

dendrobium orchid



Photo courtesy of McLellan Botanicals

DENDROBIUM

BOTANICAL NAME

Dendrobium spp. (den-DRO-bee-um)

COMMON NAMES

Bamboo orchid, Singapore orchid

DESCRIPTION

Dendrobium plants are varied, but most varieties bloom in sprays with delicate florets that are 1 inch to 2 inches across, blooming along a central sturdy stem.

COLORS

Dendrobiums are available in an array of colors including purple, pink, fuchsia, white, yellow, green and bicolors. Purples and whites are the most popular and available.

CONSUMER LIFE

The plants can last from weeks to months.

AVAILABILITY

Dendrobiums are available year-round.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Bright, indirect light is recommended. Inadequate light levels can result in spindly stems and thin leaves with few or no flowers. East or west windows in the summer and fall, and south windows in the winter and early spring will give plenty of light to grow *Dendrobiums* well. Extended exposure to strong light or abrupt exposure of plants to high temperatures in the presence of strong light can quickly cause permanent sunburn.

WATER For best flowering, regular watering is needed. Let the plants dry slightly between waterings, or root rot can result.

TEMPERATURE *Dendrobium* plants are tropicals and require warm conditions. Consumers should maintain daytime temperatures of 70 F to 90 F and nighttime conditions of 60 F to 65 F for best results. The plants should never be exposed to temperatures lower than 55 F for extended periods of time.



Photo courtesy of The John Henry Company

DENDROBIUM BAMBOO ORCHID, SINGAPORE ORCHID

HUMIDITY Humidity levels should be high. Humidity can be increased by placing the plants on pebble trays.

FERTILIZER Use an orchid fertilizer at each watering when there is active growth. When there is no active growth, fertilize at every other or every third watering. Always allow the excess water to drain freely.

REPOTTING Do not repot the plants unless new growth has come out of the edge of the pots or the medium has decomposed. Potting medium can be a mixture of medium-size bark, volcanic rock, hardwood charcoal, coconut husk chips or sponge rock. Press the medium tight during repotting.

GROOMING Remove individual flowers as they fade. If lower leaves turn yellow, they can be removed without damaging the plants.

challenges

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Dendrobiums* show low sensitivity to ethylene gas.

PESTS Spider mites, aphids and mealybugs all can infest *Dendrobiums*. Control them by washing them off with insecticidal soap. You also can dab rubbing alcohol directly onto mealybugs with cotton swabs.

fun facts

MEANING The name "*Dendrobium*" comes from the Greek words "*dendron*," which means "tree," and "*bios*," which means "life," referring to the plants' habit of growing attached to trees.

FAMILY These beautiful spray orchids come from the largest family of plants, the *Orchidaceae*, which has hundreds of thousands of genera and species native to all parts of the globe. The genus *Dendrobium* has more than 1,000 species and is among the most commonly encountered orchid in the retail trade today.

ORIGINS *Dendrobiums* are native to many parts of the world, including the Pacific islands, Asia and Australia.

UNUSUAL PLANTS *Dendrobiums* are "epiphytes," or air plants. They grow on other plants and elevated supports. They get water and nutrients through a spongy covering on their roots and are not parasites.

quality checklist

BLOOMS Check for signs of discoloration on petals, which indicates old flowers and/or flowers grown too cold. Avoid plants that show any blackening. **sfr**

Some information provided by:
The Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenet.org
Flowers and Plants Association, www.flowers.org.uk
Kauai Orchids, www.kauaiorchids.com
The North of England Orchid Society
www.orchid.org.uk/dendcult.htm
Texas A&M Agricultural Research & Extension Center
<http://primer1.tamu.edu/orchids/dendir.htm>

Reach "Blooming Plant of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.

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