

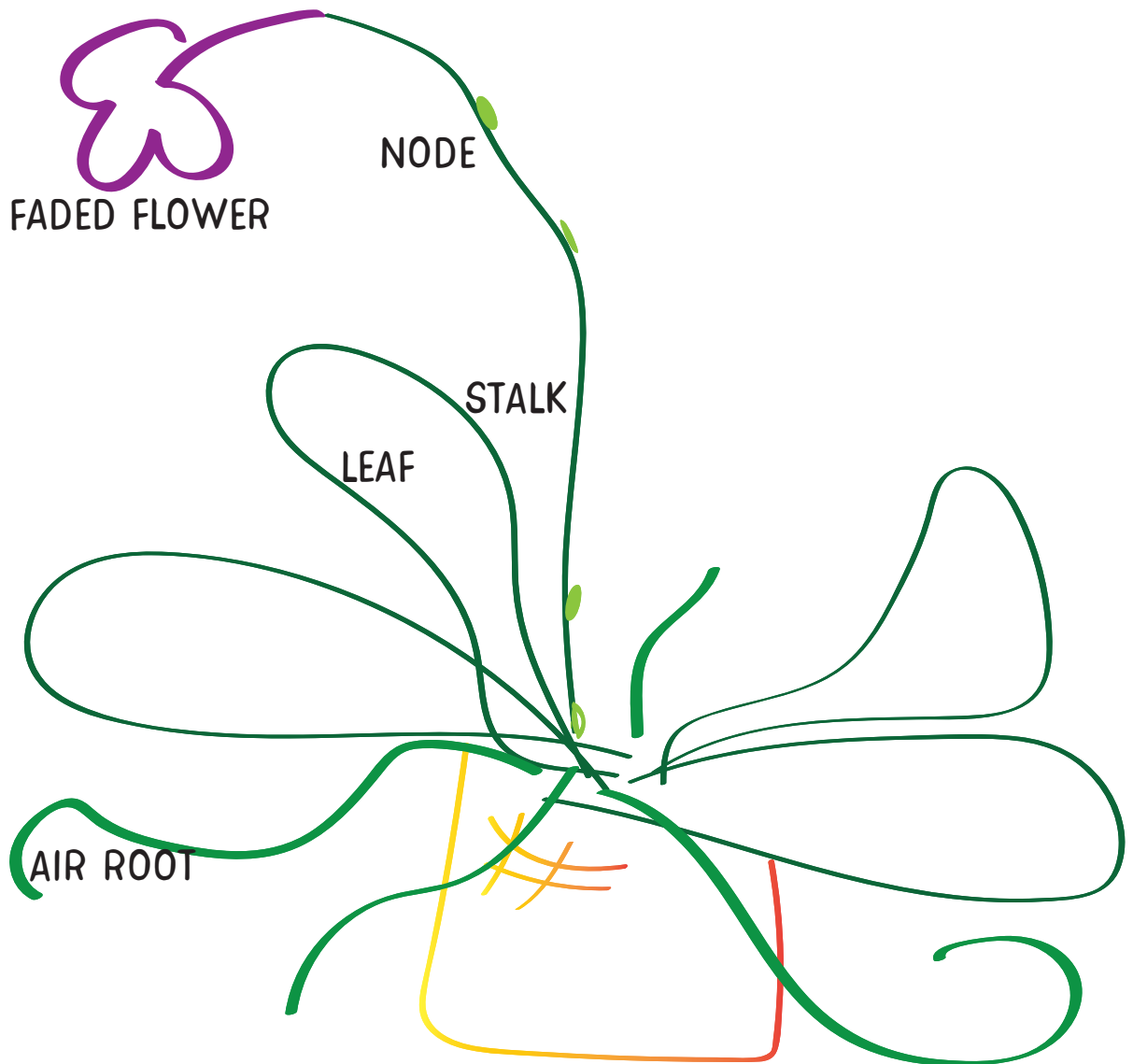


**YOUR CUTTING THE ORCHID SPIKE
CHEATSHEET
FREEBIE**

*A step-by-step guide to cutting the orchid spike
to promote flowering.*

by Anna Weston

Phalaenopsis Orchid



Sterilize the Scissors

Before making a cut, be sure that your scissors have been sanitized. This may seem like an unnecessary step, but it will help keep your orchids healthy by preventing viruses and other pathogens from being passed between orchids. Think of yourself as a sort of orchid doctor. There are two ways to accomplish this: rubbing alcohol or a flame.

Method 1

Tools:

- » Rubbing alcohol
- » Cotton balls

Procedure:

Soak a cotton ball with rubbing alcohol and thoroughly wipe down the scissor blades.

Method 2

Tools:

- » Small torch. I use a kitchen torch. One day the torch caramelizes crème brûlée, the next it sanitizes my pruning shears. Multi-purpose.

Procedure:

Pass the scissor blades through the flame for about 4 seconds.

