

Vanda Alliance

The Vanda Alliance, as this varied group of plants is called, is made up mostly of warmth- and sun-loving orchids with very colorful flowers. Originating from tropical Asia, they are easily grown in warm climates, where plants are grown outside in light shade, such as in a lath house. In climates where winters are cold, they are often summered outside, and grown inside during the winter in a sunny window, or year-round in a greenhouse.

LIGHT is a crucial factor in blooming some vandaceous plants. There are three types of vandas: strap-leaf, semi-terete and terete. The first type has broader, flat leaves, while terete types have round, pencil-shaped leaves. The

TEMPERATURE for most vandas should be warm; a minimum winter night temperature of 55°F is recommended. Colder spells can be tolerated for a short time if it is not windy. Optimum temperatures are 60°F at night, and a maximum of 95°F during the day. Warmer temperatures mean faster growth, which must be balanced with higher humidity, air movement, and increased water and fertilizer. Days should be warm and humid for optimum plant growth.

WATER. Vandas generally like lots of water when growing, but must dry quickly. Because of this, and their extensive root system, they are mostly grown in slatted wood baskets, or in pots with a coarse potting medium. If

nighttime. Air movement must be strong.

FERTILIZING. A well-balanced (20-20-20) fertilizer applied full strength once a week is recommended when warm, or use 1/4 strength every watering. During cool or cloudy weather, apply fertilizer once every two to four weeks. Use a high-phosphorus fertilizer (such as 10-30-20) every third application to promote blooming. A vitamin B1 compound may be beneficial; use it once a month.

POTTING should be done in the spring. Plants in baskets do not need to be repotted often; leave them unless the potting medium breaks down. Just set the plant, with the old basket, into



semi-teretes are hybrids between the two, with an intermediate shape. Terete types need full sun, and are best grown in high light climates. In warm, bright climates, you can grow any type of vanda, outside (if warm) with partial shade for strap-leaf types and semi-teretes (especially in midday in summer) or inside (when cold) in a bright, south window. In climates where winters are dull, try strap-leaf types (or ascocendas); grow them outside in summer and in full sun inside during the winter. In a greenhouse, give the plants about 25% to 35% shade, less in winter if dull. Leaves should be a medium green, not dark green.

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Vandas are colorful and prolific orchids originating in warm, humid climates, with plentiful sunshine. They can be flowered in a greenhouse, or even in a sunny window. Vandas, and especially the related ascocendas, can bloom several times a year, making quite a show. They are often summered outside to give the plants the much-loved sun.

Light—Strong light is important. Some sun must be available.

GIVE: Some sun, up to nearly full sun for some types. In the home, full, south sun is best. Eastern exposures may suffice. In the greenhouse, 25% to 30% shade should be provided unless temperatures can be below 95°F.

Temperature—Minimum winter nights should be 55°F, but warmer is better. The warmer they are, the faster the growth.

GIVE: Nights of 55° to 65°F; days of 75° to 95°F. High temperatures and humidity are best for fast growth and frequent flowering. Be cautious not to scorch plants in high light levels.

Water—

GIVE: Give water frequently when growing, but plants must dry quickly. Keep drier if cool. Keep humidity high when warm; 80% is ideal. Mist roots and plants in home frequently; set plants on tray of pebbles. Do not let water stand in leaves overnight.

Fertilizer—Must be fertilized regularly, since potting medium holds little.

GIVE: 20-20-20 full strength once a week if warm; 10-30-20 once a month to promote blooms.

If weather is dull or cool, fertilize only every two to four weeks.

warm and sunny, they may need daily watering, with misting several times a day in dry or hot climates. Water sparingly in the winter or during cloudy weather, but do not allow plants to shrivel.

HUMIDITY of 80% is ideal. In tropical climates this may be easy to obtain. Yet in most climates, misting may be necessary during sunny weather. In a greenhouse, this is easier to provide by wetting down the floor, or using an evaporative cooler. In the home, place the plants on trays of gravel, partially filled with water. Do not mist the plants if the leaves will not dry by

a container of water to make the aerial roots more pliable, and then set plant and basket into a larger basket. For plants in pots, repot in a slightly larger pot, positioning the plant in the center. Use a coarse medium, whether fir bark, treefern, charcoal, etc., and work it around the roots. Keep shaded, humid, but drier at the roots until new root tips grow. Do not overpot.

Prepared by: Education Committee, American Orchid Society, 6000 S. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33405 (407) 585-8666.