

THE SPIRAL ORCHID

UNPACKING

Upon receiving your package, open it immediately and inspect it for damage. You will receive your Spiral Orchids wrapped with damp sphagnum moss. These orchids should arrive as large fleshy roots and several small leaves. Do not worry about the condition of these leaves. Some may be yellowing or decaying. This is okay. Spiral Orchids are very hardy plants with thick roots and an eye below the surface. It will put on new health growth this spring.

STORAGE

Unfortunately, there is no really good option for storing these plants bare root. Please plant immediately. Although your Spiral Orchid may have small leaves it still needs to be kept dormant until your growing season starts. Pots should be stored in a cold damp environment with some light. 36-42 °F is ideal. DO NOT FREEZE. Keep them protected from drying winds. If you live in a temperate climate you can keep them outside. In colder areas, consider a garage. The trick to their health is to keep them moist, but not wet while dormant.

PLANTING

Spiral Orchids like a lot of water while growing, but also require oxygen at their roots. Make sure your pot has good drainage. Many growers use 100% Sphagnum moss. I recommend using a higher grade sphagnum that doesn't compress and allows for good air circulation. Here in the Pacific Northwest, I find straight sphagnum retains too much water so we use 100% kanuma with 1 cm covering of sphagnum. Kunuma is a Japanese soil and can be very difficult to find and expensive in the U.S. Other growers have had success with other fast draining substitutes, like akadama, pumice, vermiculite, or perlite. If you use these, please consider adding some sphagnum for higher water retention.

GROWING

Spiral Orchids are a hardy short-lived perennial plant. In warmer climates, during the winter months, they stop growing, but remain green. In colder climates their leaves can all but disappear completely after flowering only to regrow a few months later. They bloom in mid-July. These plants do well in full sun to bright shade. In early spring move your pot to a sunny, warm position and keep them moist, but not wet. In mid-summer with a good soil mix, like the ones mentioned earlier, it is almost impossible to over water. Because the recommended soil mix does not have any organic material, you should fertilize your orchid. Almost any fertilizer will work well, but I recommend applying it at half strength. We use a combination of cottonseed meal and fish emulsion. Osmocote is a very convenient time-release product with which I have had good success.