

PAPHIOPEDILUM

paff-ee-oh-PED-ih-lum - Lady Slipper Orchid

Lady Slippers or Paphiopedilums come from steamy, tropical jungles. They are considered semi-terrestrial and grow in pockets of humus in cliffs or on stream banks. Their attractive foliage and ease of culture make them excellent house plants. Slipper orchids can last eight to ten weeks or more in bloom.

LIGHT: They do best in an east facing window that gets one to two hours of early morning sun, but is out of direct sunlight for the rest of the day. Lady slippers can also be grown in a south or west facing window if shaded by a sheer curtain or kept back from the window.

WATER: How often you water depends on the potting medium used, the type of pot (plastic or clay), and the size of the pot. When you water, water thoroughly. Never put your plant on a water diet nor let it sit in water! Watering is best accomplished in the sink where an abundant quantity of room temperature water can be poured through the entire surface of the medium. Then let the plant stand in the sink for a few minutes to ensure it has drained completely. Water thoroughly and deeply when the medium is slightly dry on top. In most small pots (3-4") that will be about every three to four days.



TEMPERATURE: Mature plants need a 15 to 20° difference between night and day. Nights of 55 to 60°F; days of 70-85°F (up to 100°F won't hurt). Seedlings need temperatures 5 to 10° higher than mature plants.

HUMIDITY: A relative humidity of 50% - 60% is ideal. Good air movement is essential if your humidity is extremely high. In the home this is less of a problem, but in the greenhouse, circulating fans to move the air are a must!

FERTILIZER: Must be provided on a regular basis because most potting media have little fertilizer, although Paphiopedilums will flower with less fertilizer than most orchids. Use an even numbered formula such as 7-7-7 or 10-10-10. Only fertilize when the plant is in active growth; when growing new leaves, or growing a bloom spike.

POTTING: An annual re-potting will keep your orchid growing strongly. The type of potting medium used for orchids rots or composts over the course of a year. Replacing the medium and placing the plant in a new pot will encourage healthy root growth. Lady Slippers prefer a fine, moisture retentive medium such as fine fir bark, sphagnum moss or a mixture of both.

PESTS: Paphiopedilums are relatively pest free. Scale insects, mealybugs, and spider mites can be an occasional problem. The first line of defense is always simple removal. A ball of cotton or light finger pressure and a stream of warm water can be used to wash most insects and their debris off of the leaves. A horticultural or neem oil spray can then be used to smother the pests and their eggs. It is best to examine your plants on a regular basis, as early detection and control is always more effective than trying to control a major infestation.

www.johnsonsfiorists.com

WASHINGTON, DC
4200 Wisconsin Ave, NW
at Van Ness St

KENSINGTON, MD
10313 Kensington Pkwy
next to the Post Office

OLNEY, MD
5011 Olney-Laytonsville Rd
Rt 108 and Zion Rd

