit through the bottom of the containers in which they are planted - this is why they are typically grown in mesh or wire hanging baskets filled or lined with sphagnum moss. Although individual flowers only last 3-7 days, new flowers can bloom continuously for up to 4 months. Stanhopeas are vigorous plants and grow fairly quickly. They can be divided when there are enough pseudobulbs to have at least 4 per division.

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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