

Soil- Use a good quality violet/Strep soil. Make sure it has peat, and perlite. ProMix HP, Fox Farm Ocean Blend, Black Gold and Tupur Royal Gold are all good choices. Add 60-70% extra coarse perlite, grade #3 is preferred. If you use our club's soil add 1/3 cup more perlite to every cup of soil.

Watering - Whether you are watering from the top, bottom or wick watering, you can easily create root rot if you over water. A way to keep from doing this is to watch the weight of the pot or basket when you pick it up out of the outer pot. If it is really heavy then don't add more water. If it is a normal weight or a little on the dry side then fill the outer pot. Using a clear reservoir when you wick water will ensure you always know when your plant needs water.

Light - Morning or soft late afternoon light is best if you have a window sill collection. That means an East, or shaded South-facing window. Avoid direct sun during the harsh hours of the day or West exposure. If you have a large collection its best to use artificial lighting. Use either LED or florescent, that has around 4100 K. The full spectrum at 6500 K is way too much for these plants. 6500 K is natural full sun. These plants, in nature, do not grow in full sun. If you can afford dimmable lights, get them so you have the ability to adjust the light level if needed. Leave the lights on for about 9-12 hours a day.

Feeding - Use 1/4 tsp of fertilizer per gallon with each watering. This works for all watering methods. Every four weeks use plain water to flush out any salts left by the fertilizer you might be using. Dyna-Grow Foliage Pro and Better Gro Orchid Plus are both excellent fertilizers. They spur growth of leaves & since Streps produce flowers from the leaves, you should see more blooms. 1/4 tsp. of Epson Salts added to the fertilizer will increase both flower production and intensity of colors.

Temperature - Keep the plant in its comfort zone. It is happy in the temperature range between 60 and 80 degrees. Most prefer the cooler side of the spectrum. Avoid sudden temperature changes which can cause mold or mildew on leaves. An electric fan running in the room will help to keep them cool and circulate the air so that fungus has a hard time growing.

Repotting - Repot your plant every 6-9 months. The plant needs the nutrients from new soil. Increase the pot size only by the smallest increment. These plants prefer to be root bound. Small starter plants can bloom before it is even time to repot them. Avoid deep pots; they hold too much moisture. Avoid terracotta pots; the roots glue themselves to the porous pot interior and suffer damage when you repot. Moisten the mix prior to removing the plant from the old pot. It will be much easier to remove the plant without ripping the roots. Moisten the new mix. Add a small amount to the pot. Sprinkle a small amount of Marathon to the top of the new soil. Remove 1/3 of the soil and roots off the bottom of your root ball to spur new growth. Pot the plant so that the crown sits 1/8" above the top of the pot. Very small plants may need to be put under a clear dome for 2 weeks after repotting.

Cleaning - Remove spent flowers. Do not let spent blossoms drop onto the leaves. This will invite rot and disease. Remove old, yellowed, or unhealthy leaves. Cleans plants will resist pests and disease. You can trim leaves with pinking sheers so that the leaves look more natural. When removing a leaf, leave an inch of the bottom attached to the rosette. This will spur the plant to produce more leaves and more new growth.