

## Nun's Orchid

Nun's orchid--named for its hooded flowers--originally came to the United States from China during the eighteenth century. This attractive orchid is adaptable and easy to maintain.

The individual flowers of the nun's orchid are large--up to five inches across--and are rusty brown with a purplish lip. Flowers are believed to develop in response to reduced hours of daylight, mainly during late winter and early spring. Each inflorescence opens over a period of up to six weeks, and the flowers last for about a month.



Place the nun's orchid where it will receive light shade during the hottest part of the day. Bring in the house if the temperature will drop below 40.

Before planting your nun's orchid, work organic matter--peat, well rotted compost, and partially decomposed pine bark--into the soil to a concentration of sixty to seventy percent. To improve soil drainage, add perlite and sand or use a commercial potting mix. Maintain soil moisture at an even level, allowing the top two inches of soil to dry out when new foliage matures.

Soil pH should be in the range of 5.5 - 6.3. Apply an organic or slow release fertilizer every three months and a fish emulsion or compost tea every two weeks while the plants are in active growth.