Sphagnum Moss **Phalaenopsis Culture**

**PHALAENOPSIS,** the MOTH ORCHID, is one of the best orchids for growing in the home, and is also a favorite with greenhouse growers. Culture for DORITIS, a related genus, and DORITAENOPSIS, a hybrid between the two, is the same as for pure PHALAENOPSIS.

**TEMPERATURES for PHALS** should be above 60 degrees at night, and range between 75 and 85 degrees during the day. Higher temperatures force vegetative growth but must be accompanied by higher humidity and higher air movement. Maximum is 95 degrees! To initiate flowering in the fall night temperature must be reduced to 55 degrees for 3-4 weeks!

**LIGHT** is easy to provide for PHALS. They like to grow in a bright window with a minimum of direct sun. An east window is ideal in the home, or semi-shaded south of west window are acceptable. In dull, northern winter climates, a fall southern exposure may be needed. Artificial lights are excellent! Usually four fluorescent tubes (in 1 fixture) are placed 6012 inches over the leaves, for 12 to 16 hours per day following the natural day length. In a greenhouse, heavy shade must be provided to prevent sunburn! 1,000 to 1,500 foot-candles is optimum.

**WATER** is especially critical for PHALS growing hydroponically. Because they have no major water storage organs (other than their leaves). THEY MUST NEVER COMPLETELY DRY OUT! Another area affected by water content is the roots. If the Sphagnum mediums they are growing in become too dry, the fertilizer content increases proportionately to the reduced water content and the resultant high saturation level will burn the roots and can off food to the plant. Water your plant thoroughly every week. In the morning (this allows the leaves to dry off before night time) using the best available pure water (rain, reverse osmosis, distilled, bottled water or at worst…low TDS tap water) and use lukewarm water running it through the pot thoroughly.

**HUMIDITY** at 50-90% is very important to PHALS! In your home, set the plant on a gravel tray, partially filled with water, but DO NOT SIT THE PLANT IN THE WATER! Grouping plants together raises the humidity by conserving the water plants transpire. In high humidity areas (greenhouses) it is imperative that humid air is always moving (fans) to prevent disease.