

Spathoglottis

Spathoglottis is a genus of tropical, terrestrial orchids with 60+ species. The genus has a widespread native habitat range throughout southeast Asia to the Philippines. The genus is easily grown as a potted plant, or outdoors in temperate areas. Several species have become naturalized in Hawaii and Florida.

The plants have pretty leaves, which are broad & arched, and can look a bit like small palms. The showy flower spikes, which can grow as tall as 3 feet, produce successive flowering clusters of small brightly colored flowers. The leaves emerge from round pseudobulbs that multiply and grow larger as the orchid matures.

Temperature

Spathoglottis enjoy daytime temperatures above 60° F and nights above 50° F for vigorous growth and flowering. They tolerate temperatures down to 45° F, if dry, but may drop leaves and go dormant with extended low temperatures. Some leaf tip burning, and leaf drop, can occur with extended high summer temperatures.

Light

Spathoglottis will grow well under bright shade to full sun conditions, but appear to do best when grown 50% shade.

Water

Keep plants evenly moist. They will tolerate some drying periodically, more so in the winter when dormant. Over watering may cause fungal problems, especially in young or newly established plants.

Humidity

In winter, try to keep humidity at 50% to 60%. Higher humidity is recommended during the summer. Good air movement is always a "plus", especially at elevated humidity levels.

Fertilizer

Because of their fast rate of growth, spathoglottis require a higher than average nutrient supply. Nutritional requirements will vary with light and temperature conditions, but 200 ppm N or a bit more, applied weekly, is not too much for these guys. Slow release fertilizers may be sparingly applied to the surface of the potting medium during the growing season to promote vigorous growth when plants are given higher light intensity.

Potting

Spathoglottis tend to have fairly long roots, so deep containers are recommended. A water-retaining, but very airy terrestrial mix is recommended, as even through they like constant moisture, excessive water can lead to rot. We find that a good blend is 50% commercial "soilless" medium, cut with 25% each medium bark and sponge rock, does the trick.