

Fair Orchids Calanthe, Phaius & Phaiocalanthes

The **Calanthe** genus has two branches, **deciduous** and **non-deciduous** plants. This sheet deals primarily with the first group. Both Calanthes & Phaius have soft green pleated foliage.

Light: Similar to Cattleya, all the way up in an East or West facing window is preferable.

Temp: Normal room temperature is fine.

Mix: Can be grown in either sphagnum, or in a light terrestrial mix.

The deciduous Calanthes have a growth cycle very similar to that of Catesetums & Cychnoches. After a total rest period, new growth commences in the spring. You withhold watering till the new growth is about 1½" tall; from that point onwards, do not let the plant dry out and fertilize well, as it needs to produce the new growth in a relatively short period of time. I suggest 2/3 fertilizer dosage in every 3rd watering.

In the fall, the leaves will start to wither away from the tips. At this point let the plants just dry out between waterings, and cut back on the fertilizer to 1/3 dosage. Buds will appear from the base of the bulbs.

Flowers last about 6 weeks. When blooming is over, stop watering (you can unpot bulbs for storage if you like). Check for new growth after 60-90 days of dry storage; when new growth starts, repot the bulbs with room for forward growth.

Plants should be potted with just the bottom 1/2" of the bulb below the surface of the mix.



The larger **Phaius tankervilleae** does not require the same rest period, but if not in active growth, some reduction in watering is recommended over the winter months.

The intergeneric **Phaiocalanthes** fall somewhere 'in-between'. They do not require a hard rest, so some watering is required - even when the plant is not in active growth. Also, with the Phaius influence, the foliage may last more than a single season (though some leaf tip die-back is normal).



Pink **Calanthe Grouville**, with flower spike about 30" tall. Leaf die-back has been disguised by trimming the leaf tips.



The larger flowered **Phaius tankervilleae** sets masses of flowers, which leads to improved flowering in Phaiocalanthes.

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