

McBean's Orchids

CULTIVATION NOTES

Ophrys, Orchis and Serapias

These general notes may be helpful for the grower of predominantly Mediterranean species of the above orchids. These are not fully hardy in the UK but are easy to grow in pots in a protected environment such as a greenhouse or plant conservatory.

CONTAINER-GROWING BASICS

The annual cycle commences in July/August when the dormant plants are divided and re-potted. These species do not require large pots for their roots but a larger pot does give a more stable growing environment. They are also very amenable to community planting, i.e. a number of plants in a large container.

The compost should be loam-based (John Innes No 2 for choice) which should be opened up by the addition of 50% of Cornish/horticultural grit or coarse sand to ensure free drainage.

The tuber should be placed 1-2 inches below the surface of the compost which should then itself be covered with around 1 inch of grit. Do not water until the shoot appears.

Some species will put up a leaf rosette in the Autumn; keep the compost just moist through the Winter. Other species will not show above the soil until Spring.

These plants are not fully hardy. As a minimum they should be kept frost-free; a low temperature of around 3-4°C may be preferable.

Winter light is desirable but semi-shade from April on. We do not generally use fertiliser on our nursery plants of these species.

After the flower has withered, keep plant completely dry through its Summer dormancy (i.e. until re-potting).

Problems or questions? Call McBean's on 01273 400228 or email sales@mcbeansorchids.co.uk