



The Orchid Trail Greenhouses

Growing Orchids Outdoors in North Carolina

People are often surprised when I tell them that they should grow their orchids outdoors in the summertime if they have the room. Although few of the orchids that we grow will survive year round in North Carolina, they originally grew outdoors in tropical conditions that most of us would consider harsh.

It is a myth that orchids are delicate plants. In fact, orchids grow much better outside than in the house or even in a greenhouse. In nature, many grow as epiphytes in the mountain areas from 2,500 ft. to 8,000 ft. elevation north and south of the equator where they get natural air movement, high humidity, and plenty of rain. Growing outdoors reduces disease and damage from harmful insects and increases the number of blooms and rate of growth.

Outside, insects have natural predators that help keep them in control. Air movement and rainwater will keep disease pathogens under control. Orchids hung up will be away from slugs and pill bugs. If your plants are on a surface, slug bait will keep them under control. Bayer Ready-to-Use Rose and Flower Spray® will get rid of any persistent insects.

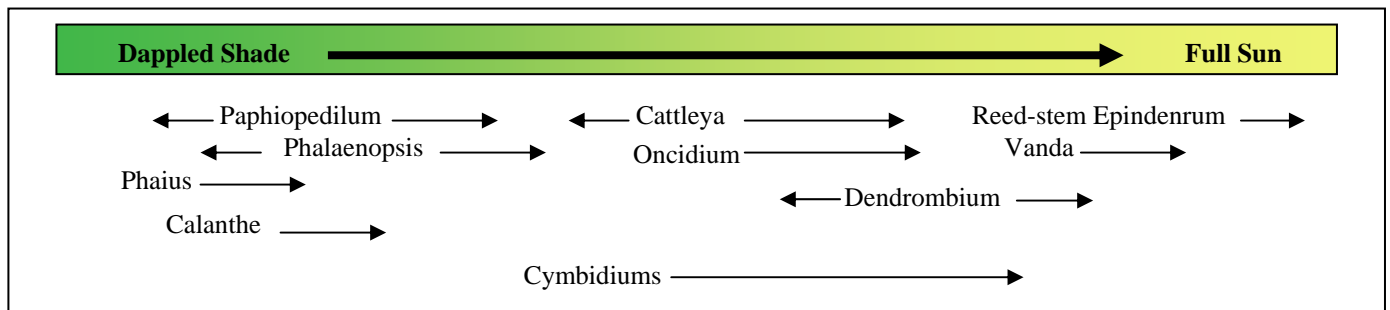
Summer temperatures are in a good to ideal tolerance range here in North Carolina. Paphiopedilums, Phalaenopsis, Phaius, and Calanthes are best kept in the shade much like a fern. Cattleyas, Oncidiums, Dendrobiums, Cymbidiums, and Zygopetalums like bright, filtered or dappled light coming through the trees. Vandas like very bright light to full sun. One word of caution, before exposing your plants to the full strength of the sun, gradually acclimate or harden them to prevent sunburn.

Many people build temporary shade houses for summer use. Shade cloths are available precut with bound edges. Most use 50% to 60% shade for general use. For high-light plants, use 30%, and for low-light plants, use 80%. Lath, bamboo and other materials can make very nice shaded areas.

Phalaenopsis-type dendrobiums and antelope dendrobiums can bloom all summer and put on many flower spikes. Reed-stem Epidendrums will also bloom all summer in very bright light. Vandas also can bloom more than once during hot weather.

If your area is not getting consistent rainfall, water every three days for most plants, for Vandas, water every day, or every two days depending on the temperature and rainfall. Fertilize about every two weeks with one teaspoon per gallon of water-soluble fertilizer. Phalaenopsis pots can be tilted about 45° to keep water drained out of the crown. Inexpensive irrigation timers are available for automatic sprinklers.

If you have further questions about orchid culture outdoors or indoors, call or visit the *The Orchid Trail Greenhouses*.



Directions to *The Orchid Trail Greenhouses*,
Morrisville, NC

- From I-40, take Exit 285 (Aviation Pkwy.)
- Turn south on Aviation Pkwy. (away from the airport) and go 2.4 miles.
- Cross Hwy. 54 over railroad tracks.
- Turn right on Church Street.
- The Orchid Trail is located on the right-hand side at 402 Church Street.

The Orchid Trail Greenhouses
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