

Riverside-San Bernardino Counties Orchid Society

Dracula Orchids



The orchid genus *Dracula* consists of 123 species. The strange name *Dracula* literally means "little dragon", referring to the strange aspect of the two long spurs of the sepals. They were once included in the genus *Masdevallia*, but became a separate genus in 1978. This genus has some of the more bizarre and well-known species of the subtribe *Pleurothallidinae*.

Culture of Dracula Orchids

Temperature

Generally, *Dracula* demand cool growing temperatures. A handful of *Dracula* can tolerate slightly higher temperatures, although most cannot. Take note of the origin of the particular plants you are growing for a hint on their temperature requirements. Higher elevation plants tend to thrive in a cooler environment than lower elevation plants. In general, a range of 55° - 70° F is good for *Dracula*. Try to avoid temperatures above 80° F for a sustained period of time. If higher temperatures cannot be avoided, ensure that the night temperatures drop at least 10 degrees to give your *Dracula* a break.

Light

Draculas tend to be happy anywhere from 600 - 1500 foot candles of light. However, some folks have been known to successfully grow *Draculas* a bit "harder" with up to 2000 footcandles of light.

Air Movement

A subtle breeze will keep your *Draculas* happy and will help keep the bacterial infections away.

Fertilization

A very light feeding of a well balanced fertilizer will keep your *Draculas* blooming. Too much fertilizer will cause the tips of leaves to turn brown or black. A feeding of 100 ppm N every other watering or 2 out of 3 waterings is ideal.

Water Quality

Draculas require a high quality water. An investment in an RO system will make your Draculas happy. Rain water is also good. Try to keep your water below 50 ppm TDS, if possible.

Humidity

Humidity is one of the most important factors in successfully growing Draculas. A range of 80% - 90% is ideal.

(Thanks to Chad Sarles for allowing the use of his information. Visit his website at <http://www.draculaspecies.com/> to see all of his information on Dracula Orchids.)