

Cattleya Orchids

Resource: Beautiful Orchids

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CATTLEYA (cat-LAY-a) - Cattleyas have earned the reputation as the "Queen of Orchids" and are known to the public as the ultimate in floral corsages. While some naturally occurring species are offered by growers, the most popular plants are man-made hybrids derived from combining Cattleyas with some of their close relatives to produce a wide range of colors, sizes and forms.

Temperature

The ideal day temperature is 75-85 degrees F., while the ideal night temperature is 60-65 degrees F. Occasional temperature extremes are tolerated if exposure is not prolonged.

Light

Cattleyas and their relatives require a good amount of light. They enjoy full sun in the morning, but will require shading from about 11am-3pm; less shading will be necessary in the late afternoon. Their leaves should be a light green color, and a darker green color indicates too little sun.

Water

Basically, cattleyas grow best when their potting medium becomes dry in between waterings. These plants are epiphytes in nature, (i.e. growing on top of trees) and are used to drying out between the rains of their natural habitat.

Repot

Cattleyas should not be repotted unless the plant have outgrown the pot (every 2 or 3 years) or when the potting medium begins to deteriorate. Or when the mixture become sour, does not drain rapidly and is invaded by snow mold or shows green mold on the surface. A coarse medium such as medium-grade Fir-bark, or coarse-grade Fir-bark will work well.

Feeding

High-nitrogen fertilizers (25-9-9) can be used year-round at one teaspoon per gallon of water. Feed once a month.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike

When the last flower drops, cut your flower spike all the way down the stem. Apply a pinch of cinnamon powder or melted candle to seal the wound. Continue caring for it and wait for a possible rebloom.