



**HOW TO CARE FOR ORCHIDS  
CPVGC PROGRAM  
PRESENTED BY HANNAH MYER FROM  
FANTASY ORCHIDS  
RECORDED BY GRACE GEHRET CPVGC SEC'Y**

Program Chair, Terri Butz, introduced our program. She explained that FANTASY ORCHIDS was founded in Longmont 23 years ago. The business started as a small backyard greenhouse but now has expanded to over 10,000 sq. feet. The orchids grown there are supplied to the entire metro area and the facility is open to the public. Orchids originated in humid and tropical climates but Fantasy Orchids has been able to develop orchids that thrive in our dry environment. Our speaker was Hannah Myer who is in charge of education and outreach for Fantasy Orchids.

Hannah began her talk by telling us that grocery store orchids are mass produced with lower standards than what we might find at an orchid nursery such as Fantasy. She explained that there are more types of orchids than any flower species in the world. She also gave a number of general tips for growing orchids:

1. The pot must have a hole in it so that roots can breathe.
2. Overwatering is a common problem. "Less is more". Allow the plant to dry (usually 5 to 7 days) before watering. Water from the top and do not allow the plant to sit in water. Plants in a bark medium need to be watered more than those in a moss medium.
3. The ice cube method of watering is a no-no. Orchids originally grew in warm tropical conditions.
4. The pot should be as small as possible. Orchid roots like to be crowded. Do not re-pot until roots are overflowing the pot.
5. Orchids can live for years and get stronger as they get older.
6. Keep the plants next to a window until they bloom. Once in bloom move the plant away from the window and keep cool. If leaves are a very dark green they are not getting enough light. Grow lights work but sky lights are generally too far from the plant.
7. Fertilize each time you water, but water first and then add the plant food.
8. Spraying orchid plants with rubbing alcohol can eliminate pests. Do not spray blooms.

After giving general information, Heather gave specific information about some of the varieties of Orchids that were represented:

CATILEYA is a hybrid with active root and leaf growth. The blooms are large and fragrant.

DENDROBIUM produces small blooms on a long stem. These are often found in cut flower bouquets. They bloom twice a year and tolerate dry conditions.

PHALAENOPSIS, the most common, can bloom 2 to 3 times a year. Their spent stalk can be cut between the nodes but the plant will become stronger if the stalk is cut at the bottom.

VANDA produces a small cluster of blossoms and likes very bright light as well as dry conditions.

**GROWING ORCHIDS**  
**HANDOUT FROM FANTASY ORCHIDS**  
**RE-WRITTEN BY CPVGC MEMBER KIM WATSON**



Orchids are the ultimate houseplant because they grow in the same conditions as your other houseplants, but their flowers last so much longer. Orchids also offer a huge variety of flowers. Some of the most exotic blooms in the world can be yours to enjoy at home with no more care than your other houseplants require. They cling to the same trees in the jungle and therefore can grow in the exact same conditions as most of your other houseplants. Many orchids bloom during the winter months, which is particularly gratifying while outdoor plants are dormant.

Consider the following basic fundamentals when attempting to grow your own orchids:

**LIGHT**

The growing zone is within two feet of the window. Direct sunlight on leaves is usually fine in an east window, but may burn leaves in a south or west window. Most orchid leaves should be a medium green color. If your orchid is hesitant to flower, try increasing the light levels and use Flower Fantasy Fertilizer.

**WATER**

Since most orchids do not grow in soil, and prefer a very porous mix, a thorough watering of the roots is crucial. Water plants generously but NEVER allow the plant to stand in water. Most types should become almost dry before watering again. This may require several days to a week, depending upon conditions. An easy way to determine when a plant is dry is by its weight. If the plant feels light, it may be time to water. When unsure, wait a day.

**HUMIDITY**

Grouping plants together is one of the easiest ways to increase humidity around houseplants. Plants placed on a tray filled with gravel and water for evaporation helps. Humidifiers are often used. Fresh air is important, place a small fan near your plants to keep the air fresh.

**TEMPERATURE**

Orchids do well between 65 and 85 degrees. All plants prefer a 25 to 20 degree difference between day and nighttime temperatures.

**FERTILIZER**

Use Flower Fantasy Fertilizer with every watering. Every other week, spray plants with Fantasy Secret Solution, to develop maximum plant strength, flowering, and root growth. By following these basic guidelines, you can expect awesome results.