



## Growing guide | *Cattleyas*

*Cattleyas* are among the most popular orchids in home culture. While some naturally occurring species are offered by growers, the most popular plants are man-made hybrids derived from combining *cattleyas* with some of their close relatives to produce a wide range of colours, sizes and forms. Culture varies only slightly among most of the species and hybrids.

**Temperature:** The ideal day temperature for growing *cattleyas* is between 22° - 30°C, while the ideal night temperature is 15° - 18°C. Occasional temperature extremes are tolerated if exposure is not prolonged.

**Light:** *Cattleyas* and their relatives require high light levels. They enjoy full sun in the morning, but will require shading from about 11am - 3pm. They can get bright light again in the late afternoon. Their leaves should be a light green colour, with a darker green colour indicates too little light.

**Water:** *Cattleyas* grow best when their potting medium becomes dry in between watering. These plants are epiphytes in nature, and are used to drying out between the rains of their natural habitat. Plants in active growth need more water than plants that are resting.

**Feeding:** Fertilisers which are high in nitrogen can be used year-round as can balanced fertilisers. Feed at least once a month, although weekly feeding can be beneficial if fertilisers are diluted heavily.

**Humidity:** *Cattleyas* 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.

**Repotting:** *Cattleyas* should not be repotted unless plants have outgrown the pot or when the potting medium begins to deteriorate. *Cattleyas* grow well in a medium that drains effectively but are also happy with being mounted.

**Cutting Dead Flower Spike:** Once flowering has ended and the spike has turned brown, cut the spike where it emerges from the pseudobulb. *Cattleyas* produce a single flower spike from a pseudobulb.