

Choosing the Right Pot for Your Orchid

It's Ryan "The Orchid Guy" here again :-)

In the next several newsletters we're going to talk about "How to Choose the Right Pot for your Plant."

To start things off, I want to throw out an EXTREMELY important piece of advice when it comes to choosing a potting container for your orchid:

This may come as a *shock* to you, but you should NEVER place your orchid directly in a decorative pot, and here's why:

Unlike most houseplants, orchid roots and leaves are EXTREMELY sensitive to the paints and glazes used in decorative pots...So sensitive in fact, that orchids can very easily experience a toxic reaction to the metal- based glazes found on most decorative pots today!

Many retail flower shops these days will sell orchids directly placed in decorative containers because they look more attractive this way when on display.

What you may not realize is that this is setting up your orchid for a quick demise!

Instead, you should always place your orchid in a plastic or natural clay pot first, and then position that container in a decorative pot for display purposes only. (we'll talk about some of the important difference between clay and plastic pots in the next few newsletters.)

If you've recently purchased or received an orchid as a gift, do yourself a favor, won't you, and check right now to make sure that your orchid was first potted in a plastic or natural clay pot.

How does it look? Is your orchid okay?

If it isn't, you should repot the plant as soon as possible. (And if you're not sure about the "right" way to repot your orchid - and avoid harming your plant, don't worry because we'll touch on the process in a later issue of this newsletter.)

Above we talked about how you should never place your orchid directly in a glazed decorative pot, because the chemicals in the glaze can leech into the potting mixture and kill your plant.

Yikes!

Instead, you should always use a natural clay or plastic pot.

But the question remains: which is better, Clay or Plastic?

Well, the answer actually depends on what kind of orchid you're growing. You see, water evaporates from clay pots much faster than it does from plastic pots. So this means that plants in clay pots will need to be watered more often than in plastic pots.

Simply put, plastic pots are good for orchids that prefer damp conditions, while those that need to dry out between watering will do better in clay pots.

Orchids that enjoy continuously damp conditions include Miltonias, Phalaenopsis, and Paphiopedilums. Orchid varieties that need to be dried out between watering include Cattleya's and Dendrobium's.

So, what type of orchid do you have? One that prefers continuously damp conditions? Or one that prefers to be dried out in between watering? Whether you decide to use a clay or plastic pot for YOUR orchid, please make sure that the container has adequate drainage with holes on the bottom or on the side.

And while we're on the topic, I'll leave you with this bit of advice:

Excess water should ALWAYS be able to drain comfortably from your orchid's pot, no matter what type of container you use...

NEVER leave your orchid resting in water, because this will almost always lead to root rot - and if root rot DOES set in, it can be a real challenge to save your plant!

In the next few newsletters, I've got some important tips you won't want to miss when it comes to choosing the right *potting material* for your orchid.

(I think you might be in for a few surprises...)

So, until next time