

ORCHIDS, CATTLEYA CULTURE

TEMPERATURE - The ideal temperature for Cattleya orchids is 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit at night and a day temperature of 10-15 degrees higher. Without the day-night fluctuation, orchids may grow lots of healthy foliage but stubbornly refuse to flower.

LIGHT AND SHADE - Proper light is an important factor in growing Cattleyas. Cattleyas require bright with some direct sun. When Cattleyas receive the correct amount of light, the leaves will display a light green color. If the plants are grown in your window (especially South exposure) they may need protection from direct sunrays. It is important that a Cattleya receives no additional light past the normal day length.

WATERING - Basically Cattleyas should be watered as they approach dryness. This may vary during sunny warm weather to dark and humid weather. It is important to thoroughly drench the plant when watering. **Do not** at any time let the plant stand in water. The Cattleya generally puts on most of its growth during the spring and summer months. At this time, watering should be increased. During winter months only enough water should be given to keep the pseudobulbs filled.

FEEDING - Since most Cattleyas are grown in fir bark mixtures, fertilizing is a must. We recommend a high nitrogen fertilizer (30-10-10) for best results. Because the orchid does not get any nutrients from the bark, we recommend using a half-strength solution every time you water.

HUMIDITY - 65-80 percent humidity is ideal for the Cattleya. However a Cattleya in nature has dry periods, therefore they can be grown where humidity is lower. A humidifier or humidity tray will help provide the extra humidity the Cattleya needs.

POTTING - We recommend repotting mature Cattleyas once every two years. The best time to repot is after flowering, which is when most orchids begin a cycle of root growth and are quick to re-establish.

OUTDOOR GROWING - When Cattleyas are grown in the home under artificial lights or by a windowsill; it is recommended that they are summered outdoors. Care must be taken to protect the plants from direct sun during midday hours. A loosely leafed tree usually provides the correct amount of light.