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# Grow Real Orchids In Your Home



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SAMUEL L. PRESNER  
Coral Gables, Fla.

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## THE SECRET IS OUT!

For generations the growing of fine Orchids was a closely guarded trade secret. Today, thousands of men and women who have never grown anything more than a radish are growing real Orchids in their homes. They are doing it with less fuss and care than that required by the average house plant.

Cattleya Orchids are air plants. They live chiefly on air, water and filtered sunshine or daylight. When these are given in correct proportions the plant converts them into food and stores it up in the bulbous part of the plant. For this reason Orchids never need be fed or fertilized like other plants. That is why they have survived thousands of years in the jungles, deserts and mountains under all kinds of adverse conditions.

Orchids are very adaptable. They will thrive beautifully in any home where African Violets will grow, since the amount of light necessary to flower an African Violet is perfect for an Orchid. Yet, Orchids are far less exacting in their needs and requirements than African Violets, roses, gardenias, or a row of cabbages! . . . . Orchids are nearly immune to all plant diseases and will often go for years without a single spraying.

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## NEW YORK, BOSTON, FARGO OR CHICAGO!

Orchids can be grown in any city in the United States. If you live in the North and your home is heated in the winter you can grow Orchids. Generally speaking, Cattleya Orchids do well at temperatures comfortable to the human body, altho they can take lower or higher temperatures when necessary. In the winter I recommend a low of 60 in the home, with a high of 75. In the summer, they can easily take the highest temperatures, since by heredity they are all jungle plants.

It takes absolute freezing, 32 degrees, to kill an Orchid plant. I have exposed thousands of plants to 36 degrees without harm to the plants. If the plant is in bloom a temperature lower than 55 degrees will wither the flowers. At 45 degrees the tender buds will wither if the plant is getting ready to bloom. At low temperatures plants will go dormant, and as soon as heat is given they will begin to grow rapidly again. Orchids seem to like a short cool spell and chance to rest and do not appear the worse for it. They catch up quickly with speedier growth after a short rest.

### BANISH YOUR DOUBTS!

Most people interested in growing Orchids approach it with too much anxiety and apprehension. An Orchid is actually easier to grow than most house plants. It is simply that they grow under conditions that are not familiar to the average person. Once you learn the conditions that they grow under you will find them easier to grow than most things.

Cattleya Orchids, for example, grow without soil. They are grown in a special fibrous material called Osmunda or Osmundine. This material is the root of a tropical fern found in the Florida Everglades, Australia, Hawaii, and a few other places. When this material was discovered the growing of Orchids on a large scale in a greenhouse or home became a practical reality. Heretofore, the potting medium had been the greatest problem.

## STICKS AND STONES! . . . .

Most people believe that Orchid plants are parasites because they cling to trees in their natural state of growth. Nothing is further from the truth. An Orchid will cling equally as well to a pane of glass, a piece of tile, a stone, or a lead pipe! If proper proportions of water, sunlight and air are given the plant it will grow on anything. A parasite is something that destroys whatever it clings too. An Orchid simply holds on for support. It is the history of its very existence.

In its native state the seeds of a Cattleya Orchid are blown by the wind into trees and in the crevices of stones. As soon as the roots form they will cling to whatever object they are in contact with. On this precarious perch begins the life cycle of a Cattleya Orchid plant. If it is lucky enough to survive to an adult age it will begin to flower somewhere between the seventh and tenth year. Once it reaches blooming age it should continue to flower every year. Some of the cattleya hybrids will often flower twice a year. A hybrid is produced by crossing two varieties of orchids, thus producing a new, and often better breed of Orchid.

Grown under good conditions Orchids double their size every two years. They are then transferred into larger pots or they may be split up and made into two plants. I have seen a thirty year old Orchid plant with as many as 150 flowers on it at a single time. They do not die with old age, but become bigger and bigger each year and more productive. Their life span is "forever", so to speak.

I recommend that all plants be changed into larger pots every two years. The Osmunda should also be changed every two years, as that is one of the most important steps to keep them blooming well. Osmunda is an organic material, and after two years in a pot it breaks down and packs to the extent that the root system of the plant cannot breath properly. When this happens the old Osmunda retains water for too long a time and the root system of the plant may rot or suffocate. If the Osmunda is changed every two years right after the plant blooms you can keep the plants growing for a hundred years!

## WHEN AND HOW TO REPOT PLANTS

When an Orchid plant outgrows its present pot it should be replanted in a pot one inch larger in size. Orchid plants grow best when crowded into small pots. Since the Osmunda must be changed every two years, it is best that they be potted correctly, so by the time they outgrow the pot you will automatically know it is also time to change the Osmunda.

Plants should be repotted right after they bloom. The old Osmunda is torn away from the plant. But you leave a small clump about as big as a half dollar clinging to a few good roots. If roots are too long trim them back with a scissors. Then wrap a collar of dampened Osmunda around the old roots and pack tightly into the pot. Be sure you have about one third of the pot filled with stones to allow for drainage. Large stones are better than small ones. The back part of the plant should touch the rear of the inside pot, since an Orchid grows forward, and you must allow for two years of forward growing.

