



Phalaenopsis

Moth Orchid

A beautiful orchid that will grow and flower quite freely if all its growing conditions are met. With varying shades of white, pink, yellow and green, sometimes striped or spotted they make an excellent gift or magnificent long-lasting display in the home.

Growing Conditions

These epiphytic plants are found growing in trees in tropical jungles but will happily grow inside or outside in a purpose built environmentally controlled glasshouse. Creating a glasshouse is for the real enthusiast and needs some research and dedication. By growing the orchids inside on a light airy windowsill, the home gardener can easily create the environment needed for Phalaenopsis. You can create the humidity that the orchids need by placing some gravel in the bottom of a saucer, filling with water and placing the pot on the gravel but not sitting in the water. Of course the higher the temperature the higher the humidity needs to be. At temperatures above 30°C the orchids growth will slow down or stop. Fluctuating temperatures can cause the buds to drop.

Potting Mix and Repotting

Choose an open pine bark mix (10-18mm) and repot carefully as the roots can easily be broken. Repot about every 2-3 years by gently removing all the mix from the roots and cutting off any dead or damaged roots. It is quite normal for roots to grow out of the pot. The best time for repotting is just after flowering and before the main growth season in spring and summer. Placing sphagnum moss on top of the pot will aid in water retention especially during the warmer months.

Watering

Regular watering is essential for healthy growth. How often depends on the potting media used and the temperature. On average every 3 days in the heat of summer, but if your mix has a lot of sphagnum moss it will need watering less. Phalaenopsis need watering when just starting to dry out but do not like to be constantly wet. With time you will get to know your orchid and its watering needs.

Fertilising

Feed weekly during the warmer months with liquid fertilisers recommended for orchids. Once the weather starts to cool you can cut back to every fortnight.