

Deciduous Calanthes

This is a group of orchids, which are not seen very often. It is notable for being the genus that produced the first orchid hybrid: *Cal. sylvatica* x *Cal. triplicate* = ***Cal. Dominyi*** (registered by Veitch in 1856).

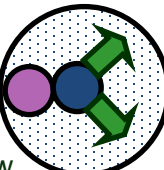
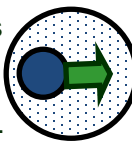
Up through the 1960s & '70s, in Europe these were grown in large numbers, with their gracefully arching flower spikes producing cut flowers for the Christmas season. As a cut flower, the spike lasts 2-3 weeks; on the bulb they last twice as long.

Calanthe vestita



These plants are terrestrials, and they require total rest during their late winter dormancy period. After blooming you stop watering. If you wish, you can take them out of the pot and store the bulbs in a cool & dark place for 2-3 months.

Start checking on them in March. When there are signs of new growths forming at the base of the bulbs, pot them up in fresh mix (every year). There are two schools of thought:

- Each plant should consist of:
 - 2 bulbs (previous years growth + the one from the year before). With room for current year growth, this requires a larger pot, but produces larger & more new growths. 
 - A single bulb (previous years growth). This allows you to use smaller pots, but tends to limit the size (or number) of the next growth. Place any older bulbs in a tray to produce new plantlets, which will take a year or two to grow to BS. 
- Use a terrestrial mix. I can no longer get chunky peat (my preferred primary ingredient), so use something like this:
 - 2 parts potting soil (ProMix or other)
 - 2 parts composted manure
 - 1 part Cedar mulch to airrate the mix
 - 1 part composted leaf mulch
 - 1 part perlite

Water sparingly till the new growth is 2-3" tall. From that point, till leaves start dropping in the fall, do not let the plants go dry. Drench, and water again when just barely moist.

These are greedy plants during the growth period.

Fertilize every 3rd watering; a pinch of NutraCote in each pot helps. Give them light similar to Paphiopedilum (or better yet, in-between Paphs & Cattleya). Intermediate temperature range is fine.

When the leaves start to turn yellow in the fall, scale back watering a little, but do not let the pots go dry. Once leaves are mostly yellow, you can trim them back. Flower spikes form at the base of the bulb, with blooms expected in Dec-Feb.

Calanthe rosea

This species with a very appropriate name is easily recognized on the pinched 'waist' half way up the bulb.



Calanthes set 2-3 large plicate leaves on each bulb. The leaves usually turn yellow and drop off prior to blooming.



On occasion plants will have a portion of the leaves still in good condition by the time the plant blooms. In such cases, just trim off the yellow portion, and let the leaf do its thing to support the flowering.

Calanthe Grouville

