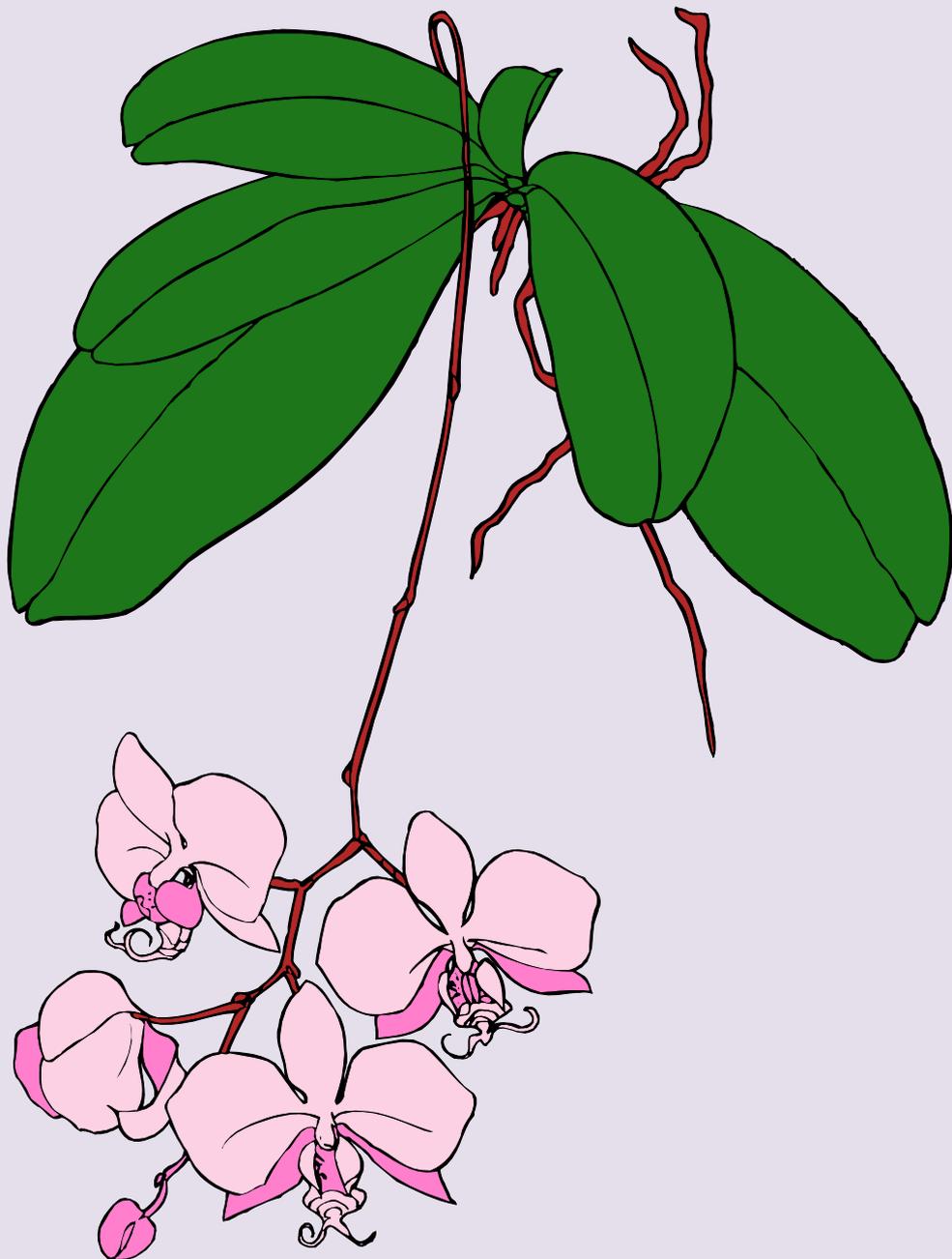


Phalaenopsis
Growing



PHALAENOPSIS

The common name for phalaenopsis is 'moth orchid'. The genus phalaenopsis consists of about 50 species with distribution throughout tropical Asia, Southern India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and tropical Australia. The Philippines in particular has a high population of phalaenopsis species. Hybrid phalaenopsis are known for their long arching inflorescences that can last for three months or more.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Phalaenopsis require lower light levels and higher temperatures than most other genera. For this reason phalaenopsis will grow best under about 85 to 90 percent shade cloth, particularly during our summer months, with heating in the winter months also required. These conditions make them ideal as a pot plant inside the house. Ideal temperatures range from a minimum of 18 degrees to a maximum of 30 degrees. Plants will tolerate short periods outside of these temperatures but long periods can cause the plants to stress and make them more prone to disease. New leaves are particularly susceptible to leaf burn from excess light and severe sunburn may kill phalaenopsis. High humidity and good air circulation are very important in a hot environment. The importance of good air circulation cannot be stressed too strongly. It helps the plant resist disease, reduces the risk of sunburn by keeping leaf temperature cool and eases damage from excessive light, heat, or humidity.

WATERING

As phalaenopsis are monopodial and lack any means of storing water, they should always be kept lightly moist. The condition of root tips indicates whether water is sufficient - green root tips indicate sufficient water, while white root tips indicate a need for more water. Phalaenopsis roots are the plants only means of water storage and should never be allowed to shrivel even during dry periods. Allowing water to stand on leaves may lead to crown rot. Watering early in the morning allows foliage to dry before night. Watering plants in the middle of a hot day can cause tissue collapse which may eventually lead to death of the plant.

POTTING MEDIA

Phalaenopsis will do best in a compost that will retain some moisture between waterings. A bark based media is usually used though some growers do get excellent results from sphagnum moss. Shallow pots with good drainage holes allowing good air circulation are best for phalaenopsis. Their roots are

nearly always thick and fleshy and continue to grow and branch with age. As they are the plants only means of water storage enabling it to survive adverse conditions the roots should be trimmed only if they are damaged or deteriorated. Kikis can sometimes develop at unbloomed nodes on old flower spikes, and are best separated when there are three or four roots 13 to 18 mm long.

FERTILISING

Phalaenopsis are a gross feeder and enjoy regular fertilising. Most growers get best results by using a high nitrogen fertiliser.

PROBLEMS / SYMPTOMS

- Clear or watery spots on the leaves may be caused by a bacterial infection.
- Crinkled leaves may be caused by insufficient water.
- Curled margins on new leaves are caused by low humidity during early leaf growth.
- Dull, wrinkled leaves indicate a too dry atmosphere.
- Inadequate leaf production is usually the result of insufficient nitrogen or phosphorous.
- Pale medium brown discolouration in the centre of the plant or at the base of the leaves indicates crown rot which usually occurs when water is allowed to stand in the crown overnight, particularly when temperatures are too cool and when air circulation is inadequate.
- Pitting on new foliage indicates tissue collapse caused by exposure to cold water or cold temperatures.
- Reddish or discoloured bottom leaves are probably dying back as new leaves are formed. This is normal.
- A round, discoloured area on the top of a curved leaf surface is nearly always sunburn.

*This leaflet is produced by
David & Di
635 Beachmere Road,
BEACHMERE Q 4510
Phone (07) 54 962 861
Mobile 0418 711043*