



Growing guide | *Oncidiums*

This is a large and diverse genus from South, Central and North America, with an equally diverse number of habitats. *Oncidiums* may originate anywhere from sea level in the tropics to the high elevations of the Andes. This obviously makes cultural generalisations difficult.

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: *Oncidiums* and their hybrids prefer intermediate to bright light. The leaves should be bright green as opposed to dark green or reddish green. Reddish green indicates too much light; dark green indicates not enough light.

Water: *Oncidiums* should become moderately dry between watering. Generally, they require more water while the new shoot is growing and less once the bulb has formed.

Feeding: High-nitrogen fertilisers should be used during spring and summer, while low nitrogen fertilisers should be used during autumn. A general all-purpose fertiliser can be given throughout the year, although less food is required during the winter months.

Humidity: *Oncidiums* require minimum humidity levels of between 40 to 50 percent, with ideal humidity between 55 and 75 percent. To increase humidity in the house place 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. As a general rule, repot them when the new shoot is two to three inches tall or when new roots appear. All the old mix should be removed from the roots and any dead roots should be removed.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike: After your *oncidium* has finished flowering cut the spike off at the base.