

How To Care For Your Vanda Orchid in Hawaii



Vandas and their hybrids are among the most popular orchids. By providing the conditions that they need, you can enjoy their beautiful flowers year after year.

Light. Vandas like more light than most orchids. There are three types of Vandas: strap-leaved (with flat leaves), terete (with round, pencil-shaped leaves), and semi-terete, having leaves intermediate between the other two. Terete vandas will grow in full sun all day. The other two types like morning or afternoon sun but appreciate some midday shade. Vandas are not good plants to grow indoors; they need more light than a window provides. Vandas grow well outdoors attached to the trunk of a tree or hapu'u.

Temperature. Vandas are warm-growers. Nighttime temperatures should be 60 or above, as is common in coastal areas of Hawaii.

Water. Vandas are commonly grown in hanging baskets with no medium, so the roots are completely exposed to the air. They may need daily watering in sunny weather. Make sure to drench all the roots. If

grown in a pot, thoroughly drench the pot, then let it dry between waterings. As a rule of thumb, larger pots (6" or more) may need water once a week; smaller pots twice a week.

Humidity is never a problem outdoors in Hawaii.

Fertilizer. Vandas like more fertilizer than most orchids. Commercially available fertilizers are fine, but mix them at half-strength. Fertilize once or twice a week if plants are watered daily.

Potting. It's normal for your vanda to make copious roots hanging down below its basket. Eventually the wooden basket may rot or the plant may grow so large that it needs to be potted in a larger basket. If grown in a pot, your vanda will need to be repotted when the potting medium breaks down and drains poorly (usually after two or three years).

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