



FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Intro to Orchids

Think orchids are too hard to grow? Well, think again! It doesn't take a high-tech greenhouse or a horticulture scientist to successfully grow and bloom these exotic beauties. Growing orchids is no harder than growing any other houseplant- it's just different. Follow these tips on the basics of orchid care and discover the different varieties available.

ORCHIDS

Orchids are available in a myriad of colors, shapes and sizes. They range in size from a two-inch plant that can sit in the palm of your hand, to five-foot giants. Some can be fragrant with luscious scents of citrus, raspberry, lilac, coconut and even chocolate. McDonald Garden Center has one of the largest collections of orchids in Hampton Roads.

Most orchids are epiphytes and grow on trees or rock. They typically grow in the canopies of tropical forests, where humidity levels remain high, and temperatures are consistently warm. Emulating their natural habitat is the key to success.

Orchids, like all living things, need sunlight, moisture, and food. Placing your orchid in the right environment and giving it proper long-term care is the key to long-lasting blooms (and reblooms).

LIGHT

The amount of light required varies, ranging from high, medium or low light, depending on the type of orchid.

- Most orchids prefer morning light, so east-facing windows are best.

- If in a south or west-facing window, be sure to keep them out of direct light.
- Leaf color is a good indicator of the amount of light an orchid is getting: bright green leaves indicate a happy, healthy plant, dark green leaves signal that a plant is not getting enough light, and yellowish-green or red leaves indicate that a plant is getting too much light.
- Orchid varieties like cattleya, oncidiums and dendrobiums can handle brighter light. These orchids can also take a little direct light, but not all day.

SOIL

Orchids need to be able to breathe and have good aeration around their roots. Never plant an orchid in standard potting soil. The best medium is one that is very light, porous, and fast-draining.

- If your orchid is already potted and healthy, keep your orchid growing in the growing medium that it comes in, either sphagnum moss or orchid bark.
- Bark soils emulate orchids growing in trees and is a great organic material that provides consistent nutrient release and moisture control.
- Sphagnum moss retains moisture well and allows for constant, easy release to the roots.
- When repotting, it's best not change their potting media.

continued on next page

CORPORATE
1139 W Pembroke Ave.
757.722.3125

INDEPENDENCE
1144 Independence Blvd.
757.464.5564

GREAT NECK
1276 N Great Neck Rd.
757.962.7596





FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Intro to Orchids

REPOTTING

Just like other plants, an orchid is ready to be repotted into a larger container once its roots are flowing over the sides of the pot or when potting mix breaks down (often resulting in dead roots).

- Slightly grade-up in pot size, but don't go too big too quickly (an inch or two larger than the pot before). Use a cache pot, full pot or orchid pot.
- To repot, simply remove the orchid from the container, prune out any dead roots (these will be brown and thin, not plump and green) and replace along with your new potting medium.
- Phalaenopsis orchid can be planted in either moss or bark. Most other orchids, like dendrobiums, oncidiums, and miltonias, prefer bark.

TIP: Do not repot while a plant is flowering, as the blooms may suffer. Cut off the spent flower spikes with sterile snippers and then repot the orchid.

TEMPERATURE

Temperature plays a crucial role in helping orchids to grow and rebloom, so choosing the right environment will ensure the orchid blooms sufficiently.

- Orchids prefer temperatures above 65 degrees.
- Orchids also need to experience a temperature variance to trigger blooming. Placing outside in summer and then bringing indoors into cooler conditions will help to spur on a new flower spike.

WATERING

Many (though not all) orchids are epiphytes, or air plants. The easiest way to kill them is by over-watering or by letting the roots sit in water. Orchids like water (room temperature) trickled down their roots- just like in the rain forest.

- All orchids require the same general watering regiment, a wet-dry cycle, watering every 7-14 days.
- Decrease watering when blooming stops, and resume a normal watering schedule when new leaves appear.
- Water orchids well. A good soaking will allow bark or moss to absorb moisture.
- Orchid roots that need watering will turn white in color. A well saturated root takes on a greenish tone.
- Mist exposed roots periodically, as they tend to dry out quickly.
- Most orchids prefer humid environments. If your room is dry, place the orchid on a humidity tray to increase moisture in the air around the plant.