Some Orchid growers like to have their plants potted a little below the rim of the pot. I prefer to "crest" mine a bit above the rim of the pot. If plants are overwatered they will dry out faster and it will prevent rot. Be careful not to bury the "eyes" which are on the bottom of the bulbs, for if you do, they will either rot out or will not grow. The "eyes" of an Orchid plant must have light to grow, and they cannot grow if buried in the Osmunda.

Do not water the plant after it has been potted for at least 60 days. My method is to spray the leaves of the plant daily, once or twice, on sunny days. This method prevents the plant from losing water stored up in its bulbs and forces a NEW root system to start. Strangely enough, when you dry off an Orchid plant, the new root system starts. After the roots start, usually within four weeks, you can begin to increase the daily sprayings lightly. Once you have a good root system you can resume weekly waterings besides a daily spray if you like.

## FORMULA FOR SUCCESS!

The two most important things necessary to know for growing Orchids successfully are:

1—HOW MUCH WATER TO GIVE AN ORCHID PLANT.

2—HOW MUCH LIGHT TO GIVE AN ORCHID PLANT.

More Orchids are killed by amateurs and experts alike by OVERWATERING than by any other reason!!!

It should be realized that in its wild state of growth an Orchid plant clings to a tree with its bare roots. Therefore, no matter how much it rains, the root system will dry out within a few minutes after it stops raining. On the other hand, when you grow the same plant in a home the root system will be wrapped in Osmunda and tightly confined into a clay pot. Obviously, the conditions of growing are not the same.

A potted Orchid plant will retain water for a week or more, depending upon humidity, light, air, size of the pot, condition of the Osmunda, and several other factors. Fresh Osmunda, not over two years old, will stay moist in a pot for about a week. Old Osmunda will retain water for as much as two weeks. If the days are cloudy and humid the plant will pick up extra moisture from the air. Thus, on cloudy days you reduce the daily spray. In hot, dry areas, plants lose water rapidly, hence, they can use daily sprayings on their leaves with benefit, even twice daily.

If plants are hung out in trees or in open patios or porches the wind will dry them out more rapidly than in a home. They too will thus benefit from a daily spraying on their leaves, during bright, sunny days. Where plants are grown in greenhouses, the hotter the day the more you can spray them; the cooler the day, the less you spray them. A good rule to remember is to spray or water on bright, sunny days and to withhold spraying and water on cloudy, rainy, days.



A plant being grown in a heated home needs more humidity, since heating tends to dry out the atmosphere in a room. A daily spraying in the morning is beneficial, and another at noon may also be given. Once a week every plant may be given a good watering by placing it under the faucet.

For those who live in very hot and dry areas of the country, or in excessively heated apartments, plants may be placed in dishes of wet gravel. This gives the plant constant humidity by the evaporation of the water thru the gravel. The method is to take a bowl, either of crockery, plastic, or metal, add about 2 to 3 inches of bird gravel, chicken grit or pebbles. Then add about 1 inch of water. The potted Orchid plant may be placed right on the dampened gravel. The plant is not in water, but the evaporation thru the gravel will greatly assist the plant to get the right humidity under extraordinary conditions of heat and dryness.

### LET THERE BE LIGHT . . . .

The next most important thing in growing Orchids is Light. This may be in the form of filtered sunlight, as thru the venetian blinds, wooden slats, or the flickering of sunlight thru a small-leafed tree; or it may be diffused light, such as thru a lace curtain, obscured or painted glass. An Orchid plant should never be exposed to the direct rays of the sun either out in the open or thru clear glass. Remember, Cattleya Orchids are by heredity all jungle type of plants, and rarely are they found growing in the full sun, except by an accident of nature.

Orchids must have Light to flower. They need no direct sunlight, just light. The correct amount of light they need is easily determined. An Orchid plant receiving the correct amount of light will have light Nile green leaves. A plant not getting enough light will have dark green leaves. And a plant getting too much light will have yellowing leaves. Sunburn will quickly

cause brown spots or large patches of brown rot on the leaves. If caught in time and cut away the plant will live.

The best location for an Orchid plant is near a window where it will receive maximum light without burning. Any exposure is good as long as the plant gets the maximum light all day long. Usually, wherever you can grow and flower an African Violet you will find Orchids thriving well. They both require the same amount of light for best growth and flowers. Broken down in percentages, one may safely say that Orchids do not need more than 25 to 30% sunlight, but it must be filtered or diffused so that it does not burn the plant.

### **“CAVEAT EMPTOR”**

### **BEWARE OF BOOBY TRAPS!**

If you have never grown an Orchid before you will be easy prey for unscrupulous persons. There are individuals selling wild orchids for as little as a dollar each. These are dried up, broken down bulbs whose flowers will usually be about the size of a ten cent piece. Not knowing one orchid from another you can easily be fooled. Your chance of flowering these is about 1 chance in 100! So when you get ready to buy a plant be certain of the dealer from whom you buy; consult your Garden Club, if possible, or friends who might be growing Orchids now.

