



## Cymbidium Orchid Care



**PESTS:** Orchids are not prone to many pests but certain types can be effected by particular insect problems. Cymbidiums can suffer badly from red spider mite. This shows itself as a silvery mottling on the underside of the leaves, and on the upper side in severe cases. As the leaf cells start to die they can become infected with bacteria so then start to turn black giving the leaves a black, speckled appearance. Red spider mite loves warm, dry conditions and so if the leaves are not kept moist enough, especially in hot weather, then the mite will thrive. Wash the leaves regularly with slightly soapy water, drawing the damp cloth along the length of the leaf so wiping the mites and their eggs away. They are too small to see with the naked eye. Mist them in between times, under and over the leaves, and keep the plants in a generally cool, humid and shady place for the summer.

The flowers can often produce sticky nectar, attracting insects to the flowers for pollination in the wild. This also attracts aphids like green fly which can then cause problems by damaging the buds and flowers and the nectar they produce dripping onto the foliage below. This in turn can get black sooty mould growing on it. Wash any aphids off with mild soapy water and clean the leaves regularly with leaf wipes.

**BUD DROP:** This is a common problem in the winter time as the lack of light often causes the flower buds to drop off. To get the flowers to open properly keep the plant in a cool, light position until all the blooms have opened, then by all means move them to somewhere else where you can enjoy them. If the plant is moved from a cool, light place to a warm, shady room whilst in bud, the shock of the change in conditions can cause them to drop prematurely.

**RE-POTTING HELP:** If you are worried about how to tackle the potting or dividing of a problem cymbidium, or any orchid, then you can bring it along to one of our Orchid Clinics held on the first Wednesday of every month. These fun sessions are all about learning how to deal with these plants and you will hopefully go away with the confidence to have a go yourself. No booking is necessary, just come along between 10am – 4pm, a charge may be made for re-potting

**SPECIES:** For those of you interested in the species as well as the hybrids then we have a range available. Please enquire or check the web site for current stock.

**Cymbidiums make great gifts for all occasions and we have plants flowering from autumn to spring.**

The Cymbidium orchids are ever popular, their showy flowers lasting many weeks. They are best grown in a cool conservatory and placed out of doors in the summer. They are mostly winter and spring flowering although there are also summer and autumn varieties too. Standard varieties grow into large plants with large flowers and bulbs. Miniature or compact types will stay more manageable. A plant should be re-potted in the spring after flowering when it has outgrown its pot, about every 2-3 years.

**RE-FLOWERING:** Keep these orchids cool and light in winter and outdoors in summer to help re-flowering. Keeping them too warm can prevent blooming.

**TEMPERATURE:** Cymbidiums need a minimum of 8°C (45°F) in winter to give them a sufficient change in conditions from the warmer summer, when a maximum of 30°C (85°F) is adequate.

**LIGHT:** Keep shaded from bright, direct summer sun as this can scorch the leaves. Give as much light as possible during the dull winter months.

**WATERING:** Keep the free-draining bark compost moist with more frequent watering in the spring and summer, the main growing season. When watering the plant, remove it from any cover pot or saucer, pour water through the pot and then let it drain before placing it back in a decorative planter. Never let the pot stand in water. Allow the compost to dry out slightly and the pot to become lighter before watering again. Add a little orchid 'grow' fertiliser to the water once every 2 or 3 waterings (approx. every 10-14 days) from February to August and 'bloom' fertiliser from August to November.

# How to Re-pot



**1.** Repot when the plant has no more room in the pot. Prepare some bark-based compost, peat, perlite, moss or charcoal can be added if you wish. You will also need some crocking material such as polystyrene chips for drainage and a sharp knife or pair of secateurs.



**2.** Once out of its pot, the plant should have a system of clean, white roots. If they are soft and brown then it may have been over-watered. If the plant is large, you may wish to divide it. To do this, cut through the rhizome that connects the pseudobulbs, dividing the plant in half.



**3.** Prepare the plant for potting by trimming back some of the roots and remove any old, broken-down compost. Leave a few centimetres of roots as an anchor for the plant in its new pot. Take this opportunity to tidy the plant by removing old bracts and dead pseudobulbs.



**4.** Choose a new clean pot in which the plant will have enough room to grow for another 2-3 years, usually 2-3 sizes larger. In the base, place a layer of crocking material for drainage. This can be polystyrene chips or stones, but these can make the pot very heavy.



**5.** Position the plant in the pot so there is plenty of room in the front of the new shoots to develop and grow into pseudobulbs. Start to fill in with fresh bark, holding the plant steady in the correct position with the other hand until it is supported by the compost.



**6.** Firm the bark compost down with your thumbs or a potting stick, a wobbly plant will not root in easily. The compost should be just below the rim of the pot with the base of the new growths sitting on the surface of the bark. Now give the plant a thorough watering, flushing through from the top.