



Growing guide | *Paphiopedilums*

Paphiopedilum or Lady's Slippers are one of the most unique and intriguing of all orchids. Its exotic, wax-like, richly coloured blooms can last for weeks and even months. The flower stem rises from the centre of the new growth to form one of the most unusual flowers in the world. Best of all, they are ideal for home growing.

Temperature: *Paphiopedilums* are divided into two temperature groups: warm and cool growers. The attractive mottled-leaf types come from the temperate zones and do best with a night temperature not below 15°C, and a day temperature of 23 - 30°C. The solid green-leafed types come from the higher, cooler altitudes. They require a night temperature of 10° - 15°C and a day temperature of 21° - 27°C.

Light: Place in any bright window but protect from mid-day sun. Leaves should be a medium-green colour. If they are too pale or yellowish, the plant could be getting too much light. Approximately the same light intensity as African Violets is preferred.

Water: *Paphiopedilums* must be kept constantly moist or damp, but not soggy. Check frequently below the surface to determine the need for water. Normal watering intervals are between seven and ten days.

Feeding: Good results may be obtained by using a general purpose fertiliser as well as fertilisers high in nitrogen all year round. Feed once a month at one-third or half of the recommended dilution. *Paphiopedilums* are sensitive to fertiliser burn so make sure to flush the medium after every fourth fertilising.

Humidity: *Paphiopedilums* require minimum humidity levels of between 50 and 70 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. It is important that the base of the growth be potted no deeper than 2cm in the medium. *Paphiopedilums* do not like their roots exposed.

Cutting Dead Flower Spike: After your *paphiopedilum* has finished flowering cut the spike off where it emerges from the plant. Be sure that it has stopped flowering completely as some species and hybrids are sequential flowers.