

VANDACEOUS ORCHIDS

The most popular vandaceous orchids generally fall into three categories: *Vanda Ascozentrum*, *Vanda Ascocenda*, and *Vanda*. These orchids are evergreen tropical perennials that are commonly sold as houseplants. Vanda orchids are comprised of about 80 different species all of which are monopodial, meaning that the plants store water in their leaves and new growth appears from the crown of the plant. Lateral buds may also appear on the main stem, which may develop into plantlets or *keikis*. These plants blooms range in a variety of shapes and colors and sizes, with many reaching up to 6" across. Vanda orchids are easy to grow and have a reliable bloom habit, and ease of growth. The bloom spikes of this genus usually appear from the axils of the leaves, which appear in two rows. Vanda orchids are part of the Orchidaceae family and are native to Southeast Asia.



Latin Name: Vanda

Hardiness: Not frost hardy

Type: Evergreen tropical houseplant

Size: Varying, roots can reach 5 feet

Exposure: Very bright indirect light

Soil: All-purpose orchid bark or fir bark nuggets

Growth Rate: Moderate

Growth Habit: Monopodial, new growth appears from crowns

Where should I plant my orchid?

Vanda orchids are great houseplants that can reliably flower if their cultural needs are met. They thrive in temperatures between 65 degrees and above and 55 degrees at night. These plants prefer high humidity upwards of 80%. Ideally this genus of orchids appreciates repotting every two years and a course potting mixture of either a standard orchid bark or fir tree bark, which is a common potting medium for many commercially sold orchids. Vanda orchids planted in wooden baskets do not need to be repotted as often. Repotting should occur in spring. Some varieties even survive with no potting medium at all but require more regular watering.

How much water will my orchid need?

Vanda orchids require excellent drainage and cannot sit in water for any prolonged length of time as this promotes root rot. They have thinner, finer roots than other epiphytic varieties. These plants also tend to have higher water needs than phalaenopsis or other epiphytic orchids. Watering once per week should suffice, but it is beneficial to check your plant mid-week depending on the size of the orchid. Smaller orchids will need more frequent watering.

When should I fertilize my orchid?

Typically, these orchids will bloom about every three months for 2-3 weeks at a time. They require copious quantities of nutrients to perform well and benefit from a well-balanced fertilizer. They benefit from weekly feedings with a liquid orchid specific fertilizer or a balanced granular fertilizer once every 6 months.

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

Orchids, like other houseplants may be visited by a selection of pests including aphids, thrips, and mites. More commonly these orchids can suffer from root rot otherwise called Botrytis. They can also suffer from rhizoctonia, which appears as atrophied leaves or anthracnose, which appears as gray-brown patches on the edges of leaves. Many of these ailments can be cured or prevented with proper ventilation. For pest control, neem oil or a diluted organic miticide spray can be applied.