

## ORCHIDS ON THE WINDOWSILL: EASTERN AND NORTHERN EXPOSURES

If you have a northern exposure, choose the brightest windows that are not shaded by nearby trees and buildings. Northern windows frequently don't provide enough light to bloom orchids well but will work if supplemented with artificial light. Eastern exposures are sufficiently bright and will allow you to bloom 'Low' light orchids. If you have enough light to flower African violets, you'll be able to bloom orchids as well.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- To supplement light, choose an incandescent light bulb of at least 120 watts that is clearly marked for use with plants. Make sure your light fixture is rated for the bulb's wattage and follow all safety precautions. Place your light fixture about 20-24" away from your orchid's leaf surface for best results.

### GROWING GUIDE

- Keep your plants as close to the glass as possible. Light intensity falls off rapidly even a foot away from a window.
- Allow your orchids to dry appropriately between waterings, depending on the orchid variety and season.
- A "vacation" outside during the warm months may be especially beneficial for orchids grown in 'Low' light conditions.

### SUGGESTED ORCHIDS TO GROW

'Low' light orchids: *Paphiopedilum* (slipper orchids), *Phalaenopsis* (moth orchids), *Ludisia* spp. and other jewel orchids (grown for the beautiful foliage)

'Medium' light orchids (for an eastern window with supplemental light):  
Oncidinae intergenerics such as Colm. Wildcat or Onc. Sharry Baby, *Miltoniopsis* (pansy orchids)

### TIP

Many orchids prefer a nighttime drop in temperature. In some, this helps encourage flowering. For several weeks during the fall, leave the windows cracked open slightly at night to allow the daytime temperatures to drop ten degrees. This should help your orchids set spikes for winter and spring blooms!

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](http://www.ncos.us). The information on these signs can be downloaded from [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).