Read This Before Cutting:

The Phalaenopsis, or moth orchid, the one likely purchased from the grocery store, is the only orchid that will rebloom on the same stalk. All other orchids will bloom again, but not from the same stalk. **All other orchids can be trimmed at the base of the flower stalk, above leaves & pseudobulbs.**

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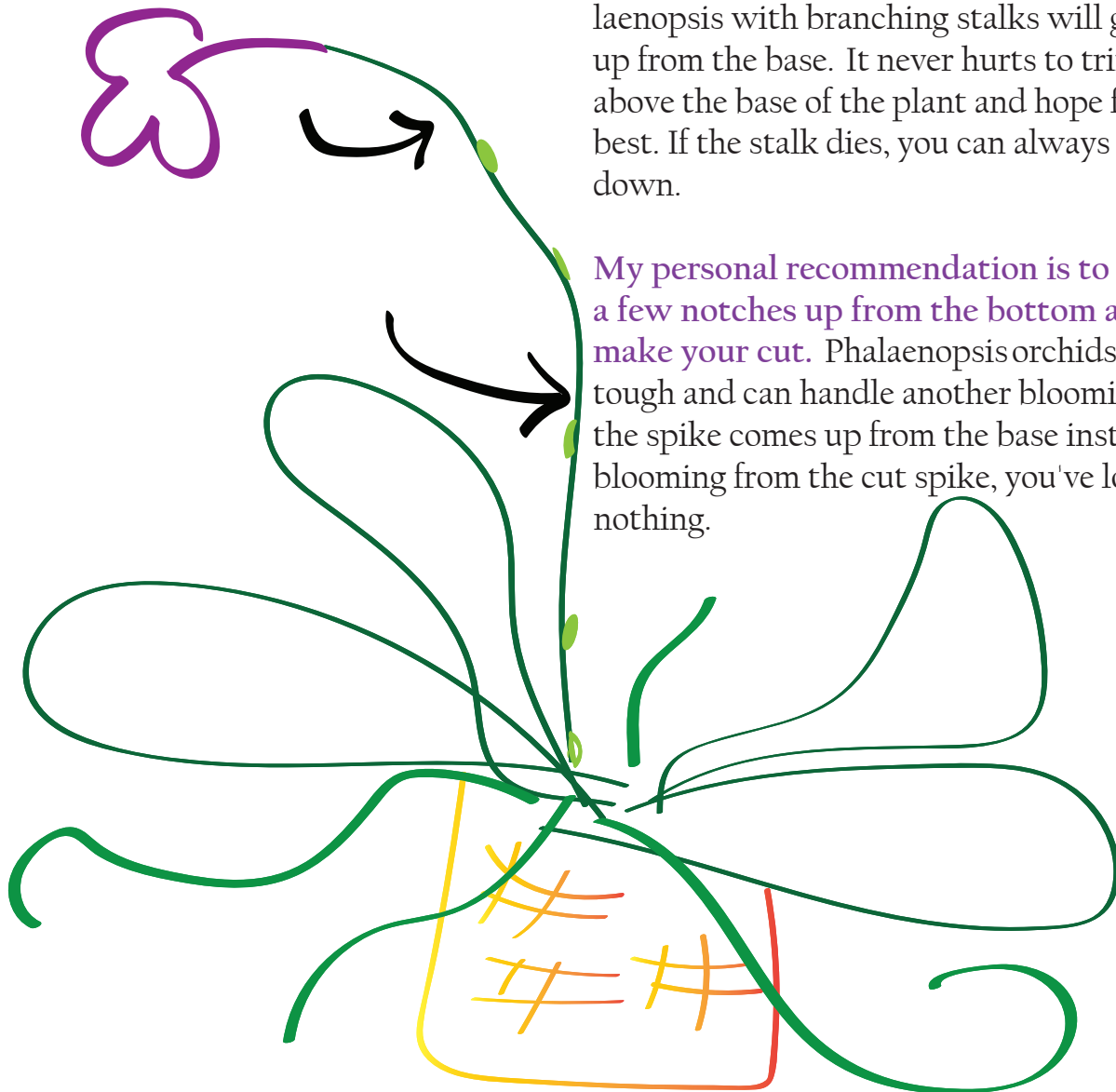
There is one more point I want to be really clear about: Just trim the flower stalk, not the pseudobulbs. Phalaenopsis, Paphiopediliums and Vanda orchids don't have pseudobulbs, but most other orchids do. For instance, if you are growing Dendrobiums or Cattleyas, don't cut the flower stalk off at the base of the plant, just trim the flower stalk. *If you see a bulge in the stem, that is a pseudobulb and you don't want to cut that. If there are leaves growing off a stalk, don't cut that.*

Cutting a Healthy Single Flower Spike

If the flower spike is a healthy green color, one option is to find the node just below the lowest flower and prune it off about an inch above the node. Another flower spike may emerge, though the flowers may be smaller and less plentiful than they were previously.

