



Miltoniopsis, also known as pansy orchids, are cool-growing orchids that originate in the higher elevations in Colombia, Panama and Ecuador. Their velvety, rounded petals are flat-faced, in colors ranging from white to pink to red, often with contrasting waterfall lines radiating outward from the center of the flower. The warmer-growing *miltonias*, originate from the Minas Gerais area of Brazil and more closely resemble large-flowered *oncidiums*. Their flowers can be brilliantly patterned.

Temperature

Temperature is a critical factor for the cool-growing plants. Unless temperatures are kept under 26°C, they may not flower. These orchids prefer minimum temperatures of 10 to 13°C, and should be considered intermediate growers because they need intermediate temperatures throughout the year. The warmer growers will tolerate temperatures over 32°C for short periods as long as humidity levels of 70 to 75 percent, or higher, are maintained.

Light

Light should be relatively shaded. Direct sunlight burns the thin leaves within a short period of time. However, the warmer growing species and hybrids prefer more light than the cooler-growing varieties

Water

Water must be plentiful and the medium must drain well. In their native habitat, the plants are drenched almost daily and, because of this, they are intolerant of salt buildup, so flushing your pots every fourth or fifth watering is important when growing in pots. When they are not getting enough water or humidity, the leaves have a tendency to grow with accordion-like pleats. The warmer-growing *miltonias* should be grown like *cattleyas* by allowing them to approach dryness between waterings. They also tend to be slightly more tolerant of salt buildup than their Colombian cousins so they can dry more between waterings.

Feeding

Use a balanced fertiliser at quarter or half strength once a week while plants are actively growing. This can be reduced to once a month in the winter. A 10-30-20 blossom-booster formulation is beneficial in early spring when plants approach their flowering period.

Humidity

Humidity must be at least 70 percent because of the plants' need for abundant water. Less humidity will stress the plants and can lead to susceptibility to disease, though too much humidity is worse than too little.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike

Dead spikes can be cut off at the base of the inflorescence, close to the plant. Some species and hybrids can flower more than once a year.

Repotting

Potting should be done after flowering when the new growth is starting. *Miltoniopsis* should be repotted every year as they are intolerant of stale conditions and do well in small pots. *Miltonias* tend to have a relatively elongated creeping habit and, therefore, do better mounted.

Did you know?

Despite the fact that *Miltonia* is now a well established genus, most of its species were originally classified under other genera as *Cyrtorchilum*, *Oncidium*, *Odontoglossum* and *Brassia*.