

EXTEND YOUR ORCHID'S FLOWERING PERIOD BY MONTHS

After your orchid has finished flowering and you cut back the stem, here's an excellent trick for preventing infection:

Using the hot wax from a candle, you can actually "seal" the freshly cut tip of your orchid's stem, which is an excellent way to prevent infection!

Here's what to do:

Once you've cut back your stem using your sterilized tools, simply light a candle and allow it to accumulate a little melted wax around the wick.

Blow out the candle. And before the wax has a chance to harden again, touch the wet wax to the exposed tip of your freshly cut stem.

Voila! In less than 2 minutes, you've created a home-made protective coating for the exposed tip of your orchid's stem. And this little trick will help keep your orchid disease free for months!

REASONS WHY YOUR ORCHID WON'T REFLOWER

Young or Recently Divided Orchid

If your orchid is not yet mature, or has been recently propagated (e.g. from cuttings, bulbs, etc.), there might not be anything wrong at all with your plant...

You've just got to be a bit patient, and be willing to wait for your plant to reach blooming maturity.

Orchid propagation is more of an advanced topic, so I'll leave the details for our book if you're interested in learning more...

BUT, there are a few **CRITICAL** things you should know right now:

If you're attempting to grow orchids directly from seeds, you might want to rethink that decision, and here's why:

Did you know it can take anywhere from 1 to 12 years for an orchid to go from seed germination to flowering? Yes, you read that right... Up to 12 years!

And did you know that most orchids take around 4 years to flower after germination?

I don't know about you, but I don't have that kind of patience! :-)

Because of this, today orchid seeds are germinated in laboratories where conditions can be controlled.

The tiny orchid seeds have almost no food storage available, and therefore rely on special types of fungus for germination. So my recommendation? Leave seeds to the pros, and stick to mature plants!

Pests & Diseases....

If your orchid is plagued with any sort of pest or disease, then you have what we call a "stressed" plant on your hands.

And just like when you or your family gets sick, your orchid is using **EVERY LAST OUNCE** of energy to fight off those foreign bugs!... (It simply has **NO** energy left to produce flowers...)

So to get your orchid to flower again, the first thing you need to do is nurse your plant back to health :-)

The topic of pests & disease naturally deserves more space than I can give it in this issue of your newsletter. (And we'll be talking about some effective ways to deal with a few common pests in a later newsletter.)

But in the meantime, here are a few signs to watch out for:

-Yellow spots, holes, or "nibble marks" on the leaves or flowers -Dark, soft, and rotting bulb/roots

Do you see any of these signs on your orchid?

Because if you've been having trouble getting your orchid to flower again, and you **SUSPECT** there might be something plaguing your plant...then **THAT'S** where you should focus your attention.

Orchid pests come in many shapes and sizes. And some of the more common problems include Aphids, Thrips, Mealy Bugs, & Spider Mites - just to name a few...

Overwatering in Cold Temperatures

This is a reason on my list that usually gets a few people scratching their heads...

But it's also something that can catch you by surprise if you're not careful.

Here's what I'm talking about:

If you're like me, you like to keep things as simple as possible, and get into a regular watering schedule with your orchids...

Cymbidiums every Saturday morning... Phals every four days, or what have you.

But one thing that's tough to remember is that as temperatures drop, the rate that water evaporates from your plants ALSO slows down.

So what that means, is this:

You need to SCALE BACK your watering during those cooler months a bit.

Otherwise you run the risk of OVERWATERING your orchid -- And overwatering can lead to all sorts of problems, including an orchid that simply will NOT be able to produce flowers for you (no matter how nicely you say 'please'... :-)