



Surrey, BC, Canada
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Cut Orchids: Distinctly Elegant



Orchids have an unparalleled mystique which makes them a favorite for weddings, graduations or any special event brightened up with flowers. The undeniable uniqueness and elegance of orchids make a refined statement about the event.

Not all orchids are suitable as cut flowers. How long your orchids will last depends on the variety as well as the use you put the blooms to and the care they receive. Some orchid varieties have been bred specifically for the cut flower trade and are long lasting, open quickly, do not fade, and do not bruise or spot easily. Some orchids are thick and heavy, almost waxy in texture; this is the substance of the flower and orchids with heavier substance will generally last longer. This is especially true if you will be using single blooms in corsages, bouquets and boutonnieres.

Most cut orchids will last longer as a stem than as a single bloom; cut orchid arrangements will last longer than a boutonniere. Flowers should be as fresh as possible, if they appear a little wilted, they can be submerged in cool water for a few minutes. After stems are purchased and brought home, 2 cm (1/2 inch) should be cut from the base of the stem with a sharp knife, if possible while the stem is submerged in water; then place the stem in a vase of water. Blooms should be kept away from direct sunlight and heat sources; they will last longer at cooler room temperatures, but will suffer from cool drafts. A cool draft is moving air which is cooler than the ambient temperature, such as air from an open window on a cool day. Blooms will benefit from daily fine misting, and stems should be re-cut every few days to prolong their life. Cut orchids stems may be arranged in vases or in floral foam (oasis), and single blooms can be floated in bowls for a softer look.

Cymbidium and *Dendrobium* will last 2 to 3 weeks as stems and can be used for cut arrangements as well as for corsages, boutonnieres and bouquets. *Phalaenopsis*, *Oncidium* and *Paphiopedilum* can also be used in various ways and last 1 to 2 weeks on the stem. *Cattleya* and *Odontoglossum* will last up to 7 days and are best used in corsages, boutonnieres and bouquets. Some *Cattleya*, *Cymbidium* and *Oncidium* have sweet or floral fragrances that add to their charm in various arrangements.