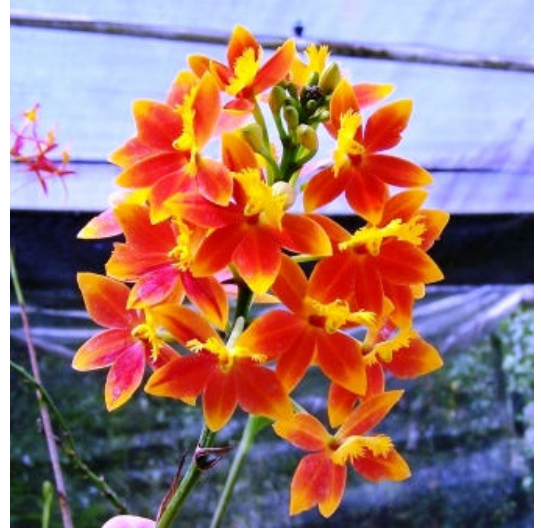


Epidendrum

Introduction

This group of orchids encompass a range of plants which bear colourful, long lasting flowers on top of vigorous growth. *Epidendrum* are good novice orchid plants owing to their easy growing habitat. Native to the Americas, they are variable in habitat with some being lithotropic and some terrestrial. The so-called 'mini epidendrum' are in fact hybrids of *Epiphronitis Veitchii*, a very strange hybrid only made once that was supposedly sterile. It appears that one individual plant out of a tissue culture of that hybrid was fertile, which opened the door to all the miniature *Epidendrum* used as pot plants today.



Pot type:

These plants are fairly forgiving and will grow in any pot type. Preferring an open media terracotta pots or baskets are often used in warmer climates. Repotting should occur every 12-18 months after flowering or when roots are looking for new media.

Grades to use:

A very open free draining mix should be used. For both small and large plants the larger grade Orchiata should be used e.g. Power and or Power+. Similar potting styles to *Cattleya* can be used.

Humidity and Air:

High humidity (50-80%) should be maintained however good air movement should always accompany this. Misting in high temperatures will aid growth in summer.

Temperature:

These plants prefer warmer temperatures normally however they will tolerate a wide temperature band. Day temperatures should be maintained at 60-90°F with night 30 – 70°F. Higher altitude varieties will tolerate cooler temperatures than this.

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F +64 3 359 8240
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519 Wairakei Road
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Light:

Epidendrum prefer bright light; full sun when younger and filtered light (mimicking rain forest canopies) when established.

Fertiliser:

Use a ½ strength 20-20-20 fertiliser during the higher growth periods (spring, summer, autumn). More fertiliser during flowering will lead to denser and brighter flower spikes. Fertilise every 7 days in summer and once a month in winter. In periods of low light reduce the nitrogen amount by half, such as a 10-30-20 or 10-20-30.

Irrigation:

Epidendrum being mostly rainforest plants are preferable to high rain which drains away rapidly. Therefore wet and dry cycles must be provided to potted plants as well. Water plants thoroughly and allow to dry sufficiently before the next irrigation. Do not fully dry out but allow the top centimetre of the media to dry. Irrigate at least 3 times a week in summer and once every 7-10 days in winter.

General:

Changes in light levels initiate flowering therefore plants can flower all year round if provided shade, then brought into the light like autumn and spring. Remove old flower spike to help encourage newer growth. The micro *Epidendrum* respond as well to cold spells by blooming possibly due to their *Sophranitis* ancestor. Plants are susceptible to leaf spotting; if leaves and bulbs turn red and start shrivelling this is likely to be *Rhizoctonia*. Periodic drenches of thiophanate methyl will help to keep the plant perfectly clean.

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