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## PC-5 Cattleya Orchids

### About Cattleya Orchids

Cattleyas are among the most grown orchids, and their culture is often used as a comparison with other types of orchids. Like most other cultivated orchids, cattleyas are epiphytes or air plants that grow on top of trees. They have water-storage organs called pseudobulbs and large, fleshy roots.

### Temperature and Light

Mature plants need a 15 to 20-degree F difference between night and day. Temperature at night should range from 55 to 60-degrees F.; daytime temperature should be 70 to 85-degrees F. Cattleyas can tolerate temperatures up to 95 and 100-degrees F if shading, humidity and air circulation are increased.

Cattleyas grow and flower best in strong, dappled sunlight. They like full sun in the morning but will require shading from about 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.; less shading is essential in the late afternoon. Their leaves should be medium olive green; a darker green color indicates too little sun. Under lights, place four 40-watt fluorescent tubes and two 40-watt incandescent bulbs directly over plants. Plants should be naturally upright, without need of much staking, and of a medium olive-green color. Dark green, limp foliage indicates too little light. Keep out of cold, dry air while in bloom.

### Water, Fertilizer and Humidity

Plants must dry out between watering (they are used to drying out between the rains in their natural habitat).

Feed weakly, weekly with a dilution of half the recommended rate of high nitrogen rich 30-10-10 fertilizer, adding **SUPERthrive** (1 drop per cup or ¼ tsp. per gallon of water). Cattleyas need 50 to 60% humidity. In the home, place on trays over moistened pebbles or use a humidifier if conditions are too dry.

### Potting

Repot Cattleyas every two to three years in the spring before plant mix breaks down. Pot them firmly in a porous container with good aeration and ample drainage; allow enough room for two years' growth. We recommend planting them in pre-moistened **Kiwi** premium-grade pine bark from New Zealand. After repotting, water the plant immediately with warm water and **SUPERthrive** according to above rate.

Our source for much of this information is the **American Orchid Society Guide: Growing Orchids.**

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