
ZYGOPETALUM ORCHID

Zygopetalum orchids are perhaps one of the most reliable and easy to care for orchids that can bloom multiple times per year. Their blooms are highly fragrant and often remain for 6 weeks. These plants can be grown outdoors in Southern California or tropical climates; however, they are commonly sold as evergreen houseplants in the United States. There are currently fourteen recognized different species of zygopetalum orchids all of which are epiphytic, and some of which are rhizomatous. This genus' name is derived from the Greek word *zugón*, which means "yoke." This is a reference to the yoke-like growth at the base of the lip. Most species of zygopetalum orchids originate from low to mid elevation regions of South America, in particular Brazil.



Latin Name: Zygopetalum
Type: Tropical evergreen flowering houseplant
Hardiness: Not frost hardy
Exposure: Bright, direct or indirect light
Soil: Fine orchid bark & sphagnum moss.
Growth Rate: Fast
Growth Habit: Rhizomatous
Size: 2'

Where should I plant my orchid?

Zygopetalum orchids are an easy to grow and tolerant genus of orchids that are perfect for hobbyist orchid growers. Adequate light is imperative to the health and flowering of these plants. They enjoy bright indirect light at the strength of about 3,000 to 4,000-foot candles. They also enjoy relative humidity at about 50%. Grouping plants together helps to retain moisture in the air around them. However, on its own, humidity requirements can easily be met by a tray filled with water and pebbles placed under the plant.

How much water will my orchid need?

Zygopetalum orchids require more consistent moisture than some other orchids species such as phalaenopsis. They have cymbidium like water requirements and prefer to be constantly moist, but not soggy. These orchids enjoy watering at least once per week during the growing season, or more often in drier locations. The frequency of watering will depend on the growing medium and size of the plant. However, zygopetalums, like all orchids require excellent drainage, as they cannot sit in water for any length of time.

When should I fertilize my orchid?

Zygopetalum orchids are moderate feeders that benefit from a well-balanced fertilizer either in a water soluble or granular format. Many growers use a high nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season from February to August and a low nitrogen fertilizer during the blooming season and winter. About once per month feedings will suffice.

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

There have been some pests noted on zygopetalum orchids when grown outside, but also occasionally indoors as well. The most common tend to be white flies and scale, both of which can be treated with insecticidal soap.