

## **CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS**

(sim BID ee um)

### **Position:**

These orchids are epiphytes, which means that in the wild, they grow in forks of trees where they receive dappled sunlight all day. So in cultivation, the ideal position for optimum growth and flowers is filtered sun all day - e.g. a shade house with 50%-70% shade cloth. This should be situated in an open position with no trees or buildings that will give shade. If this is not possible, give your cymbidiums the most filtered sunlight per day that you can or place them under a deciduous tree, on the northern side, so that they receive the most sun in winter and yet are protected from the hot overhead sun in summer. This will also protect them from light frosts. If regular or heavy frosts are prevalent in your area, a solid cover, e.g. a clear fibreglass type of material cover will be necessary in winter. This is also a good idea when they are in spike or flower as it protects the blooms from rain and hail etc.



To produce flower spikes, a temperature drop to approximately 10 C for a short period each day is needed **in** spring and summer. Watering in the evenings on hot days will achieve this. In some areas this drop occurs naturally.

### **Watering.**

A rough watering guide can be given by temperature:-

If the temperature is under 20-C, water once a week, depending on rainfall.

When the temperature is between 20c and 30C, water 2 - 3 times a week.

If the temperature is over 30c, water every day, and twice a day if it is very hot

However other factors can affect drying, hot north winds and dew fall for example.

### **Potting mix.**

It is easier if all your orchids are potted in the same type of mix and pots, so if you buy or win an orchid, it will pay you to re-pot it, using the same mix as your other cymbidiums. This will help with the watering, as they are more likely to dry out evenly. There is a wide range of potting media that can be used; the main thing is that the mix is free-draining, as the roots don't like to be soggy or waterlogged. The medium should be slightly acid - PH5. Plain pine bark can be used or a mixture of pine bark, sand and marble chips. For small collections of orchids, a commercial cymbidium potting mix can be used and is easier than mixing your own.

### **Dividing or Repotting**

When dividing or reporting your orchids, pot into a size pot that the orchid can stay in for three years. This is the time span for reporting, even if the orchid doesn't need dividing as the potting mix breaks down in this time and will hold too much moisture. Repot as soon as flowers are finished or picked, spring is usually the best time and before the end of November if possible. Autumn is also a good time. The main thing is not to repot when it is very hot or cold. When dividing the plant, leave at least 3 green bulbs with leaves on the main division, as this is a good flowering sized plant.

### **Fertilising.**

Slow release fertilizers can be used every three months. If using other fertilizers in powder form that are mixed with water, always use half strength and there is less likelihood of burning the plant. Use fortnightly except in winter when no fertilizer is needed.