anyone can grow orchids in the home without living in the tropics or
having the luxury of a greenhouse. Today, houseplants are a regular part
of home decoration. If you have ever successfully grown a houseplant, or en-
joyed a flowering potted plant, you can grow orchids. The good news is there
are plenty of options to give yourself a beautiful display of flowering orchids
year round. Hint: Orchids grown in the home during the colder months will
respond wonderfully well to being summered outdoors in a protected area.
This will also extend the range of plant selections available to you. Be sure to
read the AOS’s companion sheet *Orchids in the Garden and on the Patio.*

**Light**
No flowering plant will do well without sufficient light. In the home, where most
available light is incidental (that is, at an angle, and therefore less intense), plants
will need to be fairly close to an east or west, or lightly shaded south, window. A
north window will rarely provide adequate light. If light is too intense in a
southern exposure, a sheer curtain could be hung to diffuse the light. Extra hours
of light will not entirely compensate for poor light quality. Indeed, extending
daylight artificially to more than 16 hours can be detrimental to the plants’
health and often will prevent flowering.

**Humidity**
Rugs, drapes and some furniture act as giant wicks that absorb the home’s hu-
midity, as do heating and air-conditioning systems. Also, it is not advisable to
have the home’s interior be too wet to accommodate the plants. Solutions:
Group plants to take advantage of their collective transpiration (exhaled moisture)
or place them on gravel-filled humidity trays to raise the humidity to 50 percent.

**Temperature**
The plants will be comfortable where you are comfortable. Typical home tem-
peratures of 55 to 60 F at night and 75 F during the day are fine. Guard
against excessively low or high temperatures immediately adjacent to glass win-
dows. Some leeway for seasonal fluctuations is allowed.

**Fertilizer**
Fertilize regularly at a low dosage of approximately one-quarter strength with
a fertilizer appropriate to the potting mix in which your plants are grown. Fertilize
less often during the winter.

**A Selection of Plants**

**Angraecums** Dwarf Madagascan species, fragrant at night; bright
light.

**Cattleya Alliance Hybrids and Species** Choose miniature types less
than 10 inches tall; bright light of southern exposure is best.

**Dendrobiums** Dwarf phalaenopsis types, or higher-altitude miniatures;
bright light at south window required.

**Oncidiums** Many types available in flower, best if smaller growing;
bright light.

**Paphiopedilums** Lady’s-slipper orchids grow well under home con-
ditions, giving long-lasting blooms; provide African-violet conditions.

**Phalaenopsis** Moth orchids are absolutely the number-one best
orchid houseplant; provide African-violet conditions.

The American Orchid Society is the world’s leading provider of information about and relat-
ed to orchids. We invite you to join us and learn about the world’s most fascinating flowers and
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