

DENDROBIUM ORCHIDS

This genus of orchids is incredibly popular to hobbyist growers and orchid collectors alike yet can be challenging. This genus contains over 1,000 different species and subspecies. Botanists tend to divide the genus *Dendrobium* into smaller “sections” that each contain groupings of orchids that are relatively similar in blooming habit and size. The most popular types of dendrobiums that we tend to see on the market today are dendrobium nobile, dendrobium phalaenopsis, and dendrobium Victoria Reginae. Dendrobium nobile orchids are also commonly referred to as “bamboo orchids” and are the most common type that is commercially sold. These plants are evergreen tropical perennials commonly sold as evergreen houseplants, with some exceptions that can be deciduous. They are only found in nature in the Eastern Hemisphere from New Zealand to Northern Japan.



Latin Name: Dendrobium
Hardiness: Not frost hardy
Type: Evergreen tropical houseplant
Size: Varies by species
Exposure: Very bright light
Soil: All-purpose orchid bark or fir tree bark
Growth Rate: Moderate
Growth Habit: Produces pseudobulb canes

Where should I plant my orchid?

Dendrobium orchids are a great addition to any houseplant collection as they have large, showy blooms that are often fragrant and can rebloom multiple times per year. There is a wide variance of cultural requirements depending on the species of orchid. However, nobile dendrobium, typically the most market available prefers high humidity and a well-draining potting mix. These plants prefer to be rootbound and can live for many years in very small pots. They do not like to be repotted often, so no more than every few years should these orchids be introduced into a new home. They enjoy temperatures between 70-85 degrees and do also enjoy one month per year with night temperatures around 50 degrees. They typically will bloom after winter dormancy. These orchids require at least 50-70% relative humidity.

How much water will my orchid need?

During their active growth period, water dendrobium orchids copiously. Their pseudobulbs should be firm and not shriveled while the plant is growing. Thorough watering as often as 4 times per week is optimal for some varieties including nobile dendrobiums. Reduce watering as the plant approaches autumn and its dormancy period. Due to their high-water needs, dendrobium orchids can even be planted with long fiber sphagnum moss or a variety of other moisture retentive additives such as 1/3 peat moss.

When should I fertilize my orchid?

A low nitrogen fertilizer is beneficial for these types of orchids as they require higher levels of phosphorus and potash to flower. They benefit from some nitrogen for part of the year during spring and summer, and lower nitrogen as they approach winter dormancy and prepare to bloom.

Are there any pests or diseases I should be aware of?

Orchids, like other houseplants can be occasionally visited by pests and diseases. Most commonly these plants can suffer from fungal infections due to poor circulation or over watering. Commonly they may suffer from root rots such as fusarium and rhizoctonia. Roots should always be a healthy white or pale green. Other pests may include aphids, thrips, or mites.