

Peel Region Orchid Society of Western Australia Inc.

PO Box 1303, Mandurah WA 6210

CULTURAL NOTES - AUSTRALIAN DENDROBIUMS

Potting Mix: Most orchids will grow in a basic mix of bark chips. The bark mix does not break down for at least two years. If the mixture is allowed to break down and become muddy, the plant roots will rot and cause orchid bulbs to rot.

Prepare the matured old bark (not green) by soaking in water with a soluble high nitrogen fertilizer for two weeks before potting – 5mls to 9 litres of water.

Location: Position the shade house away from shading trees or buildings. 50 to 70% shade cloth is suitable, ideally with an east and west aspect. Stand pots on wire grid benches approximately 30cm off the ground to allow adequate air circulation. Cover the ground with plastic sheeting and then layers of mulch wood chips, saw dust or stone to hold high humidity and to minimise weed growth.

Watering: Keep plants moist not soggy. Water early in the mornings and not during the heat of the day.

Summer – frequent watering if weather is particularly hot or dry, twice a day. (morning and late afternoon after 4pm approximately).

Winter – water once a week, this should be sufficient.

Fertilizer: Water plants before fertilising. Soluble fertilisers eg:

(a) High Nitrogen – Fish Emulsion, Aquasol or Campbell's Blue.

(b) Low Nitrogen – Campbell's Yellow, Phostgen.

At half the recommended strength every two weeks during active growth. Excessive fertiliser leads to salt build up which harms the roots. Do not fertilise during the plants' rest period.

Re-potting: Re-pot after flowering ideally eg: Autumn and in Spring. If the plant has outgrown its container and the mix has not deteriorated they can be potted on, into the next sized pot.

DO NOT divide the plant into very small pieces as it takes longer to recover.

DO NOT over pot, gently divide the plants and cut off any damaged roots. Treat the wound with Lime Sulfur Dust. Keep the re-potted plant in a cool dark place keep in a cool place for a week or two to recover from shock.

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Pests: Some pests that attack are: Garlic Snails, Slug – crushed snail bait. For Mealy Bug, Scale or sucking insects – Kelthane Spray.

YOU MUST wear protective clothing and equipment when using sprays.