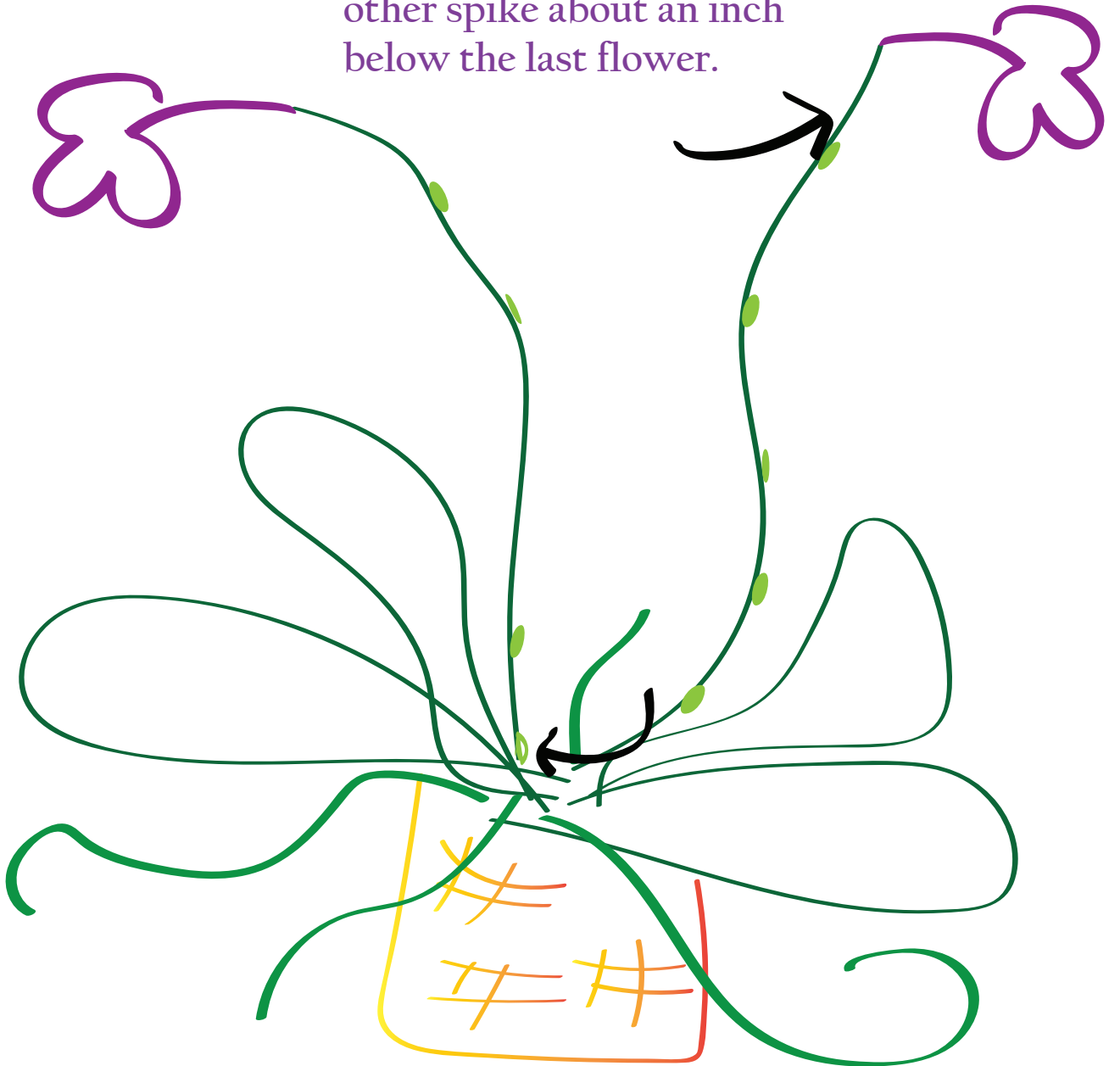
Another option is to trim the spike near the base, with the option of leaving just a couple of nodes. Usually within 2-3 months new growth will appear and buds will form. Remember that younger or weaker plants may not rebloom. Phalaenopsis with branching stalks will grow up from the base. It never hurts to trim above the base of the plant and hope for the best. If the stalk dies, you can always trim it down.

My personal recommendation is to count a few notches up from the bottom and make your cut. Phalaenopsis orchids are tough and can handle another blooming. If the spike comes up from the base instead of blooming from the cut spike, you've lost nothing.



Trimming a Double Flower Stalk

If you are lucky enough to have a double-spike Phalaenopsis orchid, **cut one spike at the base and cut the other spike about an inch below the last flower.**



Trimming a Dying Flower Stalk

If the spike is dying, and looks brown, trim the stem at the base of the plant.

The Phalaenopsis is unique because it will bloom more than once a year. Most other orchids bloom only annually.

If the orchid is not a Phalaenopsis, trim below the flower stalk, but above pseudobulbs and leaves.

