

WHY MOUNT ORCHIDS?

Well over 100 years ago orchids were brought in from the wild and immediately potted like other plants, usually unsuccessfully. Even those who could afford to build a greenhouse for them were unable to re-create the perfect environment for them and usually over-watered or over heated them. Eventually with continued efforts and research, growers began to understand the unique requirements of each type of orchid. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in growing orchids and along with that many newly discovered facts about where they grow and how. This has enabled us to improve our success in growing them outside of their natural environment, and one aspect of this has been mounting orchids rather than just potting them.

In mounting orchids you are in a sense recreating the way in which the orchid grew originally. Most grew on the bark of trees, so we use cork, which is an excellent substitute and readily available. You can also use treefern fiber, and even weathered wood without bark (it will eventually peel off). Along with this you will want to add a small bunch of sphagnum moss which will hold some moisture, and then arrange the orchid in an "upright" position, determined by the general direction of the leaves or the spike. Nylon fishing line and fine wire are generally used to wrap around and secure the orchid to the mount, although hot-glue and push pins have also been used; the important thing to remember is that you want to attach the roots so as not to break or cut them. Also, either before or after mounting, you will want to create a "hanger" for it, depending on where & how you will hang the orchid.

Mounted orchids need to be misted or sprayed at least once a day or more, depending on their location and the humidity level, as they should not be allowed to dry out; just feel the moss to determine this. Be sure to fertilize them as much, if not a bit more than you do the potted orchids. Also one has to consider the needs of each type of orchids; those with bulbs and small roots have to be located in a more shaded and damp area, whereas those that have more free ranging roots that can absorb the light and water can be located in a brighter area.

An advantage to mounting orchids is that they take up less room and therefore you can create a nice group of them (recommended) in a relatively small space.

Another advantage is being able to hold them up and get a good 360 degree look at

the plant to check for any disease or insects. Maintenance is relatively simple and they can be grown undisturbed for many years (no re-potting!).

So, get your orchid mounted, bring it home and find a good place for it, preferably in a bright (no direct sun) location, or where you have your "grow lights", and be sure that there is plenty of humidity around them. Then check them out every day and enjoy watching how they grow!!



*For additional information on the subject of orchid mounting please refer to the American Orchid Society website at AOS.ORG.