



## Cultural Requirements for Epiphyllum (Orchid Cactus)

Epiphyllum are cacti and called “epi” for short. They are also known as “orchid cactus” due to their large bright blooms but they are not orchids. Epiphytic plants are generally used as houseplants. Their care is similar to orchids as you want to maintain a good balance of watering.



Epiphyllum make great hanging baskets with their stems growing 20-30 inches. They are native to tropical Central and South America and spans approximately 20 species. The stems produce brilliant flowers that bloom from early winter through spring. The blooms however do not last more than a couple days.

An interesting feature of Epiphyllums is that they grow edible fruit. The fruit is said to taste much like passion vine fruit and a texture similar to kiwi with small black seeds.

**Light:** Choose a location with filtered, bright light, but not direct sunlight

**Water:** Keep the soil moist in spring through fall, while the plant is growing. In winter, water sparingly until new growth begins in spring. Never allow the soil to dry out. Shriveled, limp stems are a sign the soil is too dry. Do not overwater or let your plant sit in standing water as this can cause fungus or root rot.

**Humidity:** Moderate—about 50-60% humidity. Stand the pot on a dish of wet pebbles to boost humidity.

**Temperature:** Average room temperatures 60-75oF. To set flower buds, the plant needs 8-10 weeks of cool 60-65oF nights in the winter. Temperatures below 35oF will kill the plant.

**Soil:** Mix 1 part potting mix and 1 part perlite.

**Fertilizer:** Feed every 2 weeks from early spring and fall with a balanced fertilizer diluted by half. In February, use a ratio of 2-10-10 fertilizer to promote flowering and root development. Suspend feeding once flowering is complete until October.

**Propagation:** Detach 4-6 inch (10-15 cm) stem segments in spring and place upright in moist potting mix. Stem cuttings root easily, but you may have to wait a few years to see many blooms on a new plant.

Repot every 2-3 years, moving up to a pot 1 size larger. It prefers to be slightly pot-bound and blooms best this way. Wait till early spring to repot -- never while it's blooming.

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