

Cattleya Alliance



General Culture

Members of this ALLIANCE can be grown in plastic pots, clay pots, and wooden baskets or attached to some kind of slab. Ideal annual temperature range is 7°C to 32°C. A 10°C drop between day and night temperatures is beneficial. Cattleya Alliance requires conditions of good light and humidity, with plenty of water during growth. Some shade will be needed in summer to avoid leaf burn. When pseudobulbs are fully formed, less water should be given.

Light

Cattleya Alliance members grow best in medium light intensity. If possible morning sun up until noon can be given. Unless protected, during the hottest part of the day, the flattened leaves will burn in full sun. Lime green coloured foliage is an indication of proper light. Dark green foliage, while very attractive, is not conducive to the plant reaching their full blooming potential. Yellow coloured foliage indicates too much light.

Water

Cattleya Alliance enjoys frequent watering, during their growing period, but will not tolerate wet feet for extended periods. The frequency of watering is relative to the container, the temperature, air circulation, and the amount of water retained in medium in the container. Watering should be done, so the roots are approaching dryness, before re watering. In the warmer periods, several waterings a week can be done, without worry, if the roots can dry quickly.

Fertilizer

Cattleya Alliance plants should be fed consistently, when in full growth. During the Spring through early Autumn, fertilizing every seven days, with several clear waterings in between, will make your Cattleya Alliance plants happy. In the late Autumn through Winter, a light feeding once a month will suffice.

Potting

Cattleya Alliance do not resent being disturbed, so re potting should be undertaken whenever necessary. The best time is after all flowering has ceased. To minimize root damage, a warm water soak for 10 minutes, will make most roots very pliable and easier to remove from the container.

The best potting container for Cattleya Alliance plants is clay orchid pots. The plastic pots are second choice and considerable cheaper. Water in plastic pots does not evaporate as fast as in clay pots, but if adjustments in watering frequency are made no problems will be encountered.

The potting medium must be well-drained, i.e. coarse bark, lava rock, river rocks, pieces of broken pottery, chunks of tree fern, hardwood charcoal, etc. so that the roots can be wet, but then dry quickly.

When dividing Cattleya Alliance plants, always divide into parts with four pseudobulbs. Remove any dead roots from the divisions, and then lay the divisions aside until new root growth begins. At that time, usually a week or so, repot the divisions in their new pots. Now the plants can be watered and fertilized as usual, without worrying about rotting them, because they retained no roots in the division. Newly repotted plants should be placed in slightly lower light for several weeks.

Tips

When you purchase a new plant, always place it where you can watch it for a couple of weeks until it is acclimated to your area. Initially, water the plant thoroughly and place it in a bright location with good humidity.

Examine your plants on a regular basis. Always remove the dried sheathing from pseudobulbs to prevent build-up of moisture, and as a hiding place for insects. In nature, the breeze removes the sheath. In captivity, you must remove the sheath. The removal of the sheath also provides more surfaces for photosynthesis activity. Insects, particularly scale insects, find Cattleya Alliance plants attractive. Also slugs and snails will dine on these plants. Following the label recommendations on your favourite insecticide will usually solve any insect problem. Bud sheaths often collect water inside causing the new buds to rot. Cutting the top off the sheath will eliminate this problem. On occasion, a sheath will form without a bud ever forming. On the other hand some, because of their mixed up genetics, will form a sheath, then many months later form the flower buds.