

ORCHIDS UNDER ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Many orchids will grow and bloom under artificial lights. A fluorescent light fixture is one of the simplest and least expensive ways of growing orchids with artificial light.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Any 4-ft. light fixture that holds a minimum of four fluorescent tubes is recommended. Fewer or shorter tubes simply won't provide enough light to grow orchids.
- A mix of standard 'cool white' and 'warm white' tubes works well.
- Special wide-spectrum plant lights provide a broader light spectrum but are usually much more expensive.
- Replace bulbs once a year or at about 70% of their rated life.

GROWING GUIDE

- The greatest light intensity is towards the center of the fixture.
- Place your orchids as close as you can to the tubes without touching.
- Follow the natural, seasonal day length—lights should be on for about 12 hours each day during the winter and up to 16 hours each day in the summer.
- Do not leave the lights on 24 hours a day. Plants need a nighttime rest, just as we do!
- Orchids grown under artificial lights may dry out more frequently than those on a windowsill. A room humidifier will help maintain appropriate humidity.

SUGGESTED ORCHIDS TO GROW

'Medium' light, compact-growing orchids less than 10" tall: some miniature *Cattleya* varieties, *Dendrobium bigibbum* hybrids, or some of the smaller Oncidinae intergeneric hybrids like Onc. Twinkle or Hwra. Lava Burst

'Low' light, compact-growing orchids less than 10" tall: *Phalaenopsis*, *Paphiopedilum*, jewel orchids, some smaller *Angraecum* species and hybrids, or *Miltoniopsis*

TIP

Plug your lights into a timer so that they will come on and off automatically, even when you're not around.

Your local orchid society is usually the best place to gain important information on which varieties do well in your area. For more information visit the National Capital Orchid Society at www.ncos.us. The information on these signs can be downloaded from www.usbg.gov.