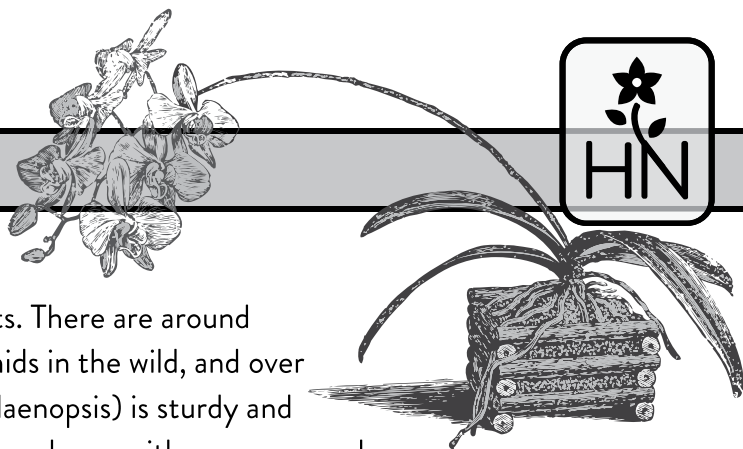


CARE GUIDE:

Moth Orchids



The Basics

Orchids have become very popular houseplants. There are around 30,000 species of orchids in the wild, and over 100,000 registered hybrids. The Moth Orchid (Phalaenopsis) is sturdy and resilient, and by far the most popular. Its petals are round, one with a pronounced lip. Flowers are usually white, yellow, purple, pink, or a combination, on a single, tall stalk above a whorl of fleshy, oval leaves. Phalaenopsis is also one of the easiest orchids to grow, as long as a few basic conditions are met. Following are instructions for successful indoor care and reblooming of orchids.

Guidelines for Success

LIGHT Orchids do well indoors in indirect sunlight. The leaves will burn in direct sun.

WATERING The most common cause of death for orchids (and most houseplants) is overwatering. The perfect time to water most orchids is just before they go dry. Stick a finger in the potting mix, then pull it out and rub your fingers together. If you don't feel any moisture, it's time to water. If your finger feels moist, check again the next day. The roots can also tell you when it the plant needs water. When they turn a silvery-green, that's a sign. You'll begin to develop a sense of how often your orchid needs water. You'll also start to notice how light the pot gets when it is dry. To water your orchid, simply pour water into the potting mix, and let any excess drain through the bottom.

HUMIDITY Orchids prefer high humidity. A bathroom or kitchen location works well. To create higher humidity, place pot over a shallow tray of pebbles and water, or use a humidity tray. Orchids don't like wet feet, so be sure the pot is above water level.

Orchid Fun Fact

Many orchids will rebloom several times per year, and can live for decades. The oldest on record thrived for more than 100 years.

FEEDING Use an orchid fertilizer, following directions. The concentration will depend on whether you choose to fertilize weekly or monthly.

TEMPERATURE

Orchids prefer temperatures of 70-85°F during the daytime, and 55-65°F at night. Typical household temperatures are perfect for many orchids. Since they are very sensitive to rapid temperature changes, be sure not to locate near an air vent or exterior door.

REPOTTING Repot every other year in an orchid mix or sphagnum moss, ideally, during dormancy. (See back for details.)

A SECOND BLOOM When the last flower drops, cut the spike just above a healthy node. The healthiest node is usually the one closest to the last blooming flower, and should be green. Some nodes already have small growths on them, which look like tiny twigs. One like this would be a good choice. Often, a new shoot will emerge from the cut location.

PREPPING

Once all blooms have fallen, and the spikes begin to turn brown, remove all stakes and clips.

CUTTING BACK

Be sure to use sharp scissors to get a clean cut.

For **BROWN** spikes:

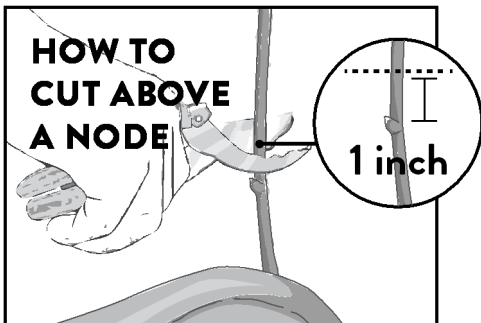
- Cut back to base of plant

For **GREEN** single-spikes:

- Find the healthiest (usually the lowest) flower node
- Cut 1" above that node

For **GREEN** double-spikes:

- Cut one spike down to the base
- Cut the other spike 1" above the node under the last bloom



WATERING

Don't stop watering when the flowers have dropped. Continue with normal watering.

LIGHT

Dormant orchids need lots of indirect light. Add a sheer curtain to a north- or east-facing window, to shield from direct sunlight.

HOW TO

Rebloom

ORCHIDS

FEEDING

Nutrients are important during this phase. For optimum health, fertilize once a month with an orchid fertilizer. Don't water your orchid on weeks you fertilize.

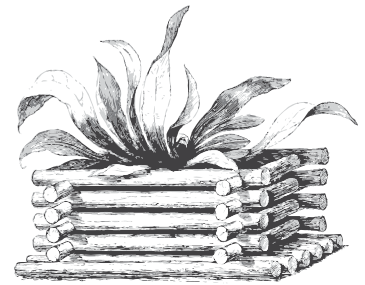
All About Dormancy

A period of rest allows the orchid to store up energy for reblooming. When it is preparing for dormancy, blooms wilt and fall drop. If leaves drop, but roots appear plump, your plant is not dead. Leaf development will resume with the next growth cycle.

Continue caring for your orchid, and you'll likely be rewarded with another season of healthy, vibrant blooms.

DRESSING IT UP

During dormancy, not only the orchid's blooms disappear, but the stems may dry and turn brown as well. Leaves can take on a dull appearance, and may become limp and flat. To dress up the resting plant, add a silk stem of orchid blooms (taking care not to disturb the roots), or incorporate the orchid pot into a larger display of complementary plants, such as mosses and ferns.



AWAKENING

Fall or early winter are great times to trigger a rebloom, since orchids naturally bloom in cooler weather. To encourage flowering, move resting orchid to a cool room for 3-4 weeks. Be sure it stays cooler at night and warmer during the day. When a new flower spike emerges, return the plant to its normal growing environment.

Refer back to this Care Guide for general care, and you should enjoy yet another season of exotic orchid blooms.