

Paphiopedilum Orchids

Lady Slipper Orchid

The slipper Orchid is one of the most striking and often bizarre orchid groups. Flowers are waxy looking, heavily textured and come in many interesting color combinations. The culture of these plants is more difficult than other types of orchids. When given proper care, they will grow, flower and delight you for years to come.

“Paph’s”, as they are commonly called, need bright, filtered sun although a few of the heavier strapped varieties may take nearly full sun, along the coast. A good bet is to use about 50% shading. Generally, the mottled leaf varieties should have a little more shade. When watering, the plants should have a good soaking and be allowed to become slightly dry between waterings. Water more when plants are in active growth (summer and spring), and less when inactive. Fertilize with a good, balanced fertilizer, such as a water-soluble orchid food 20-20-20, once a month. If you prefer a slow release fertilizer, use Osmocote 14-14-14 every two to three months.

These plants require a well-draining potting mix. Use a combination of large and small orchid bark, with equal parts of charcoal and coarse perlite. Walter Andersen Nursery usually has small packages of this already mixed up. Keep the plants in small pots, do not over-pot. Paph’s have sensitive roots and dislike over potting which can lead to over watering, and root rot. Some require greenhouse conditions but there are many complex hybrids that will easily survive in a lath-house or on a covered patio.