



Vanilla Orchid Care



Warmer growing orchid species like vanillas need a little more care when growing in the British climate as we have quite a temperate environment here. They come from South America where they grow up the trunks and branches of trees with their long vine-like habit. When the stem has grown enough to reach the top of the tree, that is when it usually flowers, hence vanillas need to reach a long length and good maturity before they will bloom. Those flowers only last a day at a time too!

In cultivation, the species *Vanilla planifolia* is grown commercially in many tropical countries for vanilla pod production used in cooking to give us the favourite vanilla flavouring. The flowers are pollinated by hand and the seed pod produced is harvested, dried and shipped around the world.

It will be quite a challenge to grow a vanilla orchid at home and for it to reach maturity to flower, but we all like a challenge!

It should not go below 18°C in winter and keep warm and humid all the year round. Spray the foliage and aerial roots regularly, daily in warm weather, and water to the pot on average once a week or when the compost is starting to dry out. Keep in a light position but not bright direct summer sun to avoid the leaves burning.

If it becomes too dehydrated the stems and leaves will wilt and it will go downhill. It will make aerial roots from along the length of the stem as it grows longer with new leaves being produced at the tip.

All the best with your Vanilla orchid!

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