

TOP TIPS FROM TOP GROWERS

Richard & Anne Nicolas – Texas

Anne's Soil Recipe: For plants on wicks

8 quarts pasteurized peat moss
6 quarts vermiculite
8 quarts perlite
½ to ¾ cup dolomite lime
2 quarts Baccto Premium Potting Soil
1 cup red lava sand
¼ cup humate
1 cup earthworm castings
1 ½ cup horticultural charcoal
¼ cup dried molasses
¼ cup Bio-tone Starter Plus

Fertilizer: Richard & Anne rotate Orchid Plus 20-24-13 (Better Gro brand), Peat Lite and plain water.

øWe balance the mix to pH 6.7. Our club owns and shares a digital pH meter so we can all test soil mixes and do programs on pH of both soil and water.ø
Richard Nicolas

Nancy Robitaille – Quebec

Soil Recipe: In equal quantities

Premier Pro-Mix Peat Moss
Medium perlite
Medium vermiculite
Horticultural charcoal

For pots on wicks, add handfuls of perlite to lighten.

Fertilizer: Nancy rotates fish fertilizer, Miracle Grow, 10-52-10 Yard Pro, and 20-20-20. Occasionally foliar feeds.

øBy changing fertilizers frequently, I expect different parts of the plant to react. I use different brands of numbers of fertilizers in order to get the secondary nutrients. One day before the show, I use Sturdy and Bounty which helps the plant from getting a big shock in moving and sitting on the show table for four days.ø Nancy Robitaille.

Beverley Williams – Ontario

Soil Recipe:

2 quarts sterilized clay loam (garden loam or top soil)
2 quarts perlite (with the addition of 2-4 extra cups)
2 quarts medium or coarse vermiculite
2 quarts fine chip horticultural charcoal
8 quarts sphagnum peat moss (screened to remove sticks)

Mix Separately:

1 cup bone meal
1 cup calcium carbonate or dolomite lime powder (not granular)
1 tablespoon Fermate or Ferbam
Combine above ingredients with a half gallon of water

Fertilizer: Bev alternates 20-20-20 and Miracle Grow for bloom.

øKeep to a schedule for watering. Mark your calendar on the days you have to water.ø Beverly Williams

Marie Burns – Maryland

Marie's Show Mix:

2 gallons Baccto AV Soil or potting soil
2 ½ gallons perlite
1 gallon peat moss
2 gallons coarse vermiculite
6 cups horticultural charcoal
1 cup dehydrated cow manure (Hoffman's Super Manure)
6 tablespoons of bone meal
10 tablespoons of dolomite lime

Fertilizer: Marie uses Peters 20-10-20 or Miracid.

øMy soil is very rich in nutrients so I use plain water on my plants for at least the first 2 weeks after potting.ø Marie Burns

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Eileen McGrath – Ontario

Soil Recipe:

2 liters organic topsoil-pasteurized
2 liters vermiculite
2 liters perlite
2 liters chip charcoal
8 liters peat moss
1 cup bone meal
½ cup powdered lime
½ cup granular lime

If wicking, use 12 cups soil, 6 cups perlite, and 4 cups vermiculite.

Fertilizer: Eileen rotates Peters 20-20-20 and Peters 14-12-14.

øKeep you plants to a minimum, record the requirements of each one so they get what they need.ö Eileen McGrath

Catherine Thompson – Iowa

Soil Recipe:

part perlite
part Pro-Mix

Fertilizer: Catherine uses Jackø Classic 12-36-14.

øConsistent repotting every 6 months is key. Repotting is just as important as the soil and fertilizer that you use.ö Catherine Thompson.

Kathy Lahti – Minnesota

Soil Recipe:

3 parts Pro-Mix BX
2 parts perlite
1 part vermiculite
Moisten before using

Fertilizer: Kathy uses Optimara Violet Food 14-12-14.

øShow plants need consistent light, wate, fertilizer and grooming, beginning when the plants are just babies.ö Kathy Lahti

Bill Price – British Columbia

Soil Recipe: Makes a 24 liter batch

8 liters peat moss or Pro-Mix
8 liters coarse vermiculite
8 liters coarse perlite
2 liters coarse charcoal
1 cup bone meal
½ cup dolomite lime

øFor Sinningia, Kohleria and most -viningø gesneriads, instead of peat moss, use the same volume of reconstituted New Zealand Sphagnum Moss Pellets.

Fertilizer: Bill rotates 20-20-20, various Peters varieties, and fish emulsion used at ¼ strength dosage per gallon of water.

øGrowers should not wait until the last few days before a show to groom their plants. Plan on spending some time once a week going over each potential show plant, dealing with misshapen leaves, old blossoms, redirecting trailer stems, dirt, etc. Your plants will come to the show looking even more -show readyø than you thought.ö Bill Price
