

## ONCIDIUM ORCHID

Oncidium orchids are a genus of orchids that consist of approximately 600 species, which are divided into taxonomic sections of closely related species. They are found almost exclusively in the tropics with recorded species ranging from Florida to Central and South America. These orchids can bloom more than once per year and are commonly referred to as “dancing-lady orchids” due to the shape and grace of their small flowers. These plants are epiphytic and rhizomatous in nature that produce pseudobulbs and large sprays of flowers. This genus was first officially described by Olaf Swartz, a Swedish botanist in 1800. The name is derived from the Greek word *oykos*, which means “swelling” or “mass.” The blooms of these orchids are most commonly brown and yellow but have also been seen in purple and white as well. They are typically grown as evergreen tropical houseplants and are good choice for hobbyist orchid growers.



**Latin Name:** Oncidium

**Type:** Tropical evergreen flowering houseplant

**Exposure:** Bright indirect light

**Soil:** Fine orchid bark and sphagnum moss

**Growth Rate:** Fast

**Growth Habit:** Epiphytic

**Size:** Varies by cultivar

**Hardiness:** Not frost hardy

### Where should I plant my orchid?

Due to so many different species of oncidium orchids, there is natural variation in their preferred care routines. Many oncidium orchids that are available today on the retail market follow a few of the same rules. These plants enjoy bright indirect light, similar to the conditions of cattleyas with about 1,500-2,000 foot-candles. The leaves should be medium green or slightly yellow, which is a sign of proper light and health.

### How much water will my orchid need?

There will be slight variance between species of oncidiums that call for some trial and error on the gardener's part. A good rule of thumb for many consumer varieties though, is thorough watering about every 7-10 days. These plants have pseudobulbs, which store water, and can help growers know when to water.

### When should I fertilize my orchid?

Oncidium orchids enjoy a moderate feeding schedule with a balance fertilizer. This can be achieved with regular fertilizing at one quarter strength, or a granular, orchid specific format. Some varieties do have a dormancy period, and some do not, making research imperative to the successful care of these plants. Growers should research individual varieties of oncidiums to make the best choice for their indoor garden environment.

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

Typically, orchids are not visited by too many pests, although they are susceptible to some fungal diseases. They can commonly suffer from root rot, bacterial brown-rot, *botrytis*, or *rhizoctonia*. Many of these ailments can be cured with proper air circulation and watering.