



## Phalaenopsis (fal-en-NOP-siss)

### Origin

Tropical Southeast Asia and Philippine Islands

### Temperature

The optimal range for growing phals is 60°F night and upwards to 87°F daytime. This is considered to be a fairly warm growing orchid.

### Light

Phals require 500-1200 footcandles to grow and flower well. This may be achieved by growing in an east window or in a south or west facing window, with some shading or by placing the plants away from direct sun. Phals can be grown very well under fluorescent lights for 14 hours daily. The lights should be no more than 2 feet away from the plant's leaf surface.

### Humidity

Phals enjoy 50-80% relative humidity, with gentle air movement. If you grow your phals in the house putting them in trays filled with gravel and water can provide humidity. The bottom of the pot should always be above the water level.

### Watering

Phals can not store water for themselves, they should not be allowed to become bone dry, consequently, the potting medium should be kept moist but not soaking wet. Always water thoroughly and then let it become almost dry and water again. Frequency of watering would range from 5-10 days depending on the season. Water early in the morning on a clear, sunny day to allow the plant leaves to dry off by mid afternoon. Always use tepid water or water at room temperature.

### Fertilizer

Feed weekly, year-round except December and January, feed bi-weekly using a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20 or 18-18-18 at 1/2 teaspoon per gallon of water. Water first with plain water before fertilizing.

### Repotting

Repotting should be done every 12-18 months. The best time to repot phals is the late spring, just after flowering has completed. Immediately after repotting for about 4-8 weeks, keep the newly repotted phals warm, more shaded and slightly moist until they have established themselves in the newly transplanted potting medium and show new roots. Phals can also be grown in many different media from bark, moss, coconut chips and other combinations.

### **Summer Growing Conditions**

Phals can be brought outside from June to September in the Northeast region, provided they can receive open shade and good air circulation. Be certain to check the plant for insects and disease, on a regular basis, about every 10-14 days, in order to take care to protect the plant promptly.

### **Professional Advice**

In early September, expose the phals to 4 weeks of 60°F nights to 75°F or above days to initiate flower spikes. Phals need this day/night temperature differential to spike. After the flower spike has finished flowering, on the larger, healthy plants, you may cut the spike just below the section where the first flower opened to encourage a secondary spike to form. The quality of the flowers may not be equal to the original spike and you may want to cut the spike off completely (about an inch from the base) and wait for the cycle of flowering next season.