



Cultural Requirements - *Den. secundum*



Native to Southeast Asia, *Dendrobium secundum*, also known as the "Toothbrush Orchid," bears all its flowers on one side of its stem, resembling the bristles of a toothbrush. Thriving in dry lowland forests and savanna-like woodlands, this semi-pendulous species requires high temperatures, humidity, and light during active growth. This warm-growing species in section *Pedilonum* are medium sized to large epiphytes, with slim, leafy canes (stems) that become pendent as they grow. Typically, these canes are deciduous after about a year, and the plants bloom from nodes along the bare stems.

Temperature. Keep warm to hot temperatures year-round, ensuring nights stay above 60°F. Shield orchids from cooler weather to prevent rapid leaf-drop.

Light. Provide bright shade, similar to cattleyas, with slightly brighter light for *Den. smillieae* in winter.

Water: Water regularly to mimic their year-round moisture habitats. Be cautious during new growth, avoiding water collection to prevent rot.

Fertilizer: These dendrobiums thrive with regular feeding during their active growth phases. Use any balanced, water-soluble fertilizer, diluted as directed on the package. Jack's Classic 20-20-20 is a recommended choice; feed once a week from spring to fall. If plants are actively growing, with new leaves or growths appearing, continue regular fertilization. In winter, when days are shorter and cooler, reduce feeding frequency.

Potting. These dendrobiums thrive in pots, baskets, or on mounts. For their medium to large size and tendency to hang, many growers prefer mounting on sturdy materials like cork or driftwood. Encourage upright growth by staking new canes, as they may naturally become horizontal or hanging. Use an open, fast-draining medium for plants in pots or baskets.

Common Issues: Watch for pests like snails, slugs, and mites, especially in dry weather. Prevent root problems by avoiding stale or decayed potting medium.

References: *American Orchid Society via aos.org*

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