

# How To Care For Your Oncidium-Alliance Orchid in Hawaii



Among the most popular orchids are hybrids of oncidiums and related species (the oncidium alliance). By providing the conditions that they need, you can enjoy their beautiful flowers year after year.

**Light.** Oncidium hybrids like partial sun – either dappled sun (30-40% sun, 60-70% shade) all day, or direct sun in early morning or late afternoon with more shade in the middle of the day. Indoors, these orchids can be grown in an east or west window that gets some sun. They will not flower in deep shade. They grow well outdoors attached to the trunk of a tree or hapu’u.

**Temperature.** Most oncidium-alliance orchids are temperature-tolerant and will grow anywhere in Hawaii. The exception is Miltoniopsis or “pansy orchids”. They need temperatures less than 60 degrees to induce blooming and will not flower in warm coastal areas.

**Water.** When you water, thoroughly drench the pot. Water often enough to keep the medium evenly moist, but not soggy –twice a week is usually sufficient.

**Humidity** is never a problem in Hawaii unless the plant is kept indoors in air conditioning.

**Fertilizer.** Oncidium hybrids, like most orchids, are light feeders. Commercially available fertilizers are fine, but mix them at half-strength. Fertilize every one to two weeks for actively growing plants, or once a month when not in active growth.

**Potting.** Your orchid will need to be repotted when the plant grows over the side of the pot, or when the potting medium breaks down and drains poorly (usually after two or three years). Orchids must be potted in a special orchid mix such as chopped fir bark, not dirt, so the roots have good drainage.

Potting orchids is not like potting other plants, because they don’t grow in dirt. You can learn how, plus much more, at the Hilo Orchid Society (see below).

## *Hilo Orchid Society*

Got questions? We can help. Everyone is welcome at our meetings, which are held the second Saturday of each month except August and December. Meetings feature speakers, growing tips, plant displays, and demos. Check our web site for location and details.

[www.hiloorchidsociety.org](http://www.hiloorchidsociety.org)