

Before returning the plants to the plastic house, it pays to give them a spray with an insecticide to kill any stray insects or their eggs because these may cause damage to the plants and their flower spikes.

If in doubt whether to water or not, don't.

Crowded conditions are not favorable to flowering and the rule is to place the pots a pot's-width apart. This space allows good air circulation, effective watering and less chance of insect infestation or disease.

Various types of composts are used throughout the world to grow cymbidium orchids all of which are equally successful. The pH should ideally be slightly acidic. Some ready-mixed composts also contain an even balance of nutrients.

Cymbidiums should be repotted in early spring or straight after flowering.

Plants only need repotting or dividing up when they have filled the pot with roots or have grown too large for the pot. When repotting, take care not to over-pot as cymbidiums like to be slightly root-bound. The pot should fit around the orchid leaving a space of around two centimeters to accommodate new growth.

LES HODGE

HOW I BECAME A MEMBER OF THE IOS — PETER STILLER

Peter Stiller, also a member of the Deutsche Orchideen-Gesellschaft, writes from Germany remembering how in 1997 his friend Huntley Lauder sent him a copy of **The Irish Garden** with an article on orchid collecting in Belize.

Although it took six years, he finally made a visit to Dublin to meet with Brendan Sayers and Marie Hourigan at the National Botanic Gardens where "I walked the entire gardens and among many interesting specimen plants and trees, a cork oak caught my attention, which I had never seen before in nature".

Peter also viewed the various glasshouses that held the orchid collection with Marie and was "especially impressed by the gigantic pots of mature Cymbidiums."

Later that evening Brendan "took me by car to an area where he showed me several species of local wild orchids. On that wonderful day, I became a member of the **Irish Orchid Society** in spirit as well as *de facto*, which I remain to this day. Even though I live several flight hours away from Dublin I always receive **Pollinia**, which allows me to be part of the IOS from afar."

TO ALL MEMBERS

What do you like about the IOS? We would appreciate it if you would email either myself or Brendan with a short opinion. We will include comments in a future edition of **Pollinia**, edited should you be too loquacious in praise. Thank you. The Editor

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