

Caring for the Paphiopedilum or Slipper Orchid –

Paphiopedilum Orchids have no pseudo bulbs to carry them through long dry periods therefore they need to be kept moist but not over wet.

Watering needs from April to November are once per week.

From December to March they can be lightly watered every day.

High humid conditions are most favourable to the Paphiopedilum. To create this use a container larger than the pot the plant is in, fill it with pebbles and water. Then place another pot upside down or another object on top of the pebbles and sit your plant upon it. Do not allow your plant to sit in the water at any time.

Repotting is usually each second year in a light or small pine bark orchid mix with a small amount of pebbles about the same size as the bark. This is to improve the drainage in the mix. They can be potted in sphagnum moss but this usually needs to be replaced each year.. There are other potting mixes that are suitable for orchids that can be used also so long as they have good drainage properties. Use as small a pot as possible, too large a pot will cause the mix to retain too much water, causing the roots to rot and eventually the plant will die. The roots should appear through the bottom of the pot. Do not break off or repot just because you can see the roots. Splitting the plant, when repotting, is not recommended as this sets the plant back and prevents flowering. This could also kill the plant if the pieces are too small. The next pot size up is a better method of repotting. All repotting is best done after flowering or in the spring, but not in summer or winter.

Fertilising should be done every second week with a liquid fertiliser diluted to one quarter to one half the recommended strength. Organic and non organic fertilisers should be alternated so that the plant gets a different mixture each time. Also feed one teaspoon of dolomite lime twice per year.

Keep plant in a reasonably warm area with a minimum temperature of 6°C but don't allow it to get too hot during summer. They can not stand frosts and must be protected at all times from these conditions. They do not like direct sunlight and must be kept in area with at least 60% shade at all times. Too much sun will burn and kill the plant, where not enough will prevent the plant from flowering. When the leaves turn yellow this indicates too much light and if they appear a deep green then this indicates not enough light.

Air movement around all orchids is essential to improve growth and floral rates.

For further information on this or any other Orchid contact the Maribyrnong Orchid Society inc.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Maribyrnong Community Centre Randall Street Maribyrnong starting at 7.15 pm.

Or write to the secretary, Maribyrnong Orchid Society, c/o post office box 148, High Point City, Victoria, 3032.

New members and visitors welcome.