

Growers guides | *Dendrobiums*



Dendrobiums consist of a very diverse genus, containing of over 1200 species, many of which have very different cultural needs. Some species go through a growth phase and then a rest phase during the course of a year, and must be given water, food, light and temperature to match these periods of growth and rest. Flowers can last one day to many weeks, depending on the type. Some of the longer-lasting dendrobiums are commonly used as cut flowers because of their sturdy stems and distinctive colouring.

Temperature

The ideal day temperature is between 23° - 30°C, while the ideal night temperature is 15° - 18°C. Occasional temperature extremes are tolerated if exposure is not prolonged.

Light

Dendrobiums prefer bright to intermediate light, but will require shading between 11am and 3pm.

Water

Watering of *dendrobiums* is a tricky one, and cannot be standardised across the genus due to the growing conditions of the various types. Some require watering year round (although less is needed in winter), while some species and hybrids require a complete dry rest period, where water is restricted for about five to six weeks.

Feeding

High-nitrogen fertilisers should be used during spring and summer, while fertilisers high in potassium and phosphorous should be used during autumn. A general all-purpose fertiliser can be given throughout the year, although little food, if any, is required during the winter months.

Humidity

Dendrobiums enjoy humidity levels of between 50 to 80 percent. This can be provided in the home by placing the plants on trays of gravel, only partially filled with water so that the plants do not sit in the water. Air should always be moving around the plants to prevent fungal or bacterial disease, especially if high humidity or cool temperatures exist.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike

Dendrobiums can flower on the cane or from the apex of a new growth. After your *dendrobium* has finished flowering remove as much of the spike as possible without cutting into the cane. Some species will only flower on old canes while others will flower on new canes. Some species will flower on both old and new canes.

Repotting

Repot every two to three years during spring with a well-draining medium. Many *dendrobium* species are epiphytic so mounting may be a preferred option to reduce the need to repot.

Did you know?

Many *denbrobium* species are known to remove pollutants and toxins from the air. Some species are also used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Did you know?

The Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, had a *dendrobium* hybrid named after her.