



LANDSCAPE · NURSERY · GARDEN CENTER

## Orchid Care PAPHIOPEDILUM

**Taxonomic Name:** *Paphiopedilum*

**Orchid Family**

**Herbaceous Plants**

If you ever chance upon a lady's slipper orchid blooming in the woodlands of the northern United States, and then seen a paphiopedilum blooming indoors, you're bound to recognize the similarity between the two. Indeed, the "paphs" are close relatives of our native lady's slippers. Even so, they hail from distant lands--the tropics and subtropics of the Far East. These diminutive orchids are a delight. They tolerate (in fact, they often need) subdued light, and they hold their usually solitary flowers for many weeks, and sometimes even for several months. Unlike many cultivated orchids, paphs are mostly terrestrial--in other words, they originally grew in the soil at ground level rather than on tree branches. The intricate patterns and coloration of the flowers and foliage never fail to fascinate the human eye.

### ***How to Care for Your Plant:***

**LIGHT:** Bright to moderate *indirect* sunlight is necessary. If possible, place your paphiopedilum near a northern or eastern window, or near a partially shaded western or southern window where it will receive no direct sunlight.

**WATERING:** Paphs like moist but not soggy feet. As soon as the *surface* of the potting mixture is dry to the touch, water the plant thoroughly with room-temperature water. Afterward, allow the pot to drain thoroughly.

**FEEDING:** Do not feed the plant when it is dormant. Feed only when the plant is actively growing or producing flowers. If your orchid is potted in bark, use a high-nitrogen (high first number) orchid fertilizer. If potted in any other medium, use a high-phosphorous (high middle number) orchid fertilizer. In both cases, apply the food with every other watering at the concentration listed in the product directions.

**TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY:** Paphiopedilums tolerate normal indoor temperatures, but take care to avoid extremes. On winter nights, keep paphs with spotted leaves in locations no colder than 55 degrees Fahrenheit. For paphs with solid green leaves, 45 degrees is the optimal winter-night temperature. Separately, provide ample humidity--use a room humidifier nearby, or a set pebble tray partially filled with water under the plant. Paphs also enjoy growing in close proximity to other plants.