

Orchids in Coco-fiber Finishing/growing Tips



Coco-fiber or COCOHAIR as we so fondly call it can be a great growing medium for orchids if handled properly. We use it as we are allowed to import orchids rooted in the Coco-fiber which gives you the grower a much faster finishing time as compared to bare-root plants. With Coco-fiber there is little or no transplant shock, and plants can be potted direct into most other media used for orchids and will root quickly into the surrounding medium.

When growing or finishing the plants in Coco-fiber we recommend the following for optimum results:

- 1) **Watering:** Coco-fiber drains quickly and dries out faster than Sphagnum moss or bark. The medium should be allowed to dry out on the top of the pot but not to dry out completely throughout the pot. Under most conditions you will need to water the plants every 4-7 days or more often, depending on your conditions.

If plants are bumped up into other potting medium, do so without removing the fiber from the roots...just pot up and add the other medium around the root ball. Those plants potted up into other mediums will respond and dry out at a frequency more similar to the pattern of the surrounding medium.

- 2) **Fertilizer:** the material drains quickly and much of the fertilizer is leached out with the watering. We recommend using regular applications of fertilizer in the watering solution at the rate of about 200 PPM Nitrogen in a balanced formula.

Monitor your EC levels and if too high; water with plain water for 1-2 watering to leach out any excess salts. (usually not an issue)

- 3) **Repotting:** These plants should be received with great roots that are actively growing. For optimum results we recommend watering the plants in and placing them in 800-1000 foot-candles of light for the first 2 weeks while they adjust to light and greenhouse conditions again. Then after that the light level can be raised to 1500 foot-candles to help induce flower spike. After two weeks the plants can be repotted into the next larger size pot using your normal orchid mix. Styrofoam peanuts can be added to the bottom of the pot for extra drainage. Place existing root-ball in the middle of the pot and add bark mix or moss around the root-ball covering the roots and filling the pots to the base of the plant without burying the lower leaves. Water and fertilize the plants, and they should be ready to grow!
- 4) **Finishing without repotting:** If you decide to leave the plant alone growing in Coco-fiber, some nurseries will add a ½ inch layer of Sphagnum moss to the top of the root-ball across the top of the pot to slow down the drying out of the medium. This will help the product retain more moisture longer and cut down on the frequency of watering required. It is definitely a benefit if the plants are shipped this way to the retail store or end consumer.