

Orchid Growing Calendar

October

Temperature range:	Day/degrees	Night/degrees
Cool House	61	54-55
Intermediate	69-70	61-65
Warm	75	70

The days are getting noticeably shorter now. The humidity in the greenhouse is affected by the condition of the outside air. As the temperature outside goes down, you have to water less in the greenhouse because the humidity increases greatly. Watering should be gradually decreased now. As your heating system starts to work in the greenhouse, the humidity will also drop. Be sure to compensate for this.

You should have most of the shading off now depending on what the weather is doing. Since the days are short and cloudy the plants can use all the sunlight they can get. On warm days outside air can still be let into the greenhouse.

Plants need just enough shade to prevent the foliage from burning. The leaves on wholly or partly deciduous plants may turn yellow and fall off. It is only when new growth turns yellow and drops off that we should be concerned.

If you have not done so already, the plants you put outside in the spring should be moved inside now. It would be a good idea to inspect the plants for orchid pests before you put them into the greenhouse. You need to look for things like aphids, red spider mites, slugs and snails, plus others that may be hiding on the plant and in the pot. Most pests outside will die off during the winter but ones inside will continue to live and multiply.

Observe with greater care the rate at which your plants dry after each watering. With cooler and shorter days, expect a longer term between watering. Watch those plants that have been in the brightest light through the summer because they are probably going to need some extra watering when first brought in from the outdoors; let them slow their growth rate gradually, but be sure also that you are not over-watering.

Generally plants will need less frequent applications of fertilizer from this month forward until spring; with lower light and temperature levels, the plants food manufacturing systems become less efficient. In other words, an excess of the food manufacturing ingredients (light, water, temperature, etc.) for production of essential carbohydrates within the plant will be wasted, or could cause harm.

By the end of the month you can winterize your greenhouse by wrapping pipes so they don't freeze, closing vents to keep cold air out, turning off, or setting exhaust fans so they won't turn on, and by setting the heater thermostat, etc.

Cattleya: Plants with visible buds should be kept watered. As buds come out of the sheath, withhold water until flowers have opened and hardened. Spring blooming plants should have water gradually reduced, but care must be taken that pseudobulbs do not shrivel.

Continued Next Page

Calendar (*Continued*)

Laelia: Plants which you have been treating like Cattleyas should be kept cooler during their resting period, and given more fresh air.

Cymbidium: Keep them cool and well ventilated. Water evenly. Continue to keep the 20-30 degree differentiation in temperature between night and day. If they are outside for the summer, be watchful for heavy frost warnings and either move them inside or cover them until it gets too cold.

Paphiopedilum: Keep plants moist and maintain sufficient humidity around the plants. Dead leaves should be cut off promptly to prevent rot from getting a start, and the leaves should be wiped gently once in a while if dust accumulates on them. Plants cannot breathe if the pores on their leaves are clogged.

Odontoglossum: For *Odont. grande*, don't spray the plants, but pot water occasionally. *Odont. crispum* likes a cool-damp atmosphere and temperature about 54 degrees. *Odont. citrosum* (*Rossioglossum pendula*) should be kept dry after the annual growth has matured, to produce flowers.

Dendrobium: *Den. nobile* and related species are at rest. They should be kept cool and dry, with as low humidity and as much light as possible. *Den. phalaenopsis* should still be blooming. After flowering, the rest period starts. Keep them slightly moist with a temperature of 59 to 65 degrees.

Miltonia: These should be kept the same as Cattleyas, with the temperature a little higher. The temperature should not go below 60 degrees for best growth.

Calanthe: The leaves will die back as buds develop and grow. Water moderately until after flowering, then keep the plant absolutely dry until new growth starts in the spring.

Oncidium alliance: There is no resting period for these, so keep evenly moist and at intermediate temperature.

Outside plants: Make sure you move them in during the first part of the month.

Information for these culture calendars are taken from *The AOS Bulletin*, *Orchid Digest*, a book *Orchids and How to Grow Them* by Gloria Jean Sessler and some of my own experiences.