

It's Ryan "The Orchid Guy" here :-)

In yesterday's newsletter, we covered some important Orchid Watering Basics, including a few critical tips from our book:

<http://www.OrchidsMadeEasy.com/TheBook.html>

In today's newsletter, I'm going to shed some "light" on another basic orchid care question you might be asking, and that is (no surprises here):

"How much LIGHT does your orchid need?"

Let me start by saying that the bottom line is this:

Orchids need light to thrive!

(And if you're rolling your eyes, thinking "Well, OBVIOUSLY" - keep reading, because you might be in for a few surprises... :-)

So here's the next question for you:

"How do you know if you're giving your orchids ENOUGH light???"

For many of us, when we bring a new orchid into our home, we tend to choose a spot where we can admire its blooms (and of course, show it off to our guests, right?).

But when it comes to choosing a location for your plant (unless you plan on using artificial growing lights) finding a spot with adequate natural light should be one of your primary considerations.

So, now that I've hopefully convinced you that proper light is critical to your orchid's development, we'll start by talking about why light can be a confusing topic.

And then, I'll go over few tips on how to avoid this confusion for good, and how you can make the question of "how much light?" easy as 1-2-3...

But first, there are two reasons why the topic of light tends to be a bit confusing:

REASON #1: VAGUE TERMINOLOGY

As I'm sure you already know - when you read about how much light ANY houseplant needs, typically you'll see books use terms like "bright light" or "partial shade"...

And this is where the confusion starts.

Because let me ask you something:

What does "partial shade" mean to YOU?

Think about it for a minute.

How many hours of shade every day? Morning or afternoon light? Southern or Eastern exposure?

Because I bet if I asked that same question of 20 people, we'd get 20 different answers.

(and probably a couple blank stares...)

But hey it's not your fault! Because part of the problem is that sources that stick to these terms without further explanation can be confusing...

(after all, how the heck are you supposed to know how bright is "bright"??)

And terms like "partial shade" can be interpreted to mean any one of a hundred things.

If only you had a *simple scale* that was completely simple... and which you and I could use to speak the same "language of light"...

(keep reading, because you soon will...)

But that leads us to our second challenge when it comes to light, and that is...

REASON #2: LIGHT IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE OBJECTIVELY!

Light is not like water, for example, which we

can easily measure in objective terms - like say cups or milliliters. Or temperature, which we can measure in degrees Fahrenheit, or Celsius.

And that's why we resort to using descriptive terminology when it comes to light.

With water, all we need is a simple measuring cup. And if I say "2 cups" then you know EXACTLY what I'm talking about (unless you're using the metric system, but that's another issue) :-)

However, when it comes to light, unless you own a device known as a "photometer" (which I'm going to venture and say you don't) then it's difficult to measure light intensity with the same precision that we can measure water or temperature.

AND THIS IS WHERE OUR FEW HANDY TIPS COME IN...

Because while yes, it's true that light intensity can be difficult to measure without expensive scientific equipment...

HOWEVER I actually have several "home-made" ways you can measure light intensity yourself - using simple household items that you've probably got lying around the house right now. (and I cover all of these techniques in detail in my book.)

But for the purposes of our newsletter today - I'll be covering a super simple method - what I call the "quick and dirty" way to measure light.

(It's not quite as accurate as the other techniques taught in our book, but it'll get you 70% of the way there.)

For our purposes, orchids typically fall into 3 broad categories for light:

Low, Medium, and Bright light.

Low light orchid examples include most Phalaenopsis (Moth) orchids and some Paphiopedilum (Slipper) orchids.

Medium light examples include most Cattleya

varieties and some Cymbidiums.

Bright light orchids include Vandas and most Dendrobiums.

If growing instructions were not included with your plant, you should consult an orchid light chart (such as the one we include in our book) to determine where your particular variety falls in the light spectrum.

Now, you're probably saying, "But wait, Ryan! You just said that terms like these are what cause all the confusion!"

Well, this is where our home-made light measuring techniques come in!

Because this way, you and I can have the same "simple scale" to measure light. And therefore, from now on, we'll be talking the same language.

To measure the light intensity of your particular environment using my "quick and dirty" method, the only tool you need is your hand!

Here's what you need to do:

Hold your hand 1 foot (30 cm) above your orchid's leaves, or the surface where your orchid will sit.

Now take note of the shadow that's produced by your hand.

"Low" light shadow test:

No shadow will be visible when you hold your hand 1 foot above the orchid's leaves or surface where the orchid will sit

"Medium" light shadow test:

A *light gray shadow will be slightly visible* when you hold your hand 1 foot above the orchid's leaves or surface.

"Bright" light shadow test:

A *dark gray shadow will be clearly visible* when

you hold your hand 1 foot above the orchid's leaves or surface.

Pretty simple, right?

Now, you'll want to take a few "readings" at different times of the day - morning, mid-day, and late-afternoon - just to make sure you get a complete picture of your particular light conditions.

During the daytime hours, you want your orchid to be in its "optimal light conditions" - low, medium, or bright - for as much of the day as possible.

And in practice, this means that if you have a "Low Light" variety, it should be kept in low light conditions as much of the day as possible, (and never in bright light conditions for more than 30-60 minutes per day, maximum).

Now, here are few final tips on light:

Even for orchids that require "bright light", you should never place your orchids directly under hot, direct sun.

This is because hot temperature levels (especially in the summer, or for extended periods) can potentially kill your plant.

And finally, remember that there is typically a significant reduction in light from the summer to winter seasons. So, you'll want to accommodate for this seasonal reduction in natural light by finding a brighter location in your home, or supplementing with artificial light during the darker winter months.

For more tips like these, and to learn EVERYTHING you need to know about caring for your orchid (including going WAY beyond just the basics) check out our book at:

<http://www.OrchidsMadeEasy.com/TheBook.html#orderform>

You'll learn everything you need to know right away (including all the REALLY good stuff that we don't get a chance to cover in this newsletter) :-)

Thanks for reading, and until next time...

To Healthy, Vibrant Blooms!

-Ryan "The Orchid Guy" :-)

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