



As long as you avoid the real high light plants (50%+ *V. sanderiana* and pure *Papilionanthes*), light and other growing conditions can be met by the hobby grower.

Most plants arrive in empty baskets. Due to rainy seasons in both Hawaii & Thailand, any bark in the basket would quickly rot. BUT, outside of the rainy season, they have to water daily when plants are in empty baskets!

Baskets or net pots are recommended, as plants like high air flow around the roots. However, unless you enjoy watering daily, these plants are best grown with a mix in the basket.

There are 3 basic approaches to growing Vandas:

1. In **high humidity environments** (greenhouse, Wardian case, grow chambers & terrariums), plants can be grown in empty baskets or mounted on a wire. You need to water daily in summer, and every other day the rest of the year.
2. If you can't water that frequently, grow the plants in baskets or net pots filled with a sphagnum/bark mix (or all bark for larger plants). In summer water twice a week, in winter weekly. Many of the smaller plants do very well indoors grown this way.
3. **Indoor in lower humidity environment**, you can grow plants in an empty vase (leaves sticking out).

Fill the vase with tepid water and let the plant soak for 15 min, then empty. Do this every 3-5 days in summer, every 6-10 days in winter. Every 3rd time, add a few drops of fertilizer to the water.

HUMIDITY:

While 75+% is preferred by some of the tropical species, many will tolerate down to 50% relative humidity. Hybrids with *Rhy. coelestis* or *Rhy. gigantea* in the background will do fine under *Cattleya* conditions (just don't let them dry out).

LIGHT:

While *Vanda sanderiana* & *Papilionanthe teres* would like full sun, many of the hybrids will perform under light levels similar to those we give to *Cattleyas*. Plants with *Asctm ampullaceum*, *curvifolium* & *miniatum* in the background will readily bloom under *Cattleya* conditions. If you grow under lights and can't boost the intensity, consider extending the number of hours

the lights are on.

TEMPERATURE:

Many Vandas grow near equator, but at fairly high elevations, so they will do fine with intermediate temperatures. While temperatures above 60-65°F (15-18°C) range are best, the hard minimum is 55°F (13°C).

If you have a cooler environment, look for plants with *Vanda cristata* & *coerulea*, *Neofinetia falcata*, *Rhynchostylis coelestis* & *gigantea* in the background.

OUTDOORS:

In Essex county NJ, plants go out on Memorial Day, and stay out through the end of September. They do well in light mottled shade, and even better if you:

- Harden in light shade for 7-10 days.
- Move into full sun after hardening. *This requires daily spritzing with water*, which can be automated with a sprinkler + a \$35 electronic controller.

WATERING:

Most of these plants have no rest period (though they grow slower in the low light months), so they should be watered regularly all year.

- *Neofinetia falcata* should only be watered lightly in the winter months.
- *Rhy. gigantea* should be allowed to dry out between waterings in winter.

FERTILIZER:

I use Peters 20:20:20 at slightly less than 1/2 dose every 2 weeks from Feb through October. Nov-Jan they only get a single application.

POTTING:

These plants do not like to have their roots disturbed, so be gentle when repotting. I usually snip away at the old basket with shears, place the plant in a new basket and gently pack fresh material in between the roots.

If repotting a plant with long aerial roots, soak the roots so they become pliable, and curl most of them into the new basket.

POTTING MIX:

Some use lava rock, clay pot shards or even wine corks. I prefer a mix that holds moisture longer:

- < 4" 75% sphagnum + 25% bark/charcoal
- 4" size 67% sphagnum + 33% bark/charcoal
- 6" & up 50% sphagnum + 50% bark/charcoal

NET POTS vs BASKETS:

To maintain an even watering schedule, I use net pots up to 5" size, and octagonal vanda baskets in 6", 8" & 10" sizes (4" baskets dry out too fast).