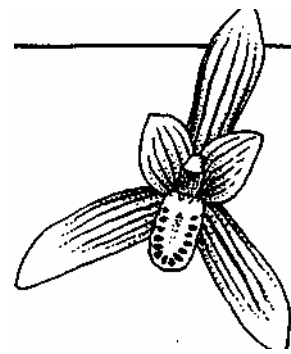


Cymbidium

^^ sym-BID-ee-um



On the West Coast of the United States, and in other cool-summer areas that receive no severe frosts, cymbidiums are among the most popular of spring-flowering orchids and are often grown as garden plants. Their striking sprays of long-lasting blooms provide ideal home or patio decoration, and are often used as cut flowers. There are both standard (large-flowered) and miniature (smaller-flowered) types grown. The miniature types, often known as "novelties," are more heat-tolerant, but neither type is particularly good in warm summer areas; nor are cymbidiums of any kind successful as houseplants. Cymbidiums are terrestrial plants in nature and require a moisture-retentive but well-drained mix. Fir bark is most commonly used, though more and more growers are switching to artificial or inorganic mixes as quality fir bark becomes less available.

LIGHT

Sufficient light is important for healthy growth and flower production.

PROVIDE Very bright light, up to 80 percent of full sun in coastally moderated areas. Leaves should be naturally erect and of a medium olive-green color. Dark green, limp foliage indicates too little light.

TEMPERATURE

Mature plants need night temperatures in the low 60s or high 50s in late summer to initiate flower spikes.

PROVIDE Nights of 55 to 60 F, though temperatures into the 30s are tolerated; days of 70 to 85 F. Cymbidiums can tolerate temperatures up to 95 to 100 F if shading, humidity and air circulation are increased.

WATER

Mature plants must never dry out between watering.

HUMIDITY

Cymbidiums need 50 to 60 percent. In the home, while in bloom, place on trays of moistened pebbles. In greenhouse, use a humidifier if conditions are too dry.

FERTILIZER

Must be provided on a regular basis because most potting media have little.

PROVIDE The exact fertilizer you use will depend on the mix in which your plant is growing. A good general rule is to apply a balanced (10-10-10, 12-12-12 or similar ratio) fertilizer "weakly, weekly." That is, fertilize every week at one quarter to one half of the recommended dilution.

POTTING

Best done every two to three years in spring immediately after flowering to allow maximum time to reestablish before next flowering season.

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