

The Diablo View Orchid Society

NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS

December 1998

December Grower's Tip

As we move into winter its time to cut back on watering and fertilizer as plants will stay wetter longer in the lower temperatures of the greenhouse and windowsills. For windowsill growers with plants having a southern exposure, be sure that the plants are adequately protected as the sun now streams in at a lower angle. Despite the cooler times and the lower sun, it is still possible to burn the plants through direct exposure to the sun.

Change the fertilizer to one that is low in nitrogen to hasten root growth, harden the latest plant growth and set the blossoms.

If you haven't already been doing so, place your nobile type dendrobiums out to cool in the colder nights. Protect them from frost and rain, but expose them to cold for at least 20 days.

This is also the time to check on the greenhouse furnace to insure that the thermostats are set correctly and that the burner is working as intended. For those with unvented greenhouse heaters, check to see that none of the burners is clogged and that the fire is all blue to prevent the formation of carbon monoxide, which is poisonous, or ethylene gas, which can cause the plants to drop their buds and blooms.

Indoor/Outdoor Growers Group News

Ray Vickers-Traft has been growing orchids in his house (apartment) since 1991. To date he has about 200 varieties of warm to intermediate plants within his apartment (he has a large apartment). Within his warm growing orchid collection are about 100 Cattleyas, 35 Phalaenopsis, 5Paphiopedilums as well as other lesser known species. Ray also has cool growing orchids located in the lath house at Lakeside Park in Oakland, where he is currently associate curator.

In November the I/OGG scheduled a meeting with ray. About 12 DVOS members converged on Ray's apartment to learn more about how to grow orchids successfully at home. Ray answered all questions cordially and discussed his secrets of how he blooms his orchids on the windowsills and shelves of his home.