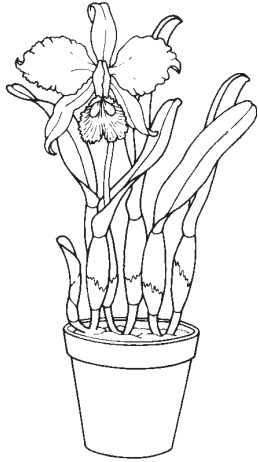


Growing Cattleyas



Cattleya, queen of the orchids, grows epiphytically—sometimes on rocks. The 65 species are native to tropical America, extending from Mexico to Argentina and Peru. All have prominent pseudobulbs, from 4" in diameter to over three feet tall. With few exceptions, flower stalks arise from the top of mature pseudobulbs and flower buds are normally enclosed in a single or double sheath until shortly before they open. Flower stalks bear on to thirty flowers, depending on the species and the vigor of the plant. In nearly all cases, sepals are widely spread and petals are broader than sepals. The lip is large and showy, its side lobes curve over the column. Cattleyas are the major orchid of commerce.

Light

In the home a bright east, south or west window is recommended. Place your plants about 12-18 inches back from the window. Give your plants all the sunlight they can take without burning the leaves.

Temperature & Humidity

The ideal minimum is 60°F. at night with day temperatures at 70 or low 80°F. Occasional deviations either way will not harm the plants. They prefer a 10 to 15 degree drop in temperature at night.

Watering

To provide extra humidity, place your orchid plant on a saucer or tray filled with pebbles. Fill the saucer with water to a level just below the surface of the pebbles. Never allow the pot to sit in water. A relative humidity of 50% is necessary.

Fertilizer

Cattleyas like a drying out between waterings. This means about once a week watering by submersing the pot in a bucket for a few seconds. Plants in clay pots may need watering twice a week during hot weather. If you are in doubt, skip a watering. Overwatering will cause roots to rot and kill the plant. Never use artificially "softened" water.

Air Movement

Cattleyas should be fed every 2 weeks during the growing season, and once a month after they have finished blooming. Premium Orchid Food 20-20-20 should be used at ½ strength. When new leads have started to grow resume feeding every 2 weeks. An occasional leaching, with plain water to wash out salts, is recommended.

Potting

This is very important as the plants are used to gentle breezes in their natural habitat. If there is no movement of air, the plants will stagnate. A small whisper fan nearby is a good way to generate this gentle air movement.

Cattleyas need repotting every 2 years. The best time is in summer just as the new growth is starting to make new roots. Allow 3-5 bulbs to a division. Avoid potting into too large a pot. Treat all cuts with tree-seal or sulfur and cut off all dead roots. Remove all old bark and repot in fresh bark that has been moistened. After potting keep plants shaded and on the dry side until new roots start to grow.

The object of this culture sheet is to give you basic information on the cultural requirements of Cattleyas and their allied genera. Should you need additional information please stop by the Flower Shop for personalized help.