

## Repotting Orchids



We repot because:

- a) The compost has broken down and so keeping the roots too wet and preventing air flow through the pot and over the roots.
- b) The plants new growth is out over the edge of the pot. These growths, if left too long, can grow at 90 degrees to the rest or even down to 180 degrees making repotting very difficult.

The optimum time for repotting an orchid is when new roots are just starting to show from the base of the leading pseudobulb, as this is the time when roots grow very fast, and will quickly grow down into the new compost to become established.

Gently squeeze the plastic pot until the plant with roots and compost slips easily out of the pot with minimal damage.

Inspect roots for any rot or insect damage then sterilize cutters.

Gently remove compost and drainage material and cut off any roots not solid and healthy.

Cut a bit off the back of the rhizome and inspect for tell tale marks of disease. A healthy rhizome cut is a clean creamy, green colour generally. If there is a black or brown mark, cut back until it disappears.

Soak the whole plant for about 10 minutes in a solution of Mangozeb (1 tsp. to 4 ½ litres). Add 2 mls of wetting agent to this solution.

Then seal up the rhizome end cut with a thick paste of Mangozeb or similar product.

Prepare a new or sterilized pot that will hold an adult plant for as long as possible.

Hold the plant in the pot with the back of the rhizome to the side of the pot. If the roots are root balled, make sure you spread them or they will stay that way in the new pot.

Choose the appropriate grade of bark mix for the size of pot and type of plant and pour it through and around the root system. Tap the side of the pot to consolidate the mix. **Do not press the mix down** to consolidate as this will break the roots.

If the plant is unstable when potted, place one, two or several stakes and tie the pseudobulbs. **NB.** Cut tops off stakes so you don't poke your eyes out next time you inspect for growth.

Always write 2 new labels as the old ones usually fade and go brittle very quickly. Write one small label and poke it right down inside the pot so no one can see it. Then if you do lose the main label either to grandchildren or short sighted show patrons, next time you repot you will find the plants correct name.

Now the plant is repotted, place it in a shady spot where you are not tempted to water it until it is bone dry and all cuts healed. You don't want to wash off all the fungicide. After the cuts are healed up place back in your collection and fertilise with a high nitrogen formula for plant cell growth.

These notes have been used at our Cultural and New Grower's Meetings. They are from various sources and we thank the authors. All articles are supplied in good faith and the Bribie Island Orchid Society and its members will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.