

ALWAYS QUARANTINE NEW ORCHIDS:

'Ryan the orchid guy'

1.) Always quarantine new orchids for at least 3 weeks when bringing them into your home to prevent them from spreading any pests or diseases to your other plants.

Simply keeping them in a separate place, away from your existing collection during their 3-week quarantine period will do the trick.

During this time, inspect your plant closely and regularly for signs of pests and disease – and don't forget to look under the leaves because this is where unwelcome insects will most often be hanging out.

After 3 weeks, if all signs suggest that the plant looks healthy and pest-free, then you can consider it safe to move it with your permanent collection.

2.) WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T MOVE YOUR ORCHID!

Once you've determined where you're going to place your orchid in your home, orient the plant so that the flower spike is growing in the direction of the best light - and then leave it there. And fight ALL urges to move it again!

Here's why:

It's very important that you don't move the plant's orientation once the flower spike begins to grow. If you do, the spike will try to reorient itself to the best light again, and this is going to result in a twisted, distorted spike.

Instead, wait until all the flowers have finished opening before moving your orchid again. The fact that the flowers have all opened will tell you that the spike has finished growing and it's now safe to move or reorient your plant as you would like!

3.) STAY AWAY FROM DECORATIVE POTS

This may come as a shock to you, but you should NEVER place your orchid directly in a decorative pot, and here's why:

Unlike most houseplants, orchid roots and leaves are EXTREMELY sensitive to the paints and glazes used in decorative pots.....So sensitive in fact, that orchids can very easily experience a toxic reaction to the metal- based glazes found on most decorative pots today!

Many retail flower shops these days will sell orchids directly placed in decorative containers because they look more attractive this way when on display. What you may not realize is that this is setting up your orchid for a quick demise! Instead, you should always place your orchid in a plastic or natural clay pot first, and then position that container in a decorative pot for display purposes only.

So, if you've recently purchased or received an orchid as a gift, check right now to make sure that your orchid was first potted in a plastic or natural clay pot.

How does it look? Is your orchid okay? If not, you should repot the plant as soon as possible - and if you're not sure how to do that exactly, don't worry... because we'll be covering repotting in more detail in a later newsletter.

EASY WAYS TO PREVENT ORCHID PESTS & DISEASE

1. Always use sterilized tools whenever working with orchids - especially when you are cutting roots, leaves, and/or stems.

**Intense heat (like the flame from a lighter) or a diluted solution of bleach can be used to sterilize your tools.

2. Always water your plants early in the day to allow for all water to dry before cooler night- time temperatures.

**Use cotton swabs to remove excess water that gets stuck in all the little nooks of your plant.

3. Never let orchids or their pots sit in water. This will cause root rot.

Here's an easy hint someone once told me to help remember this point: Orchids like to keep their "feet" dry :-)

4. Never over-crowd your orchids. Make sure that they have adequate air circulation around them.

**A fan can be used to replicate the gentle breeze that orchids enjoy in their natural outdoor environment.

5. Always repot your orchids in NEW potting matter, and use NEW (or sterilized) pots.

Have a quick home remedy for you today.... ..and it comes straight from our medicine cabinet.

Today's secret is Listerine...

Listerine has anti-fungal properties, and the alcohol content also makes it effective against bugs!

This "2-in-1" home remedy can be used as a spray at full strength for short periods (about 2-3 consecutive days is okay) as a preventative measure on your orchids.

Simply spray your plant lightly once a week or so, and you'll have yourself a quick and easy way to keep away unwanted pests and disease, and ensure your plant stays healthy.

Just be sure to ONLY use the original version, because the flavoured versions have added substances that are not 100% orchid- friendly :-)

Orchid Home Remedy: Cinnamon

I have a great little home remedy for you today...

If you remember from a few Bulletins ago, we talked about how you should trim back any diseased or damaged roots caused by over or under watering.

Well, here's a great little tip for you: Next time you need to trim / cut back your orchid (and this tip applies whether you're trimming your orchid's roots, leaves, or the stem)...

Apply a light dusting of *Cinnamon Powder* on the freshly cut areas of your plant.

What does the Cinnamon do exactly?

Cinnamon is a safe and all-natural fungicide, and applying a small amount on exposed areas your plant can protect it from fungus and bacteria!

(And by the way, it's pretty powerful stuff...)

I like to have some Cinnamon on hand whenever I bring home a new plant with a bit of damage, or whenever I am performing a bit of routine "surgery" on my plants :-)

Here's how to use it:

1.) simply wet the recently cut / broken area of the plant with a bit of water so the cinnamon will stick.

2.) Either sprinkle the cinnamon directly onto the affected area, or pour a small amount in a plate first, and then "dip" the tips of the affected areas into the plate of cinnamon.

But whichever method you prefer, be sure to use Cinnamon sparingly - too much cinnamon can actually inhibit root growth if used excessively.

So you won't want to use it on otherwise healthy, uncut roots.

Oh! And by the way, whenever you do any sort of cutting, make sure that your tools (scissors, knife, shears, etc.) are sterilized before you begin.

To healthy, vibrant Flowers!