



Marlborough
NURSERY

Growing Notes

Zygopetalum

zy-go-PET-a-lum

Temperature-They grow best in intermediate to moderate temperatures. These are soft-leaved plants and dislike direct sunlight, especially in the hot months.

Light - No more than 3,000 ft. candles (about 70% shade) of light is optimal except in winter when on a sunny day, higher light levels, because they are not accompanied by high leaf temperatures, will do no harm for a few days. As with most orchids, more direct light very early or late in the day is not likely to be detrimental.

Water – Humidity - Zygopetalums require humid conditions under moderate shade with plenty of water during the growing season, less after new pseudobulbs are fully formed.

Fertilizer - The genus is not fussy about feed ratios so any slow release or liquid feed is suitable. A liquid 20-20-20 formulation at half label recommendation year round has proven to work well. Some growers report excellent results with a light topdressing of organics in late spring and we have used Milorganite for this purpose with excellent results. The organics can be a useful source of trace elements too, so feel comfortable in applying them as a topdressing every spring. Avoid feeding with high nitrogen levels as this can make the foliage brittle and stretched.

Potting - Like most orchids, Zygopetalums will respond best if divided and repotted when the new growths are stretching upward. They are quite succulent and should be divided with care or pseudo bulbs are easily damaged or even broken. The roots are soft and expect to break most of them in dividing so the divisions need a bit of babying along to become re-established. Any medium that is free draining such as a mixture of coconut chip, bark and perlite will work well. We have found Zygopetalums are not comfortable in scoria, Aliflor or similar products. Providing the roots are white, smaller plants can be potted up to larger pots throughout most of the year except for winter. Incorporation of dolomitic lime in the potting medium or the addition of it as a topdressing twice a year will help keep the foliage a little woodier and less prone to bruising or breaking.

