

ADELAIDE ORCHIDS



ZYGOPETALUMS

Cultural Information by Stephen Monkhouse

Zygopetalum is a genus of about 20 species. The species are distributed throughout the South American continent, from the cooler parts of southern Brazil to the Isthmus of Panama, also South America, southern Mexico and the West Indies.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Zygopetalums although having the appearance of an exotic plant, are actually very easy to grow and flower. They require 50% to 70% filtered sunlight throughout the year. If you are a grower of Cymbidiums you will find that Zygopetalums are content to grow side by side with the Cymbidium. The growth pattern is similar also in that the plant has backbulbs, (old bulbs with no leaves) and from the base of the greenbulb (new bulb with leaves) come the new growth shoots. The flower spike appears from the new growths not the mature bulb, as with Cymbidiums. Each flower spike will carry up to 11 blooms. To produce heavy masses of blooms on many spikes the plant should be grown to specimen size. Many of the Zygopetalums have a beautiful perfume which will fill your home or shadehouse during the flowering time. The blooms can be up to 70mm across and these are usually highly perfumed. Some are much smaller and rarer and produce blooms 30mm across but have no perfume.

POTTING MEDIUM

The Zygopetalum is a terrestrial orchid requiring a well-drained potting medium. Most growers use the same medium for both their Cymbidiums and Zygopetalum. We use and recommend AUS GRO ORCHID BARK NUGGETS in small grade 10mm, for small plants and a medium grade 15mm for larger plants.

FERTILISER

Use of a regular fertilising programme is recommended to assist plants to produce maximum growth and flowering. We use PETERS fertiliser. This is a soluble fertiliser and can be used at full strength fortnightly or half strength weekly. Use HI-NITROGEN from July to November and BLOSSOM BOOSTER from December to June. Be sure to give the application to the whole plant, that is, over the leaves as well as into the pot. PLANT STARTER may be used at monthly intervals for small plants or as a growth activator as required. Use for approximately 1 month after repotting or potting on.

WATERING

Plants should be kept moist but not too wet. This is the reason for using a very well-draining potting medium. When the plants are grown outside in the shadehouse, and receive overhead watering, brown spotting will often appear on the leaves. This is a harmless fungus spotting and will not damage the plant.

Zygo's are a great addition to any collection and come in a colour range from greens, purples, reddish-brown to blackberry. They can flower twice a year.