

**T**hese orchids are gorgeous. Be aware, though, that growing orchids isn't always easy and requires precise temperature, light, and maintenance. New York City makes the task especially difficult: schedules are busy, apartments are small, space is limited, and windows tend to face either tall buildings or brick walls. Winter and summer temperatures can be extreme, and few can afford proper climate control. All of which makes growing orchids complicated, but not out of the question.

First, create the right environmental conditions by regulating the heat, light, and humidity of your home. Different orchids react in different ways to the inevitable temperature fluctuations of a New York apartment. *Zygopetalum mackayi* and *Dendrobium formosum* can handle a little chill, while *Catasetum russellianum* and *Stanhope tigrina* need substantial heat. Find the appropriate hanging, lighting, fanning, and watering devices at hardware stores or in special order brochures. Two recommendations: Super-High-Output fluorescent lights work particularly well, and a tightly-sealed room should keep the humidity level at an ideal sixty-five percent.

Setting up the equipment is the easy part. Orchids need lots of water (but not too much) and lots of light (but not from the wrong angle). Place specific types of high-wattage lamps at specific distances from the plants, for specific amounts of time, and, with the help of specific ventilation techniques, your orchids will thrive year- round. This takes patience, practice, and money. But all those hours, mistakes, and utility bills eventually lead to the endless pleasure of a beautiful indoor garden.

After plenty of trial and error, Jo Baer received an Award of Merit from the Greater New York Orchid Society in 1973 for the orchids she cultivated in her Greenwich Village loft. As she described in these two consecutive issues of the American Orchid Society Bulletin, her Fluorescent Light Culture approach was a success, even though her electric bills went up forty dollars a month.

Let's begin the spring with a flower sale: Helen and Charles Hersh are here to sell their orchids on Sunday, April 17th, 2011. Why not buy a few?

Organized by SheShe He, Regan Hillman, and David Wilson.