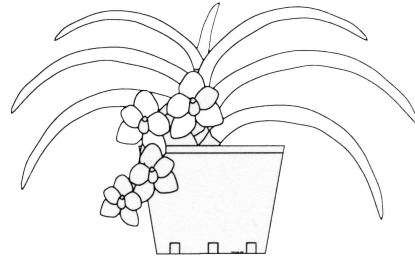


Australian Sarcochilus Orchids

Australian Native Sarcochilus Orchids are very easy to grow.

Sarcochilus grow on the East coast of Australia from Gippsland right up through New South Wales. They produce numerous crystalline white flowers with varying degrees of red in the centre. Modern hybrids have resulted in larger, better shaped flowers and an extending of the red centre to the extent that solid red and pink flowers are now available.



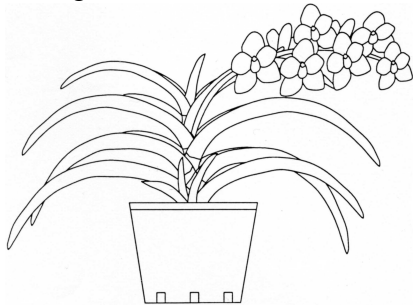
Creams, orange and greens are also being produced with much better flower quality.

POTTING

Many growers grow these orchids in pots or in hanging baskets using 5-10mm pine bark. An open mix is necessary as they grow on trees in the wild and need to be free draining. They can also be mounted on tree branch or pieces of treefern where they would need some moss around the roots to help to keep them moist during summer.

LIGHT

Most experienced growers grow these under shade cloth, around 50%, along with other Australian Native orchids and Cymbidiums. They can be grown in full sun during the winter months.



WATERING

During summer they like lots of water because the pine bark will dry out fairly quickly on the hot days. Many growers water daily in the hot weather. In winter they can be allowed to dry out to some extent but they are quite happy being left out in the rain provided the mix is open and free.

FERTILISING

In nature they get small amounts of bird manure and other nutrients washing down the tree or rock each time it rains and that is the ideal. One quarter to one half strength fertilizer on a regular basis will be quite sufficient. Some growers put a few grains of a slow release fertilizer on the top of the mix so they get a small feed every watering.

REPOTTING

They should only need repotting when they have run out of room in the pot. If the mix is still open and the roots have not gone soft and brown, they can simply be put into one size bigger pot and have new mix filled in around the edges. If some of the roots have gone rotten they should be removed along with the old mix and a pot which will comfortably accommodate the remaining roots should be used. Once you have filled in around the roots with new mix, give the plant a good watering to make sure the bark is all wet and then keep the orchid in a cool shady place for the next few weeks. Give it another drink if you think the mix has dried out completely.