

SOBRALIA CARE

Sobralias are the perfect cymbidium companion! Ideally suited for our Mediterranean climate, sobralias love the warm summer days and cool summer nights that they need to bloom. Many California growers treat their sobralias as garden plants, and are rewarded with copious, colorful flowers each year with relatively little care. Growers in other areas can succeed with sobralias if they can duplicate this climatic regime. If plants can be grown out-of-doors during frost-free months they will have enough light to set spikes. Unfortunately, despite their beautiful ornamental bamboo look, their high light requirements keep them from making good houseplant (unless you are not interested in flowers).

Flowering is done in succession, one flower at a time. You will see the bloom unfold, hold for a few days, and then it will fade, as another bud develops and then flowers. This will repeat another time, so each spike give you up to 3 blooms from the same flowering tip.

Temperature - Summer nights in the 50's, with summer days in the 70's and low 80's, suit these plants well. In cooler months, they will take down well into the 30's before any protection need be contemplated. However, when temperatures approach freezing, plants may be damaged, so some overhead protection is called for.

Light - Sobralias need all the light you can give them, short of burning the leaves. Along the California coast, plants will tolerate nearly full sun, with dappled shade to protect them from the hottest noon-day sun. The further inland one goes, the more mid-day shade is needed. Leaves should be light green and naturally upright. Limp, dark green foliage is a sign that plants are not getting enough light. INSUFFICIENT LIGHT IS THE MOST COMMON REASON SOBRALIAS FAIL TO FLOWER.

Humidity and Air Movement - These are fairly tolerant of lower humidity, but will do best with 50% - 60%. Humidity should rise with the temperature. If it gets super hot, damp down around the plant to take some stress away.

Water and Fertilizer - Water every 5-7 days. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer year round. Some growers prefer the slow-release type, but liquid feed like Miracle-gro or Peters 20-20-20 is easier to manage for most growers.

Potting - Plants should be repotted into fresh mix every two to three years, depending on the health of the mix. If it is broken down and soft, repot. Potting is best done right after flowering, to allow maximum time to re-establish before spiking the next season. Do not be too anxious to divide, as best flowering is on large plants. Never divide down to less than 8 canes. You will see significant leaf drop after you re-pot, don't worry. The new growth will soon leaf out and fill things out. Use cymbidium style potting media for best drainage.

Source
Cal-Orchid, Inc
1251 Orchid Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
805.967.1312 FAX 805.967.6882