



MASTER GARDENER

Getting orchids to bloom

By Carol Ort

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So, you received a lovely orchid for that special occasion, and a year later, it still has not re-bloomed. Is there any hope? Maybe. Orchids make wonderful, easy-care house plants if you are lucky



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enough to have the perfect window for them. If not, you have to work harder to convince them to bloom.

The type of orchid matters. Moth orchids (*Phalaenopsis*) are the most common, and I've found them easy to grow. The large leathery leaves grow at the base of the plant and the flower stalk has many large moth-shaped flowers. Other common varieties include *Dendrobiums* and *Oncidiums*.

If you have had your orchid for several months and it is alive and flourishing, you already have done many things right. Often, orchids perish soon after they are purchased because of inappropriate care, like overwatering. Some die because the trip home was too hot or cold.

Orchids actually are very hardy. They can take cool and warm temperatures and prefer a daily variation in temperatures of about 10 to 20 degrees. They like moderately high humidity, but my moth orchids are doing fine without any extra humidity.

Orchids can withstand being too dry much better than too wet. When purchased, most small orchids have sphagnum moss surrounding their roots. The moss stays wet and it is easy to overwater them. If yours is in moss, water only when the moss dries out.

Eventually, you should transplant it into a bark mixture so the roots get more air. Use a clear plastic orchid pot with slits along the side. Water it once a week by placing it in the sink and running room temperature water over the bark for several minutes. Leave the plant in the sink until it drains. Fertilize after every other watering with regular fertilizer diluted to half-normal strength. Plastic orchid pots allow for air circulation but are lightweight and not very attractive, so put them inside a heavier, prettier pot. Translucent pots work well for moth orchids because their roots can photosynthesize if they get some light, making more energy for the plant.

Many people have lovely thriving orchid plants that never re-bloom. Usually, this is because of insufficient light. Orchids need to live on windowsills in full light, not just in a "bright" location. A south or west window is great if you have low-E windows or sheer curtains that diffuse direct sunlight in summer. For a new orchid, to avoid burning the leaves, place it in a bright location and move it slowly toward full light during a period of a few weeks.

Other orchids need more than just light to get them to re-bloom. *Dendrobiums* like a cold dry winter rest period. *Oncidiums* like high humidity. My *Oncidium* orchid finally bloomed after I moved it to the windowsill in my shower.

Carol Ort is a master gardener with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.



FOCUS ON: HOME & GARDEN

DESIGN THERAPY

Seek refuge from the cold outside with a winter decorating project and websites to get started

By Laura Longero

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The temperatures have dropped to below comfortably cold, which means the memories of summer gardening are long gone.

During the winter, it's easy to become bored while you're stuck inside, but it's also the perfect time to start thinking about a home-improvement project or sprucing up your furnishings.

If you're looking into tackling a decorating project this winter, here are four websites to check out:

Apartment Therapy

Apartment Therapy features question-and-answer articles; liveblogging; videos; tours of apartments and houses; segments on budget living, luxury living, small spaces, green living, renters' solutions and healthy living; decor styles like simple chic and dramatic modern; products; and classified advertisements.

I particularly like the before-and-after section that shows photos of a piece of furniture before it's been restored, describes the steps and then shows a photo of the finished project; or uses the same process for an urban garden.



Apartment Therapy

ON THE WEB

Apartment Therapy: www.apartmenttherapy.com

Design Sponge: www.designsponge.com

Houzz: www.houzz.com

Well Furnished: www.wellfurnished.com

Design Sponge

Design Sponge is another decorating site that features sneak peeks into homes, international city travel guides, before-and-after projects, do-it-yourself projects like glittery iPhone cases, an entertaining section featuring cocktail and food recipes for various holidays, a section on products featured in blog posts and videos.

Featured products headline, like home office organizing tools, which are further broken down into boxes and bags, magazines and paper, shelves and files and small tools. An interactive tool lets users choose if they want to decorate a room, plan a meal, mix a drink or plan a party.

Houzz

Houzz features idea books; discussions and references for local design professionals. Plus, check out

articles like "Feng Shui Basics for a Happy Home," "13 Home Design and Decor Trends to Watch in 2013," "Planning Time: Get your Garden Started with Seeds," "Linoleum, the All-Purpose Flooring Wonder" and "Top 10 Unsung Organizing Tools."

Create your own idea book by signing up with email or Facebook. Browse every room in the house and participate in discussions like window treatment ideas, needing help with a dining room, what to do about wood paneling, redoing a kitchen island and more.

Well Furnished

Well Furnished allows users to use their Facebook log-in information to create an account, and it offers more than 50 brands of furniture that are designer favorites — sofas, dining tables, coffee tables, nightstands, ottomans, beds, accessories, bookcases, chairs, cabinets and furniture for children.

Fun collections abound, like Ashleigh Underwood's Glorious Gold collection, featuring tables, trays, bowls, napkin rings, a place mat, chandelier, cutlery and more, all in various shades and textures of gold.

There also are featured designers, things we like, top designers to follow and top enthusiasts.



Design Sponge



Houzz

Nursery's January seminars start today

Staff report

Moana Nursery has upcoming workshops for adults and children.

Today: Science fair projects for elementary students

Plant doctor Jon Bruyn speaks on ideas in the plant world for science projects. Parents and students in grades 1-5 will leave with a strong understanding of plant growth and health from seed to mature plant — enough to be able to design your own unique science project. A

free seed packet for attendees and free containers while supplies last. All students must be accompanied by an adult.

Seminars are free and held at Moana Nursery, 1190 W. Moana Lane, in the Landscape and Design Center.

They begin at 10 a.m. and last one hour. Please arrive 15 minutes early, as seating is limited to 60 and is first come, first served.

Jan. 19: How to identify and attract neighborhood birds

Join local Audubon Society

members and birding experts Alan Gubanich and Jacque Lowery for a mini-course in identification of the birds now visiting your neighborhood and the best ways to attract them to your yard.

Free; held at Moana Nursery, 1190 W. Moana Lane, in the Landscape and Design Center.

The class begins promptly at 10 a.m. Please arrive 15 minutes early, as seating is limited to 60.

Jan. 26: The joys and benefits of houseplants

Discover the joys of indoor

gardening, even if you don't have a green thumb.

Our horticulturist Lisa Braginton will show you how plants can add long-lasting drama and lift your spirits during this drab time of year.

Free; held at Moana Nursery, 1190 W. Moana Lane, in the Landscape and Design Center. Seminars begin promptly at 10 a.m. and last one hour.

Please arrive 15 minutes early, as seating is limited to 60 and is first come, first served.

Details: www.moanannursery.com or 775-825-0600.

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