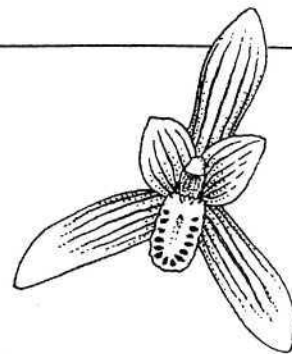


# Cymbidium

sym-BID-ee-um



**O**n the West Coast of the United States, and in other cool-summer areas that receive no severe frosts, cymbidiums are among the most popular of spring-flowering orchids and are often grown as garden plants. Their striking sprays of long-lasting blooms provide ideal home or patio decoration, and are often used as cut flowers. There are both standard (large-flowered) and miniature (smaller-flowered) types grown. The miniature types, often known as “novelties,” are more heat-tolerant, but neither type is particularly good in warm summer areas; nor are cymbidiums of any kind successful as houseplants. Cymbidiums are terrestrial plants in nature and require a moisture-retentive but well-drained mix. Fir bark is most commonly used, though more and more growers are switching to artificial or inorganic mixes as quality fir bark becomes less available.

## LIGHT

Sufficient light is important for healthy growth and flower production.

**PROVIDE** Very bright light, up to 80 percent of full sun in coastally moderated areas. Leaves should be naturally erect and of a medium olive-green color. Dark green, limp foliage indicates too little light.

## TEMPERATURE

Mature plants need night temperatures in the low 60s or high 50s in late summer to initiate flower spikes.

**PROVIDE** Nights of 55 to 60 F, though temperatures into the 30s are tolerated; days of 70 to 85 F. Cymbidiums can tolerate temperatures up to 95 to 100 F if shading, humidity and air circulation are increased.

## WATER

Mature plants must never dry out between waterings.

## HUMIDITY

Cymbidiums need 50 to 60 percent. In the home, while in bloom, place on trays of moistened pebbles. In greenhouse, use a humidifier if conditions are too dry.

## FERTILIZER

Must be provided on a regular basis because most potting media have little.

**PROVIDE** The exact fertilizer you use will depend on the mix in which your plant is growing. A good general rule is to apply a balanced (10-10-10, 12-12-12 or similar ratio) fertilizer “weakly, weekly.” That is, fertilize every week at one quarter to one half of the recommended dilution.

## POTTING

Best done every two to three years in spring immediately after flowering to allow maximum time to reestablish before next flowering season.

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