

Growers guides | *Ansellia*



Ansellia is a monotypic genus containing a single species, *Ansellia africana*. Found in tropical and subtropical areas in southern, Central, East and West Africa, this genus comes in a variety of sizes, shapes and colour forms. Generally yellow, the spotting on the petals and sepals can range from white to dark maroon. Spotting is normally associated with the location in which the plant is found - the Kruger form is pale yellow with slight white spotting, while those found in West Africa are much larger flowers with dark maroon spots.

Temperature

The ideal day temperature for growing *Ansellia* is between 22° - 30°C, while the ideal night temperature is 15° - 18°C. Occasional temperature extremes are tolerated if plants are shaded for the hottest parts of the day or protected from frosts at night.

Light

Ansellias require high light levels throughout the day. They enjoy full sun or bright light in the morning, but may require shading from about 11am - 3pm. They can get bright light again in the late afternoon but make sure the light is not strong enough to burn the leaves. Their leaves should be a light green colour (the colour of a lemon just before it turns yellow). If the leaves are dark green it indicates too little light.

Water

Water must be plentiful in the summer months and the medium must drain well. In their native habitat, the plants are drenched almost daily during summer rain showers and get very little to no water in the winter months. Watering should mimic trends seen in nature by giving the plants a dry rest period in winter, watering only once every seven to 10 days.

Feeding

Use a balanced fertiliser at half strength once a week while plants are actively growing (spring through autumn). This can be reduced to once a month in the winter.

Humidity

Humidity should be at least 50 percent. Bigger plants are often seen in river beds where humidity may be higher so providing humidity levels of up to 70 percent may be beneficial.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike

Dead spikes can be cut off at the base of the inflorescence, close to the plant. Flowering occurs once a year, in the spring and summer months.

Repotting

Repotting should be done only when the plant has outgrown its container or when the medium has begun to break down (every two to three years). *Ansellias* can be planted in plastic or clay pots, wooden or wire baskets or even mounted on a horizontal mount. Repot in late spring once the new growths have matured slightly.

Did you know?

The largest known *Ansellia* weighs over two tonnes and houses a pair of eagle owls.

Did you know?

Ansellias are highly scented. Most people comment on the strong musky fragrance, which some find pleasant and others objectionable.