-13- GROWING CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS

Cymbidium Lighting

Light is crucial for healthy hybrid cymbidiums, ranking just below improper nighttime temperatures as a cause of flowering issues. These plants thrive in bright light, ideally between 5,000 to 8,000 footcandles, which enhances flower color and promotes light green foliage. Insufficient light can lead to weak growth and poor flower spike orientation. Excessive light can cause leaf discoloration and scorching. Overall, bright light fosters stronger, more resilient cymbidiums, encouraging them to "reach towards the light."

Cymbidium Temperatures

Understanding Cymbidium care requires knowing that larger-flowered species prefer cooler conditions (50-80°F) and can tolerate near-freezing temperatures with protection. Key care points include:

- Night temperatures in the mid-50s°F to promote flower spikes.
- Cool daytime temps during bud development to avoid overheating.

Poor flowering may stem from inadequate light or warm nights. Successful outdoor growth is achievable in regions like California and Atlanta with minimal protection. Recent hybrid developments, such as *Cymbidium ensifolium*, have lessened the need for cool night temperatures.

Cymbidium Humidity

To care for cymbidiums in warm conditions, ensure good air movement to keep foliage cool and maintain around 50% humidity. Proper circulation is essential to prevent Botrytis, a fungal infection causing flower spotting, which thrives in damp, cool environments where cymbidiums grow best.

Cymbidium Watering

Watering Guidelines for Cymbidiums:

- **Watering Needs**: Cymbidiums require consistent moisture; they should not dry out completely.
- **Frequency**:
    - Keep the medium moist, not soggy.
    - Water every few days in bright, hot weather.
    - Larger plants need more water than newly potted ones.
- **Signs of Underwatering**:
    - Leaf tip dieback and premature leaf loss from mature pseudobulbs.

Healthy plants have few leafless backbulbs at their center; many leafless pseudobulbs indicate insufficient watering.