



Woolf Orchid Culture

Cool Growing Australian Native Orchids

By John Woolf

The following culture notes pertain to the cool growing Dendrocoryne section with species such as Den. aemulum, Den. adae, Den. falcorostrum, Den. fleckeri, Den. gracilicaule, Den. jonesii (Syn. ruppianum), Den. kingianum, Den. speciosum, Den. tetragonum, natural hybrids Den. X delicatum, Den. X gracillimum, their varieties and their hybrids

LIGHT.

These orchids will grow best under 50% to 70% shade, too much shade will result in weak growths, flower racemes and flower colour intensity can be reduced, too much light can result in short, stocky plants with short crowded racemes so it is important to get the light factor correct.

TEMPERATURE.

A temperature of between a minimum of 5 degrees Celcius and a maximum of 30degrees Celcius is recommended, however the plants will tolerate higher temperatures for short periods, they will not tolerate direct frost.

WATERING.

During the summer months, depending on your choice of potting media, the temperature in your area, the air movement around the plants etc, plants should be watered every second day preferably late afternoon. During winter once or twice a fortnight will suffice, water mid morning so the plants will dry before nightfall. Many of these plants flower in spring and the racemes appear during late winter so keep the potting media moist, not wet, otherwise flower quality and quantity may be affected. One gets a "feel" for the weight of the plants after a while and you can usually tell whether the potting media is dry only on top or all the way through. Water Quality is most important with rain water is preferable over town or bore(well) supplies as the latter usually are devoid of oxygen and often contain harmful (to plants) chemicals used to make it safe for us humans, such as Sodium, Chlorine etc.

FERTILISING.

In Australia , Horticultural Solutions have developed a special blend for these orchids. These orchids flower best and with the best colour after one of our Australian Bushfires, in many cases the tops of the pseudobulbs and leaves are totally burnt off leaving only the life giving pseudobulb bases with their many growth eyes to regenerate, nature's way of cleaning the plants of pests and supplying the necessary nutrients for the plant to recover and produce seed in the same season. Most low nitrogen fertilisers are all right, the one we use contains N : 80ppm, P : 50ppm, K : 250ppm plus necessary trace elements.

POTTING MEDIA.

Many different mixtures are used by Australian growers, bark, bark & charcoal, bark & river pebbles with or with other additives, however we don't want to confuse new growers so our potting media at Florafest Orchids consists of a composted hard bark with blood & bone and dolomite mixed in then wet and left for a week to cure (as we use a composted bark this extra curing does not take long) before use.



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POTS OR SLAB.

You are the best judge of this as I don't know the conditions in your Orchid House or the climatic conditions of your area. However I can tell you those Aussie Native Dendrobies that prefer slab culture, they are :-
Den. aemulum and Den. tetragonum plus all of the Rhizobium section

PESTS AND DISEASE.

These plants are the same as most of our Orchids, the insects and rodents love the new growths, flower racemes and blooms, and especially your best seedpod, the one that is going to give 100% FCC's. As most Insecticides and Fungicides are now Specific, have the problem properly diagnosed, use the recommended chemical and USE YOUR PERSONAL PROTECTION GEAR !!!!!

Good growing.

John Woolf