



Culture Requirements for *Habenaria rhodocheila* & *Habenaria erichmichelii*

By Joe Palermo

Habenarias have been promoted as being among the most difficult orchids to grow. Yet, if one pays particular attention to their general needs, they are actually one of the easiest.



- These orchid plants are like your typical bulb annuals (tulips, daffodils, etc). The plant develops from corms (bulb) that will go dormant in the parched soil of their native habitat. In the early spring, the rain softens the soil which sparks the Habenaria into new growth.
 - **The most important key is watering!**
- The plant should be kept continuously moist until the last flower has fallen off.
- At this point, continue to water your plant but allow it to dry slightly between watering. This helps with the plant to produce new corms for next year.
- Now this may seem strange but when your plant starts to look as if it's dying, **STOP** watering! Give no water at all. You can repot in dry mix at this time.
- When spring rolls around (Feb.-March) look at your plant weekly to see if a shoot is emerging. If you see something, water it. If not, put it back. If by April there is not shoot, mist a little to spark the plant growth.
- Once you see a new growth, continue to water & keep the plant moist. There will be a time when the leaf growth slows down. Watch for emerging flower spikes at this time.

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