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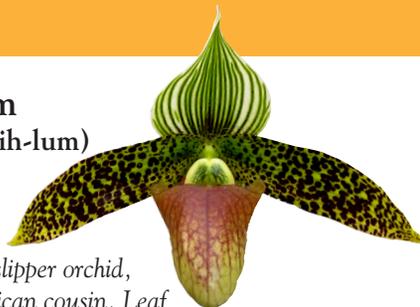
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# Grow With Us

## Paphiopedilum (paff-ee-oh-PED-ih-lum)

The flowers of *paphiopedilums* are reminiscent of those of *cypripediums*, the slipper orchid, a native North American cousin. Leaf colors indicate temperature needs: Green-leaved *paphiopedilums* require 50–60 F (10–16 C) at night, while those with mottled leaves need 60–70 F (16–21 C) at night. Many thrive in an east, west or shaded south facing window. Compact hybrids are tailored to the space limitations of windowsills and light gardens, where the tubes should be 6–8 inches (15–20 cm) above the plants. Fertilize twice a month with half-strength 30-10-10 or 20-20-20.



## Cattleya (KAT-lee-ah)

For many, *cattleyas* are the classic orchid, which growers raise in well-lit greenhouses and on windowsills with an unobstructed east, west or shaded south exposure. Compact hybrids adapt to life under fluorescent lighting. Insufficient light can prevent *cattleyas* from flowering. *Cattleyas* typically bloom in spring or autumn; then they make new growths. During this time, water when the medium begins to dry, and fertilize every two weeks with water-soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer or 30-10-10 if potted in bark. Reduce watering and fertilize monthly at other times. Provide 75–85 F (24–29 C) day temperatures, with night temperatures around 60 F (16 C).



## Dendrobium (den-DROH-bee-um)

A dazzling array of shapes and sizes awaits those who explore this genus of Old World orchids. Most frequently seen at garden centers are 20 to 24-inch- (50 to 60-cm-) tall evergreen *dendrobiums* bearing a profusion of purple, white, pink and earth-toned flowers that last for weeks on the plant or up to 10 days when cut and placed in water. Permit the medium to dry slightly between waterings, and mist those in the home for healthy foliage. Apply 20-20-20 liquid fertilizer when new growths develop, usually in spring and summer. Temperatures below 40 F (4 C) can cause leaves to drop. *Dendrobiums* need bright east, west or southern exposures to promote flowering.

For American Orchid Society membership information and benefits go to [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org).



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## Orchid Basics

# FAQs

### Are orchids hard to grow?

No. They are no more difficult to grow than many popular flowering plants. Like any plant, an orchid needs water, fertilizer, light and air. If you grow other ornamental plants either in the garden or indoors, you can grow orchids

### Aren't orchids terribly expensive?

Not any more. Once a hobby for the wealthy, orchids are now within the reach of any income. Modern reproductive methods make it possible for growers to enjoy plants for a reasonable price. You can spend as little as you like. But trying to own one orchid is like trying to eat one peanut.

### Are all orchids the same?

Quite the contrary. No plant family is more diverse. After all, the orchid family is the largest plant family, occupying almost all possible environments. From the thimble-sized *Mystacidium caffrum* to the 40-foot- (13-m-) tall *Sobralia altissima*, orchids exhibit amazingly different shapes, forms and growth habits. Some orchids produce blossoms no larger than a mosquito; other orchid flowers are as large as a dinner plate. Your familiar cattleya corsage is just one of the thousands of attractive types that can be grown with ease, given the proper culture. And with today's propagation methods and current hybridizing trends, there are more choices to choose from than ever before.

### Are orchids parasites?

Absolutely not! Of the approximately 30,000 species of orchids that grow around the world, not one is parasitic. In nature, many orchids cling to trees and bushes as a growth habit, but they take nothing from the host plant and do not injure it in any way. Orchids that grow on trees are called epiphytes or air plants.

### Do orchids come from the tropics?

Some do. But every country in the world and every state in the United States, including Alaska, have orchids.

### Are orchids short-lived?

Most are long-lived. In fact, some species are virtually immortal, given the proper attention. Divisions or propagations of orchids discovered in the 19th century are still growing and flowering today.

### How often do orchids bloom?

Again, it depends on the plant. Some bloom once a year, others bloom several times a year and some even bloom continuously.

### How long do orchid blooms last?

It depends on the type as well as on cultural treatment. Blooms of hybrids of the genus *Cattleya* may last from one to four weeks on the plant. Those of the genus *Phalaenopsis* commonly last from one to four months.

### Are orchids fragrant?

Some are so powerfully scented as to perfume an entire greenhouse or living room. A few orchid fragrances defy description, while others mimic familiar aromas — raspberry, coconut, lilacs and citrus. Others have no scent, but rely on shape and color to attract insects or birds for pollination, thereby continuing the life cycle of the species.

### Can I transport orchids?

Yes. Because many of them are cultivated in pots or baskets, they can be carried anywhere. Many growers use blooming plants as living centerpieces in their homes. Orchids are routinely mailed and sold at shows. But use common sense. When you buy orchids, do not let them sit in a hot or cold car or damage may result.

### Where can I buy orchids?

Hundreds of orchid nurseries, many of which advertise monthly in *Orchids* magazine, exist in the United States and around the world. Visit the *Orchid Source Directory* at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org) to find one near you or in an area that you plan to visit. Additionally, many fine growers will ship orchids right to your door. Today orchids are found in big-box stores, nurseries and garden centers, and perhaps even in your local supermarket.

### Is conservation of orchids an important issue?

Absolutely! Sadly, orchid species are becoming extinct faster than they can be described and classified. Threats

to orchids originate primarily from loss of habitat and collecting. The AOS advocates the purchase of only artificially propagated orchids, either from meristems (clones) or seeds, which will help discourage the collecting of orchid species at home and abroad. The AOS also encourages orchidists to pollinate orchid species already in their collections and to share the seedlings with their fellow orchidists. For more information about this serious topic, and to learn how to get involved and to support conservation efforts, visit the American Orchid Society Web site, [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org).

### Where can I get more information?

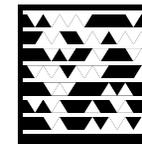
First, check out the AOS's popular culture sheets available at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org). Additionally, there are many excellent books available to help a novice grower learn more. The AOS offers several illustrated handbooks on orchid growing. Most bookstores and public libraries have good orchid book selections also, as do some commercial orchid firms.

### How can I find out about orchid society meetings?

Perhaps the most useful learning step is to become a member of your local orchid society. Currently, there are approximately 425 orchid societies that are affiliated with the AOS scattered around the globe. A listing of AOS Affiliated Societies is at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org). Click on the sitemap, then Affiliated Societies for easy access to the closest society to you!

**For more detailed information regarding growing orchids, visit the American Orchid Society's website at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org).**

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