Smithsonian Associates

Summer Orchid Care   Instructor: Barb Schmidt

Materials and supplies needed:

This class will end with a demonstration of how to repot an orchid. Four main reasons that an orchid would need to be repotted are:

1. The orchid has been overwatered and its roots are rotted.

2. The orchid has an insect infestation.

3. The orchid has outgrown it pot. Monopodial orchids, such as Phalaenopsis, can become too tall and top-heavy. Sympodial orchids, such as Cattleya, Oncidium, and Dendrobium, can actually grow out over the edges of the pot.

4. The orchid media is old and has broken down into smaller pieces. This allows less air and more moisture around the orchid's roots. Repotting for this reason should occur every three or four years.

If you would like to do this repotting activity with me, you will need the following supplies:

- Orchid media – this can be bought at most home supply or garden centers.

- A new, larger pot if you are repotting your orchid because it has outgrown its existing pot or because its media has broken down (#3 or #4 above). Make sure to buy an orchid pot or a pot with large drain holes.

- A soft rag, dishwashing detergent, Q-tips, a glass jar, and alcohol if you intend on reusing your existing pot (#1 or #2 above). You will also need a lighter if you are repotting more than one orchid that has an insect infestation, as you will need to sterilize the scissors.

- A protected area to work – Removing a wet orchid from its pot will be messy. I usually put a large garbage bag down on my kitchen table so I can roll everything up at the end and throw it away.

- A bowl of water big enough to soak your potted orchid in. When the class begins, place your potted orchid in the bowl of water to soften the roots. The water height should be at the top of the pot.

- A pair of gardening sheers or old scissors – You will use these to trim off any dead or decaying

roots from the orchid before it is repotted.