



Dendrobium Orchid Care

The Bamboo or Spray Orchid is a warm climate orchid that stores water in its upright stems or canes called pseudobulbs. This orchid is readily available due to its ease of growth in greenhouse conditions, but is considered an intermediate level orchid due to the warmer temperatures and brighter light it requires in a home environment. Dendrobiums can be grown outdoors in summer, and will reward their grower with a late fall through winter bloom cycle.

Lighting: Bright light to 50% sunlight from an eastern, western, or lightly shaded southern window is preferred. Direct artificial light with four, 40 watt fluorescent bulbs or two, 40 watt incandescent bulbs placed just above the plant will work too. Foliage color should appear medium olive green in color.

Temperature: Preferring cool nights (60-65 degrees F) with a 15-20 degree increase during the day to 80-90 degrees F will trigger flowering. Temperatures in the 50's will cause yellowing and leaf drop.

Water: Let the soil dry out before thoroughly reapplying water. Due to their pseudobulbs these orchids can withstand short periods of drought. When flowering, the orchid will require even moisture. Try to water in the morning so the plant has the entire day to absorb it. Generally, you will need to do this once a week at the most. The most common error that orchid owners make is overwatering.

Humidity: Appreciating 50-60% humidity, the foliage of the orchid can be spray misted in the morning, on days you are not watering the soil. Avoid spraying buds and flowers. Placing the orchid pot on a humidity tray of moistened pebbles will help increase humidity easily too.

Fertilizing: Fertilize during its active growing period, spring through fall. Do not feed in winter. Use a balanced liquid plant food (20-20-20) using a 1/3 strength dilution or use a specifically formulated orchid food following the package instructions. Apply the plant food to the soil with every other watering.

Repotting: It is healthy for a Dendrobium to be root bound, with some of the "air" roots sticking out of the soil. Repot every two to three years in early spring before the potting soil breaks down. Replant with a porous orchid soil (i.e. 70% bark, 20% perlite, 10% sphagnum moss).

Pruning/Propagation: As the blooms open from a mid-point on the flowering stem to the tip, they will fade in this same pattern on average after one to three months. Remove each faded flower by hand or let them naturally drop. After all flowers are finished cut the stem to a 1/2" above where it emerges from the foliage. Keikis or new growths with their own roots can be cut from the parent cane and potted up as new individual orchids. Dendrobiums are one of the few varieties to readily produce keikis.

rev 11/07

