

# How To Care For Your Phalaenopsis Orchid in Hawaii



Phalaenopsis (moth orchids) and their hybrids are among the most popular orchids. By providing the conditions that they need, you can enjoy their beautiful, long-lasting flowers year after year.

**Light.** Phalaenopsis need less light than most other orchids. They like bright shade (not deep shade). Indoors, grow them at a window that receives bright light (but not sun) all day, with possibly some early-morning direct sun. Outdoors, grow them in a spot shaded from direct sun.

**Temperature.** Phalaenopsis are warm-growers. Nighttime temperatures should be 60 or above. If you live at a higher elevation where temperatures go below 60, grow your Phalaenopsis indoors.

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

Water the pot, not the leaves. Phalaenopsis are subject to crown rot from water trapped in the crown (top) of the plant.

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

**Fertilizer.** Phalaenopsis, 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.

**Aerial Roots.** It's normal for phalaenopsis to grow roots sticking out into thin air. Don't cut them off. When you water the plant, water these roots, too.

**Reblooming.** Phalaenopsis bloom for months, but eventually the flowers will fall off. If the plant is healthy and has not lost any leaves, you can make it rebloom by cutting the flower stem above a node (a swollen joint in the flower stem). The second blooming will have fewer flowers. Or just cut off the flower stem near the base. Next year the plant will bloom again – be patient.

**Potting.** Your phalaenopsis will need to be repotted when the potting medium breaks down and drains poorly (usually after two or three years). Phalaenopsis 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)