



## Your Cymbidium Orchid

*Congratulations on purchasing a Cymbidium Orchid.* In flower it will give you a lovely display for **up to 2 months** (sometimes even more depending on the particular variety of plant). You may house the plant indoors and enjoy its display whilst it is in flower. Water it every 5 days or so, but don't allow it to stand in a saucer of water and don't put it too near a source of heat. When it finishes flowering, follow the instructions below and it should flower at the same time each year. It should be even bigger and more spectacular next time it flowers.

*Cymbidium Orchids are easy to grow and flower if you treat them well.* They are very tough plants, but if you don't given them reasonable conditions, they will grow larger but not flower well (or at all). They are just like you and me; give them the right conditions and they will be happy and flower profusely year after year.

The conditions they require are relatively easy to provide, certainly in southern Australia. They require partial shade (50% to 70%), particular during the hotter months (but do not shade them too much). They also require regular watering to keep the humidity near them high. Most orchid growers water daily for about 15 minutes in summer or until water comes from the bottom of the pot, every second day in spring and autumn and only as required to keep them damp in winter when they should receive natural rain. Spring and autumn watering may need adjusting depending on how hot it is. If the weather is hot and/or dry, increase the watering to almost summer levels. The potting mix should be moist at all times and the foliage (leaves) should be a yellowish green. If they are deep green the plant is probably growing in too much shade and will be less likely to flower next flowering season.



The best environment for your cymbidium is a shade house with 50% to 70% shade-cloth covering. An automatic watering system is desirable to ensure regular and reliable watering. The floor of the shade-house is best covered with a water holding medium such as small gravel, 50mm thick, or wood-shavings to about the same depth. Plants can be stood on the floor or on benches. If using benches, best results are obtained if the benches are low (less than 300mm high), so the plant enjoys the higher humidity near ground level. If you are not able to provide a shade-house for your plant/s, a sheltered area under a tree can suffice, but make sure it does not receive too much shade and remember to water it regularly. Perhaps surround it with other plants like ferns *etc* to trap the humidity.

Potting mixes vary greatly with coarse pine-bark making up the bulk of most mixes. Many orchid growers will argue that their particular mix is better, but most mixes which are open and free draining are suitable. Most commercially available mixes produce excellent results, but try to standardize on a particular mix for all your orchids. Do not plant them in soil or sand.

Plants need fertilizing to give best results (we need feeding, so do they). Good results can be obtained using slow release fertilizer such as *Osmacote*, *Nutricote etc* every six months or so, but many growers liquid fertilize regularly using commercial liquid fertilizer (most brands are good). If liquid feeding, try to fertilize weekly in summer, tapering to irregularly in winter. The dosage rate recommended by the manufacturer should not be exceeded. Lower rates (50% reduced) produce excellent results, provided they are regularly applied.

Plants need re-potting regularly or when they outgrow the pot they are in. They should be re-potted at least every 3 years because the potting mix breaks down. If they are growing well, they will probably require breaking up. Don't worry, it's easy to do. Knock the plant out of the pot and break it into smaller plants, trying to retain at least 3 active green bulbs on each division. Any old dead looking bulbs (back-bulbs) can be removed and either discarded or potted into a separate pot to about a third of their depth. If they are not too old, are kept damp and in good conditions, new

shoots will emerge from the back-bulb and will grow into a new plant. It can take 3 years to flower, so be patient. The divisions of the plant should be planted into new potting medium in separate pots, kept damp and a little shaded and they will develop new roots quickly. Look after them and they should flower next season. Re-potting and dividing is best done in spring or autumn but owners of big collections do it all year or when resources are available.



There are thousands of different varieties of Cymbidium Orchids. There are very small flowers (some less than 20mm in diameter) called miniatures. Standard flowers are usually 110mm or so in diameter, but there are much larger flowers. There are intermediate size flowers also. There are upright spiking varieties, arching varieties and many other spike habits available. Some are easy to flower, other are more difficult. Various varieties can be chosen to flower virtually all year, but the most popular varieties flower between May and October. Most flowers last at least a month on the plant and some can last much longer. Cut flowers also last long periods, but not usually as long as when they are still on the plant. Enjoy your plant when it is in flower. It will last longer and be more spectacular than a bunch of cut flowers and almost certainly better value long term.

There is a trend in high density living areas to buy a plant, enjoy it while it is in flower then discard it when it finishes flowering. While orchid lovers dislike this method or orchid growing, if it suits you, do it.

There are orchid clubs in many areas of Australia. They can assist you to learn how to grow a Cymbidium and welcome visitors to their club, and are continually seeking new members. Most hold shows of their plants regularly. The shows are usually very spectacular and can assist novice growers. Consider joining a club. Enjoy your orchid plant and I hope this leaflet is of benefit to you.

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*We are primarily a wholesale plant nursery, but we welcome visitors when possible. We are open by appointment (please telephone) **and** Saturday mornings during the flowering season (May to September each year) from 8 am until 12 noon. A huge selection of plants are always available, ranging from very small plants (flasks) to flowering size, with many plants in flower or with flower spikes showing during the flowering season. All are at very competitive and reasonable prices. New varieties are always being developed. Beginners and experienced growers are all welcome. Friendly and helpful advice is always given.*

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