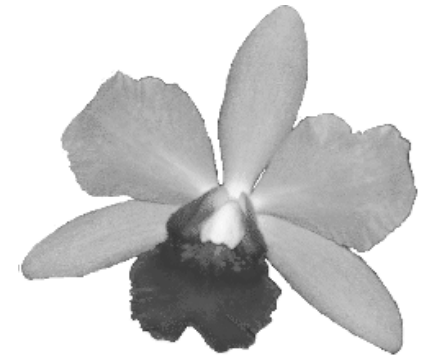


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Regal Orchids Culture Sheet For Cattleya Alliance



The Cattleya is best known as the classic corsage orchid, used to great extent in bouquets and posies across the world. The flowers are notable for their size, varied colours and striking contrasting lip. Crossings with Laelia, Epidendrum, Sophronitis and Brassavola have led to vigorous growing, highly adaptable hybrids that are always popular.

In its native countries of Central and South America the plants are generally epiphytes, clinging to the trunks and branches of trees and come in two forms; those with a flat pseudo bulb and one terminal leaf and those with more club-like pseudobulbs with twin terminal

leaves. Bud formation is easily noticeable in all cattleyas. A spatha (or sheath) forms between the leaves of the new growth and from it will emerge the flowering stem.

Indoor Cultivation

LIGHT

Provide bright light at all times if possible for maximum growth. Check leaf colour as the plant grows: medium green indicates correct lighting. Yellow or burned foliage indicates too much light. Leaves are thick and may warm up if too much light is given - if warm to the touch, reduce light. In Scotland, a south facing windowsill is ideal or a conservatory or greenhouse suits these plants well.

TEMPERATURE/ HUMIDITY

Minimum night temperature may go down to 55 degrees F. Daytime temperatures can go up to 90 degrees, as long as adequate humidity (40-50%) and good air movement is provided. Aerial roots are common from the new growth and indicate the plant is vigorously growing.

WATER

Water when the potting medium is nearly dry. A good test is to lift the pot: it will seem quite light or top heavy when water is needed. In general, these types of orchids will require water every 3-5 days in the spring/summer, and 5-7 days in autumn/winter, depending on weather. Use

a 50:50 mix of rain and tap water for best results. Allow the water to flow freely through the potting media and out the base. The plant should not be allowed to sit in water. Water early morning, so leaves will dry by night to prevent disease. Watering can be reduced to half as often once the spatha/sheath has formed as the plant will be resting prior to producing the flower spike. If the pseudobulbs seemed shrivelled, this is a sign that you are not watering the plant enough.

FERTILIZER

Fertilize every watering year round. Any orchid food is ideal for use at the manufacturers recommended dosage or use normal household plant fertilizer at ½ the recommended dosage. Remember that most orchids are weak feeders compared to other household plants.

Ideal formula Orchid Food is readily available from Regal Orchids.

FLOWERING

This plant can flower more than once per year depending on the speed of new growth. Most likely a Cattleya will only produce one new growth at a time from the base of the last flowering pseudo bulb.

Cattleyas generally do not flower for as long a period as other orchids but make up for this with their exotic blooms and fragrances.

REPOTTING

A potting medium such as fir bark or a bark/coco husk mix that gives excellent drainage is ideal. For blooming size plants, medium size fir bark is perfect. To maintain good drainage, repot in fresh medium about every 2 years. If possible, repot in the spring months, and when in doubt about root health, repot. However, do not place your plant in too large a new pot! Enough room for one or two new growths is enough. Regal Orchids Compost mixes are ideal for these plants and can be bought in varying weight sizes.

HINTS & TIPS

- Plants will lose a leaf from time to time. This is a normal part of the aging process.
- Rotting of new growths is a likely sign of over watering or too damp conditions. Change the plants regime slightly and monitor its progress.