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Orchid Care DENDROBIUM

Taxonomic Name: *Dendrobium*
Orchid Family
Herbaceous Plants

The dendrobium genus is one of the largest in the entire orchid family, and its members are an especially diverse lot. Of all their number, the most popular are the hybrids at least partially derived from the species known as *Dendrobium phalaenopsis* or *Dendrobium bigibbum*. Unlike many other well-known orchid types, they tend to have a distinctly vertical growth habit, with a full complement of leaves arranged along tall, cane-like stems. Their flower spikes usually arise from a point near the top of the stems.

How to Care for Your Plant:

LIGHT: At least some direct sunlight is preferable. If possible, place your dendrobium in an unobstructed southern or western window. An eastern window may also suffice, but the odds of the plant's blooming a second time are somewhat poorer.

WATERING: From early spring through fall, water whenever the top two inches of the potting medium is dry. In winter, let the medium dry out a little more--add an extra two or three days between waterings.

FEEDING: In general, follow the orchidist's adage: *Feed weakly, weekly*. In other words, apply an orchid fertilizer once a week, but at one-quarter the concentration listed on the product label. It's also a good idea to suspend feeding for about one month after your plant has finished its latest spate of flowering. **NOTE:** If your orchid is potted in fir-bark mixture, use a high-nitrogen (high first number) orchid fertilizer. If your plant is rooted in any other medium, use a high-phosphorus (high middle number) orchid fertilizer.

TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, AND OTHER FACTORS: Dendrobiums tolerate normal daytime temperatures and prefer a nighttime temperature of 55-60 degrees Fahrenheit (or a little cooler both day and night when they're dormant). Provide at least 50% humidity--use a room humidifier nearby or set a pebble tray partially filled with water under the plant. Also, keep in mind that your dendrobium likes to grow in small pots. Don't be too eager to transfer the plant to a larger container!