

Orchid Care 101:

Fun Facts:

- 1.) Orchids are the largest family of flowering plants. With more than 25,000 species, there are more orchids on the planet than mammals and birds!
- 2.) Long live the orchid. Orchids can live up to 100 years!
- 3.) The vanilla bean comes from a species of Orchid. The Vanilla Orchid is the only commercial grown and harvested Orchid plant.
- 4.) Orchids take about 5-7 years to bloom once germinated. Plants sold in stores are already decades old! At home, they're easy to grow and can re-bloom several times a year.

Which takes us into the 'secrets of the Moth orchid's growth'...

The most common type of orchid is a Phalaenopsis or "moth orchid".



This is known as an "epiphyte"- an organism that grows on the surface of a plant and derives its moisture and nutrients from the air, rain, water or from debris accumulating around it.

WATERING: This means that they NEVER want to sit in water. The best time to water your moth orchid is in the morning, once a week to every 10 days. Water deeply under the facet and let the extra water run out the bottom; wait for it to finish dripping and then place back into its decorative pot.

LIGHTING: medium light is the best; near a north-facing window or slightly away from a bright window.

FERTILIZER: Because these plants grow on the sides of trees in their native habitat, they do not require much fertilizer. Only fertilize every 6 months (spring/fall) with a highly diluted orchid fertilizer.

REPOTTING: Never repot your orchid while it's blooming- this will cause the plant to abandon the bloom stock to redirect its energy bolstering its root system. Moth orchids like a repotting mix of orchid bark, ¼ charcoal, ¼ sphagnum moss, 1/3 perlite. Repot your orchid after its last bloom stock dies back naturally and every other year after that. Unless it has been in the same pot for 3 or more years- only refresh the repotting mixture and do NOT up-pot. Orchids like a TIGHT pot. Plant the orchid low enough in the pot so that the base of the first leaf set is in line with the top of the pot.

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COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: Why isn't my orchid blooming? A: Many orchids need a cold spike to encourage a bloom. A cold dip in temperature tells your orchid that the 'winter season' has passed and it is now time to produce flowers. Before the first week of consistent warmth (70 degrees or warmer outside), place your orchid in the coldest room of your home for a week (don't worry about light either) and DO NOT water your orchid during this week. After that week has passed, put back in its original place.

Q: How do I know when to force a bloom? A: You don't want to force a bloom too early. Wait until there are two sets of leaves above the last bloom stock. This ensures that the orchid has enough energy to push out a bloom stock.

Q: Why is my orchid producing bloom stocks/buds but not blooming? A: This is known as "Bloom Bust" and can be due to many reasons. One reason could be the bloom was forced too early in the season (not consistently warm enough) or before the orchid had enough energy to bloom (directing its energy towards the root system or producing a new leaf). It could also be from a lack of light or inconsistent lighting. Lastly it may be time to fertilize your orchid.