



Cattleya

KAT-lee-ah

The Corsage Orchid

Cattleyas are among the most commonly grown orchids, and their culture is often used as the basis for comparison with other types of orchids. Like most other cultivated orchids, cattleyas are epiphytes, or air plants. They have well developed water storage organs (called pseudobulbs) and large, fleshy roots. Keep out of cold, dry air while in bloom.

LIGHT. Sufficient light is important for healthy growth and flower production. Provide bright light, some sun. In the home an east, west or lightly shaded south window. In a greenhouse, about 30 to 50 percent full sun. Plants should be of a medium olive-green color. Dark green, limp foliage indicates too little light.

TEMPERATURE. Provide nights of 55 to 60 F; days of 70 to 85 F. Cattleyas can tolerate temperatures up to 95 to 100 F if shading, humidity and air circulation are increased.

WATER. Mature plants must dry out between waterings. Seedlings need more constant moisture.

HUMIDITY. Cattleyas like 50 to 60 percent. In the home, place on trays over moistened pebbles, or set a bowl of water next to your plants and allow the water to evaporate. In the greenhouse, use a humidifier if conditions are too dry.

FERTILIZER should be provided on a regular basis. A good general rule is to apply a balanced (such as 20-20-20) water soluble fertilizer "weakly, weekly". That is, fertilize every week at one half of the recommended dilution.

POTTING should be done every two to three years before mix loses consistency (breaks down). Pot firmly in a porous medium grade mix, giving aeration and ample drainage, allowing enough room for two years' growth.

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