



Watering from below via coaster

In our experience, this irrigation method has proven to be the best for plants with sufficient and healthy roots and thick and fleshy roots such as Phalaenopsis. This means that you can even cover a 1 to 2 week holiday (depending on the location and time of year) with plants in the Orchitop M and L if the saucer is filled on the day of departure. In this way you avoid watering errors by inexperienced carers and you can be sure that you will find your orchids in optimal condition when you return. Even those new to orchids will get along very well with this method.

In our experience, this watering method is particularly suitable for moist orchids or plants with very thick roots such as butterfly orchids (Phalaenopsis), lady's slipper (Paphiopedilum, Phragmipedium) and Masdevallia / Dracula.

For watering from below, three requirements must be met:

1. The substrate must have a certain capillarity in order to be able to suck up the water from the saucer. This is the case, for example, with the Seramis special substrate for orchids. If you use a bark substrate such as the Kiwi Orchid Bark, you must also add a substrate component with a capillary effect, such as the coarse clay granulate. The water is transported up to about a third of the height of the orchitope via the capillary action.

2. The plant must be healthy, have sufficient roots and the roots of the orchid must be long enough so that they reach into the lower third of the orchidope. This is the only way to ensure that the plant can absorb enough water.

3. The plant must be accustomed to this form of watering over a period of 3-6 months. During this time, if water is required, water is poured alternately from above and below. As soon as the plant forms new roots in the lower third of the orchitope, the conversion has worked.

How it works

To water from below, place the Orchitop in the saucer and fill it up to just below the edge of the saucer with water or a fertilizer solution if there is a need for water.

The water is slowly sucked upwards via capillary action. After 1–2 days the coaster should only be half full, after 3–4 days the coaster should be completely empty again.

If the water is completely absorbed faster (the saucer is completely empty again after a few hours to a maximum of a day), then you poured too late and the substrate was already very dry.

If there is water in the coaster for more than 4 days (higher than 1cm), there are 3 options:

- You were watering too early again and there is still enough moisture in the substrate so that more water can hardly be absorbed. If this is the case (Orchitop is very heavy), empty the coaster.

- The substrate does not yet have sufficient capillarity (please also note point 1 under the requirements for watering from below). This occurs especially in the initial phase, when fresh substrate is used and this method of watering is switched to. That is why it is important in the start-up phase to water alternately from above and below over a period of 2 months.

- The plant does not have enough and / or not long enough roots to be able to absorb the water. In this case, please check whether the pot size is suitable for the root volume (if not, pot in a smaller pot if necessary) and please switch to the watering method "watering from above" until enough active roots are visible in the lower third of the pot.

This method is a gentle type of irrigation (water is slowly sucked upwards via capillary action, there are different zones of moisture in the substrate) and the plant can choose for itself how deep it roots into the damming zone. Therefore, switching to this pouring method is usually problem-free if you proceed as described above. After a short time, the plant has completely adjusted to it. You can recognize it by the fact that new roots are formed in the lower third of the orchitope, which often grow directly into the saucer area and are completely covered with water when watering. These roots are then used to the moisture, so that you can continue to fill up the coaster without any problems.

In order to further optimize the water and nutrient uptake for the plant, aerial roots can, if they are long enough, be led into the saucer area.