



Woolf Orchid Culture

Oncidium Intergenerics Culture at Woolf Orchidculture

by John Woolf

It is reasonably easy given the wealth of material available and the multitude of different conditions the species within this alliance grow under to select those intergeneric hybrids that will suit your growing conditions. Watch the plants tabled at your local society meetings and shows for flowers that take your eye and approach the owners ask them what conditions they grow their plants under and if your growing conditions are similar see if they have a division available for sale or where you can obtain that plant or something similar.

TEMPERATURE.

Most intergenerics within this alliance will grow well under Intermediate to warm conditions minimum of 10 degrees Celsius to a maximum of 30 degrees Celsius. There are always exceptions some will grow colder as with all new babies, test the water first '.

LIGHT

As you may have noticed when reading the parentage of the Grexes above (You didn't ? well go back and read again) many of the Grexes had Brassia's in their parentage. Those with a high percentage of Brassia will tolerate a lot of light some like Brassidium's will not bloom without strong light mostly around 50% to 60% light will suffice. If the leaves become too yellow and the flower racemes are short and crowded reduce the light and if the leaves are too green and the flower racemes are weak and straggley increase the light. You will have to 'play around ' with them a little to find the right place in your orchid house as we all have slightly different growing conditions even if we are close neighbours.

COMPOST (GROWING MEDIA OR POTTING MIX)

Whatever you call it it needs to be:-

- (a) long lasting
- (b) well draining
- (c) have reasonable air space between the particles
- (d) be ready for the roots to feel at home in
- (e) be of a grade (size) suitable to the size of plant and pot used.

We use a composted bark however no matter what you use the media must never be allowed to sour repot regularly at least every three years. The lasting quality of your potting media is governed by the following factors :-

- (a) type of pot Plastic or Clay
- (b) quality of water
- (c) type of fertiliser used Organic, Inorganic, Chelated or Non-chelated.
- (d) air movement around pots
- (e) frequency of watering
- (f) cleanliness keeping your plants pest free. Some pests will reduce your bark to mud very quickly if not kept in check. Check your media / root system regularly watch for salt buildup around the drainage holes and roots burning off when hitting the media as they enter the pot.



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HUMIDITY

These plants like a relative humidity of around 50% to 60% this will depend on your other growing conditions such as air movement and potting media. On very hot days add humidity by wetting the floor of your orchid house don't wet the plants until the 'Sting' has gone out of the temperature late in the evening. In the colder months keep the plants dryer at night.

WATERING

This also depends greatly on other factors such as air movement water quality potting media temperature etc. These plants like to be moist (not wet) at all times as they tend to grow all year round remember the old rule 'If your not sure whether to water or not 'Then Don't'. Water' plants late evening in hot weather so they can make the most of it during the cooler night temperatures and in the colder times water mid morning so the plants (not the potting media) are dry by nightfall thus reducing the possibility of fungal spotting and damage from frost. Quality of water is important if you have bad water high in salts detrimental to the good health of your plants then water heavily as misting will only increase the salt buildup on the top of your potting media.

FERTILISER

This has to be balanced against your other growing conditions. A good well balanced fertiliser made from chelated ingredients is preferred as this tends not to build up unused salts on and in your potting media lengthening the life of the potting media and the time between repots. Plants growing in full sun or a lot of light or growing in a bark potting media will require a higher nitrogen fertiliser than those growing in more shaded conditions. We use a low nitrogen mixture on adult plants all year as with the parent combinations they have they tend to flower several times per year.

AIR CIRCULATION

This is a must for any Orchid good air circulation will prevent many Fungal and Bacterial problems from arising and will limit the spread of any problems that occur. A good buoyant atmosphere should be maintained at all times

PESTS AND DISEASE

These plants can suffer from all the usual nasties remember a pest is like a weed it's just in the wrong place doing the wrong thing. In it's homeland I'm sure it has a good role to play anyway keep your orchid house free of pest's and disease keep the house clear of dead tissue (leaves etc) and the surrounding area neatly mowed. If you have any Citrus trees nearby keep them sprayed for Scale and Mealybug, if an outbreak of any pest or disease occurs have them / it properly diagnosed and treat accordingly remember most Chemicals these days are specific and you won't control the problem if the chemical is not designed to combat that particular pest / disease.