



While there are a few epiphytic species, most are terrestrials. There are several groups of Cymbidiums, which can be broadly categorized as:

- I. **Standard** Upright or arching spikes
- II. **Miniature** Same, but smaller flowers
- III. **Table Top** Compact plants, usually warmth tolerant.
- IV. **Pendulous** Usually bred with Cym devonianum, canaliculatum or madidum.
- V. **Chinese** I do not grow these, so they are not included in this guide.

For best results (= blooms), it is necessary to grow Cymbidiums outdoors at least 6 months of the year. I bring my plants outdoors in late April or early May (watch out for a late frost).

They stay out till the first real frost is forecast, usually in November, but some years as late as early December. Group III should come in a little earlier.

HUMIDITY:

Indoors try to provide 40-60% relative humidity.

LIGHT:

Outdoors you can grow Cymbidiums in very light shade, or full sun (requires heavy watering twice a week). If brought outside:

In April: They can go directly into full sun.

In May: Harden for a week in light shade first.

Indoors they would like bright light if possible.

TEMPERATURE:

Outdoors I, II & IV can tolerate temperatures down to 32°F (0°C). For III group the lower limit is around 35-38°F (3-4°C).

Indoors the plants would like to have cool temperatures, but they tolerate intermediate. In our greenhouse, we have thermostat set at 55°F (13°C), and the ventilation does not kick in till close to 80°F (27°C).

WATERING:

Do not let Cymbidiums dry out. They have no rest period, though they grow slower during the low light months.

POTTING MIX:

Use a light terrestrial mix with plenty of organic materials. My choice of mix for I, II & IV consists of:

- 3 parts **chunky** peat (*not garden center milled peat*)
- 2 parts composted manure (I buy at Home Depot).
- 1 part medium size bark
- 1 part large perlite
- 1 part LECA (Aliflor) nuggets - *large plants only*

Some of the warmth tolerant plants do not do well in this mix. Those I grow in a bark/perlite mix, adding just a little of the chunky peat.

FERTILIZER:

In early March, top dress with a 1-2 Tbsp of Nutracote.

February to mid July, water with regular fertilizer every 2 weeks (we use Peters 20:20:20 at 1/2-3/4 dose).

Mid July thru November, water with a flower booster every 2 weeks (1/2-3/4 dose).

December & January, a single application of 20-20-20.

POTS:

I use exclusively plastic pots, as these hold moisture longer than clay pots.

POTTING:

Plants should be potted, so that the bulbs are 80% out of the mix, but all roots must be below the surface..

Plan to repot every 3 years, so you need 3-4" of room for expansion on the side where the new growths form. Photo shows a plant that can barely stay in that pot for another year. The two new growths forming will crowd the edge of the pot.

Since Cymbidiums have many thick roots, they can bust the pots (below). With a solid mass of roots in the bottom of the pot, it might be necessary to trim off some roots to make



the plant fit into the new pot. Root section to be trimmed is shown by the **blue bracket**.

While Cymbidiums might take up a bit more space than other orchids, their 8-12 week flower life make them worth the space they need.

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