



Growing guide | *Cymbidiums*

Cymbidiums have been cultured for nearly two thousand years and are prized for their long-lasting sprays of flowers. There are two main types of *cymbidiums* - standards and miniatures. Flowers come in a wide range of colours, sizes and forms.

Temperature: *Cymbidiums* will tolerate considerable summer heat as long as they get cool, mild night temperatures (between 10° - 18°C). Cold temperatures, even below zero for a few hours each night, will not damage an acclimatised plant, but once the plant spikes or flowers it should be protected from temperatures below 5°C. Plants should always be kept free of frost. Where summer nights are warm (above 20°C), miniatures are recommended because many are more tolerant of heat.

Light: *Cymbidiums* need moderate to bright light. They enjoy sun in the morning and late afternoon, but will require shading from about 11am - 3pm. A light green leaf with just a hint of yellow indicates the maximum amount of sun the plant can take, and a dark green leaf indicates not enough sun.

Water: Watering of *cymbidiums* is a delicate balancing act. They should not be allowed to go completely dry, yet these plants don't want a soggy growing medium. Water when the medium starts getting dry. As with everything else, consideration must be given for the drying effects of varying ambient air temperature and humidity.

Feeding: High-nitrogen fertilisers should be used during spring and summer, while low nitrogen fertilisers should be used during autumn. Little food, if any, is required during the winter months.

Humidity: *Cymbidiums* 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: Repot every two to three years during spring with a well-draining medium. Rock wool is a preferred medium for *cymbidium* culture as it retains moisture for extended periods of time while remaining sterile.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike: Once flowering has ended and the spike has turned brown, cut the spike where it emerges from the base of the plant. *Cymbidiums* may produce multiple flower spikes from a pseudobulb.