FEEDING

Orchids need to be fed regularly. The general rule for fertilizing orchids is "weakly, weekly" or every other week in the big growing months (March-October).

continued on next page

CORPORATE
1139 W Pembroke Ave.
757.722.3125

INDEPENDENCE
1144 Independence Blvd.
757.464.5564

GREAT NECK
1276 N Great Neck Rd.
757.962.7596





FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Intro to Orchids

- Feed orchids monthly with a fertilizer formulated specifically for orchids. This will help to promote more blooms and bigger blooms.
- We recommend Better Gro Orchid food with every watering, spring through fall. In winter, less feeding is required.
- Every fourth watering, use Better Bloom Orchid food.
- Like watering, application of fertilizer should be applied less often when blooming stops and resumed when new growth appears.

TIP: It is best not to fertilize a completely dry plants as the fertilizer can burn the dry roots. Water first, then follow with fertilizer.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

Phalaenopsis orchid (moth orchid) are the most common and are typically recommended for beginners. Other orchid varieties include dendrobiums, oncidiums, miltonia, and more.

Moth or Phalaenopsis

Moth orchids or phalaenopsis (or phals) are one of the easiest and most rewarding of all the orchids, especially for beginners.

- Available in whites, pinks, lavenders, and yellows in both solid colors and mixes of stripes and spots.
- Leaves are dark green and thick, with arching bloom stalks.
- In the right conditions, moth orchids can bloom for months.

Dendrobium

Dendrobiums possess a long, bamboo-like stem loaded with flowers. This type of orchid loves the heat.

- One of the largest groups of orchids.
- Comes in many colors including pinks, purples, yellows, whites, oranges, and reds.
- Profuse bloomer.
- Blooming season is spring through fall.
- Some bloom from the top of the long stems, while others bloom all along the stem.

Oncidium

These can come in all sorts of shapes and sizes but are generally characterized by large quantities of small to medium flowers borne on a branched stem that typically forms a Christmas-tree shape. The most commonly identified Oncidium are the yellow "dancing lady" type.

- Great for beginners.
- Low-maintenance.
- Comes in yellows, browns, and pinks.
- Usually fragrant.
- Blooms in clusters, with lots of blooms.
- Long-lasting blooms.

continued on next page

CORPORATE
1139 W Pembroke Ave.
757.722.3125

INDEPENDENCE
1144 Independence Blvd.
757.464.5564

GREAT NECK
1276 N Great Neck Rd.
757.962.7596





FACEBOOK LIVE SEMINAR

Intro to Orchids

Paphiopedilum (Lady Slippers)

Paphiopedilum are characterized by both a cup-like lip called the pouch, which gives them the common name of lady slipper.

- Easy to grow as a houseplant.
- Available in whites, pinks, greens, reds, and yellows.
- Very unique and unusual blooms, often large and speckled.

Reduce or stop fertilizing during the dormancy phase. Typically, an orchid can rebloom every 8 to 12 months.

The American Orchid Society information sheet is very reliable when researching new species or when identifying problems. Find/click the link to the below:

<http://www.aos.org/orchids/culture-sheets.aspx>

REBLOOMING

A healthy orchid that receives consistent, proper light, adequate water and humidity, and regular feeding should bloom again. Here are some of the most common reasons why an orchid may not rebloom:

- **Not enough light** is the most common cause of failure to re-bloom.
- **Poor root system** due to old, broken-down potting medium or over watering.
- **Not enough temperature fluctuation.** Orchids are adapted to not only seasonal variation in temperatures but also significant day/night variations. Temperature fluctuation is necessary for orchids to bloom and rebloom. Do not use salt softened or distilled water.

TIP: Many orchids need a period of dormancy or rest (generally in winter.) During this time, plants strengthen their root systems, grow leaves, and stockpile energy for their next growth spurt and bloom.

CORPORATE

1139 W Pembroke Ave.
757.722.3125

INDEPENDENCE

1144 Independence Blvd.
757.464.5564

GREAT NECK

1276 N Great Neck Rd.
757.962.7596

