

Growers guides | *Gongora*



Gongora is an epiphytic orchid genus containing over 70 species. This genus is found in wet tropical forests throughout Central and South America. The pendulous inflorescences arise from the base of the pseudobulbs, with some spikes growing to more than a metre long in length in some species. The spikes bear many intricately-shaped flowers that are often scented. The flowers can resemble birds or dragons depending on how active your imagination is. In general, gongoras are easy to grow into large, showy plants.

Temperature

Temperatures should be intermediate to warm, ideally between 21 - 29° C during the day, dropping to 6 - 8° C at night.

Light

Gongoras like bright, indirect light, similar to Cattleyas. They will tolerate less light, (even dim Phalaenopsis lighting) but the leaves will grow more horizontally and darker in colour to compensate for the lower light levels.

Water

This genus likes a lot of water so don't let them dry out. You can water as often as daily during the spring and summer. In winter, slow down the watering to avoid root rot. The growing medium should contain products that retain moisture, such as fine bark, sphagnum moss, perlite, etc.

Feeding

Gongoras are heavy feeders so fertilise regularly, particularly when they are actively growing in spring and summer. Supplement the growing medium with slow-release pellet fertiliser to increase the amount of food the plant is exposed to.

Humidity

This genus likes high levels of humidity - between 50 - 70%. Maintain good air movement around the plants too.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike

Dead spikes can be cut off where they emerge from the pseudobulbs once the flowers have fallen off the pendulous inflorescences. Flowering may occur throughout the summer.

Repotting

When repotting, try not to break the fine roots, which branch often and go throughout the potting mix. They also make spiky aerial roots to catch leaves and other detritus; you don't have to bury these, especially if that would require you to bury the ridged pseudobulbs. Best grown in hanging baskets due to the pendulous nature of the inflorescences, although pots can be used because the inflorescences do not grow downward through the media like Stanhopeas.

Did you know?

This genus was named in 1794 in honour of viceroy Antonio Caballero y Gongora of New Granada.

Did you know?

In nature, these orchids often grow in ant nests high in trees.