

# Paphiopedilum (paf-ee-oh-PED-i-lum)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

These Southeast Asian plants have flowers of heavy substance, lasting from one to three months. They also have an excellent keeping quality when cut. This type of orchid can be grown quite easily in the home.

## LIGHT

Paphiopedilums do well in a diminished light. An east or west window is ideal. The east exposure is better because the temperature is lower in the early part of the day when the plant is receiving the greatest amount of light. A south window is acceptable as long as the sunlight is filtered so as not to burn the plant. Around 1,000 footcandles is ideal. Paphs also do very well under artificial lights, such as fluorescent (grow at 10-19" from tubes) or high-pressure sodium lights (Son Agro). Run the lights according to the seasons: 11 hours in winter, 14-16 hours in summer.

## TEMPERATURE

There are both warm and cool growing paphs. Generally speaking, those with mottled foliage and the strap-leaved species do best in intermediate to warm conditions, preferring daytime temperatures of 70°-80° F. and nighttime temperatures of 58°-64° F. The cool-growing species are mostly from India and grow at higher elevations. Complex hybrids are cool-growing and bloom mostly during the winter season. These types prefer nighttime temperatures of 55°-62° F. with days around 65°-70° F. They will all tolerate the heat of summer as long as they are regularly watered, shaded and kept in humid conditions. The mottled leafed varieties do best in a warmer house or apartment and can often bloom twice a year.

## HUMIDITY

Paphs like a humidity of between 45% and 70%. This may be accomplished by the use of humidifiers or by filling a saucer with crushed rock and placing it under the plants. When you water, the runoff will fill the saucer, releasing humidity to the air via the crushed rock. Make sure that the pot is elevated above the water level in the saucer.

## WATERING

It is important to water your paph early in the morning. This insures complete water evaporation on the foliage as well as the crown by nightfall. Water the plant as it approaches dryness. Do not use salt-softened water. Put plant in sink when watering and allow to drain well.

**Important:** Plants should never stand in water!

## FEEDING

Prior to fertilizing, water plant with clear tepid water. Dyna-Gro is the ideal brand to use as it provides all six of the macro nutrients and all essential trace minerals plants need to be healthy, grow and flower. Mix 1/2 tsp. of Dyna-Gro Grow with one gallon of water and use with every watering.

To assist blooming, switch to the low nitrogen/high phosphorus Dyna-Gro Bloom formula or Mag-Pro supplement for the winter and/or pre-bloom periods.

## POTTING

Potting material is usually ready for replacement once every year and a half. The best time for repotting is the spring or early summer. Use medium coconut chips, spongerock and small charcoal. Plastic pots will prevent rapid drying of the potting mix.

