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Phalaenopsis
orchid care card

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DESCRIPTION

The Phalaenopsis (fal-ah-NOP-sis), nicknamed the moth orchid, is a rewarding and hardy orchid. Millions of these plants are sold every year. If properly cared for, these plants will bloom year after year - sometimes more than once a year.



WATER

Keep potting medium slightly damp. To know when it's time to water, let the potted roots (not the aerial roots) be your guide. Silvery roots indicate that it's time to water, while green roots mean the roots are still absorbing moisture. When watering, water copiously.



TEMPERATURE

Warm, 70-80° F/21-26.7° C, with about a month of intermediate temperatures 55-60° F/ 13-15.6° C in the winter to trigger blooming.



FERTILIZATION

Phals are moderate feeders. Apply balanced (7-7-7) liquid fertilizer three out of four weeks. On the fourth week, flood potting media to rinse fertilizer salts. If orchid is potted in bark, use a high nitrogen fertilizer (9-3-6).



LIGHT

Phalaenopsis are considered a low light orchid (1000-1800 fc). Place your Phal in a bright east-facing window, or a shaded south or west window. If you live in a climate with a lot of cloud cover, a south-facing window may work best.



POTTING & MEDIA

While bark can work wonderfully in greenhouses, indoors, sphagnum moss distributes water more evenly. Pot Phalaenopsis loosely in sphagnum moss, and repot yearly as sphagnum moss absorbs fertilizer salts. The best time to pot is after the flowers have faded.



HUMIDITY

Humidity levels between 40-50% work well for this orchid. Use a humidifier if necessary and a fan set to *low* to provide air movement.

TIPS

Mature Phals grow many aerial roots and may possess an ungainly stem. You can cut off the top of the orchid as long as you have several aerial roots and pot the top section. Leave the lower section as-is in the original pot. If this lower section has healthy roots, new leaves will grow. With a bit of luck, you'll get two orchids for one.