

MARIBYRNONG ORCHID SOCIETY Inc

CATTLEYA CULTURAL NOTES

The term Cattleya will also cover Laelia as well as all hybrids in the Cattleya alliance.

TEMPERATURE

Mature plants require a minimum night temperature of 8C - 10C, but an occasional lower temperature can be tolerated as long as the plants are dry.

Laelia and Sophronitis species are colder growing plants and all hybrids are easily grown. Such places as sunrooms, bush-houses, and verandahs are all suitable growing areas. Heating is not essential but would do better if kept warmer during the winter period.

LIGHT

Cattleyas require a high light intensity to flower well, but yellow leaves and stunted growth are an indication that a little more shade is required. If growing them inside, the filtered light and sun through a curtain is ideal - but, don't put them in full sun.

HUMIDITY

Humidity should be between 50 - 80% at most times, if growing inside, placing them on a shallow tray of pebbles with water in the bottom this will give added humidity to the drier atmosphere (making sure the bottom of the pot is not in the water) - plus a frequent light spray of water over the foliage will also help. If the plants are growing in a shade house area or similar, try spraying water over the flooring to help keep the humidity up during the warmer weather.

FERTILISING

When you see the roots of the plant in active growth (the tips will be green) you can fertilize with a liquid fertiliser and a good method is 'little and often' - that means a very weak solution and about once a week.

WATERING

This will depend a lot on the type and size of the media your plant is growing in. During the time of active growth water about 2 or 3 times a week, this will also depend on where you are growing them, (inside or outside). If inside take the pot to the sink and let the water run through the mix and replace the pot on the pebbles. If outside and growing in a shade house where there is more air movement you may have to water more often during the summer months. Don't let your plant shrivel, it is too hard to get your plant back to it's ideal condition if you do, but equally as important don't over-water - especially during the winter months, as you will rot the roots of the plant.

POTTING MEDIA

There is a great variety of media on the market, some growers like to use sphagnum moss, others use bark - and there are various grades of this. In more northern climates - stones are used as a potting media. If using sphagnum moss, do not let it dry out, you must keep it damp at all times - plus a layer of small pebbles over the surface will help stop deterioration of the moss from your fertilising . Some of the Sophronitis grow very well mounted on tree-fern, but be aware if you have plants on mounts they will need more frequent watering.

GENERAL

Just be aware of your potting medium and the position you have your plants and try to follow some of the tips above and you will be rewarded with a lovely plant.