The price of a good, vigorous, well established plant such as I sell, varies from \$8 to \$15 a plant. Smaller ones of blooming age at around \$5.00. My prices are based on quality and appearance of the plant, rarity, season of the year, size of the flower expected, color, texture, and several other factors. Rare and unusual colors brings up the price. Thus, White, very dark shades, Yellow, Bronze, and other rare colors will be usually double in price. That is a quick run down on my prices. Other dealers may charge you more. Inspect a lesser price with suspicion for it is impossible to produce fine

plants much lower in price than the plants I sell and still maintain high standards of quality.

I grow all plants sold to you in flower pots. They are all well established, vigorous plants of blooming size. I handle no young seedlings. All my plants are adult plants and will flower on their present growth or their new growth. In short, you can expect flowers from my plants, anywhere from 30 days to 1 year, depending on what time of year the plant blooms and what time of year you are buying it. Most Cattleya Orchid plants produce flowers once a year. A few of the better types produce two sets of flowers a year. The amount of flowers a plant produces depends on the size and age of the plant. The older and larger the plant the more flowers it produces.

Amateurs cannot, except in rare exceptions, grow Orchids from seed. It is a highly technical procedure and certainly cannot be recommended for a beginner.

## RECOMMENDATION FOR BEGINNERS

Do not attempt to absorb too much information at one time by purchasing various books on Orchids. Further reading is certain to confuse you since each grower or writer has his own pet theories of how to grow Orchids. Mine is based on growing thousands of plants. The next book you read may be based on growing a few dozen plants by an amateur grower who means well but whose experience is very limited. The information I have given you in this circular together with my other illustrated circular showing the stages of growth of a mature Cattleya Orchid is more than enough to get anyone started in growing Orchids successfully. The next step is to get some plants and get started. You will learn more by growing one plant than a dozen books.

## CONCENTRATE YOUR SHOT

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When I am asked what kinds of Orchids are most suitable for amateur growers as house plants, I always say Cattleya Orchids. There are at least 10,000 different kinds available to bloom at different times of the year, and the color variety is endless. With rare exception they require the same culture. Since they are by far the most beautiful of all Orchids and also the largest flowering kind (some flowers are 10 inches in diameter), I know the beginner is certain to be pleased when he sees his first flowers.

Where one can give a Vanda space in his home or greenhouse, I also recommend them. However, they require different growing conditions. They must have a sunny spot or full light from morning to sundown. If you have such a location you will also find these easy to grow.

Vandas produce small flowers, usually from one to two inches in size. The very rare ones produce larger flowers. Some Vandas, like Miss Joaquim, are free bloomers. They will often bloom two and three times a year. As the plant gets older it becomes more prolific and large specimens are seldom out of bloom. Vanda Teres is an exquisite dark gold and rose color blooming only between Easter and July. These are two of the inexpensive varieties. The Vanda Joaquim is the flower given away by the millions each year as gifts by stores running special sales or on other occasions.

### AN INVITATION . . . . .

You are cordially invited to visit me and look over my Orchid collection whenever you are in this area. The address is 6500 S. W. 14th Street (on 65th Avenue), W. Miami, Florida.

**SUGGESTED COLLECTIONS OF BEST GROW-  
ING TYPES OF ORCHID PLANTS SUIT-  
ABLE FOR HOME GROWING**

Note: All Plants are adult plants, pot grown, and will flower on their present or new growth. All are Cattleyas unless otherwise stated.

**SELECTION "A"**—My selection or yours of one mature plant, from \$8.50 to \$15.00. Where possible I will endeavor to give you a plant to bloom during the season you want it to bloom, but if not available, final selection will be from a plant as close to that season that you wish.

**COLLECTION "B"**—Three fine plants all of a different color and to bloom at a different time of the year, \$25.00 prepaid. State seasons desired and I will endeavor to comply.

**COLLECTION "C"**—Four small Cattleyas, all to bloom at a different time, and all of a different color. These are fully mature plants or divisions of my fine stock. \$25.00 prepaid.

**COLLECTION "D"**—Three rare plants to include 1 White, 1 Yellow and one Dark Burgundy or Red, to bloom at different times. Only \$40.00 prepaid. An excellent value.

**COLLECTION "E"**—1 Vanda Joaquim, 1 Vanda Terre, 1 Xmas blooming Cattleya Orchid. \$20.00 prepaid.

**\*"SURPRISE COLLECTION"**—This consists of Cattleya Hybrids, Laelia Cattleyas and Bras-so Cattleyas of most all colors. Tags have been lost on these, so you may find some to be rare white, yellow, alba, pink, green, bronze, red, or burgundy. All were originally very fine but over a period of years tags were lost. Collection of Six fine, vigorous plants \$50.00. A single plant may be worth the price of the entire collection!

\* **Note:** On all other collections I select plants so that you will have no duplication of plants or colors, and also to give you the widest blooming seasons, the chief idea being to give you flowers throughout the year in those seasons that you prefer.

**SAMUEL L. PRESNER**

**BOX 4550**

**- CORAL GABLES, FLA.**

