



Cultural Requirements – Phragmipedium

Pronounced: frag-me-PEE-dee-um | **Tribe:** Cypripedieae

Phragmipedium is a popular genus of slipper orchids established by Robert Rolfe in 1896. Named from the Greek words 'phragma' (fence) and 'pedilon' (slipper), these orchids grow in a sympodial manner, forming tight fans instead of pseudobulbs. They can be found at elevations between 1300-7200 feet and produce inflorescences up to 3 ft long with up to 15 flowers, which can measure 30 inches or more. The flowers, once thought to be mainly yellows, greens, and browns, now include orange, red, and magenta. As of 2020, there are 23 accepted species, distributed from Mexico to Brazil and Bolivia.



Temperature: Specific requirements vary between species, ranging from 55°F to 100°F.

Light: Provide 1000 footcandles during hot summer months and 1400 footcandles in cooler periods.

Water-Humidity: Water when the potting medium starts to dry out but is not completely dry. Ensure thorough watering until water flows through the pot's drain holes. For Phrag. besseae and its hybrids, maintain the pot base in 1 inch of water.

Fertilizer: Apply a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer at 150-200ppm from October to May, every other watering day. Allow two waterings between each fertilizer application to prevent salt buildup. Discontinue fertilizer during hot summer months to avoid salt burns.

Potting: Use a porous mix composed of five parts medium fir bark, two parts Canadian peat, one part charcoal, one part extra coarse Sponge Rock #4, and one part ½-inch Stalite. This mix provides root support while allowing proper aeration and drainage.

References: American Orchid Society via aos.org

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