



Blooming in winter and early spring, these fragrant flowers are a favorite in many island gardens.

Honohono

Dendrobium anosmum

by Jan Takamiya

Related species: *Den. parishii*, *Den. aphyllum*,
Den. loddigesii, *Den. primulinum* (polyanthum) ...

Temperature and Humidity

Honohono prefer warm temperatures, with a day to night difference of about 10-20 degrees. Cold winter spells appear to boost flower production. Sun/cloud/wind conditions, elevation, surrounding plants, ground cover, air flow and water may impact humidity and temperature.

Light

Quality and direction change throughout the year. Honohono grow best with bright (filtered) sunlight and a long day length. The bloom will probably be sparse if grown in shade or inadequate light. Avoid direct unfiltered mid-day sun to prevent burning. Consider 65% shade for keiki and 50% shade for mature plants. Your orchids will probably do best facing the east or south.

Be aware of surroundings that may impede light (i.e., trees, brush, buildings, roof lines).

Air Movement

Good air circulation helps to reduce heat stress by cooling the surface of the leaf and preventing leaf burn. It helps to speed up evaporation of surface moisture after watering, and this helps prevent fungal disease. Air circulation is enhanced with elevation; avoid over-crowding your plants.

Water

Honohono can tolerate heavy watering and may be watered daily during the growing season (March–November). Wet the entire plant, soak roots. They grow best when they are allowed to dry out between waterings. Reduce watering to 2-3 times a week during the period of dormancy (December–February).

Media is typically a mixture of New Zealand pine bark, perlite and peat or sphagnum.

Fertilizing

Good nutrition is essential to producing long canes and a profuse bloom. Honohono are heavy feeders. Fertilize weekly during the grow season (March–November). I use high phosphorus liquid fertilizer in November and again once buds emerge. Fertilizing is typically reduced or stopped when watering is reduced, and when temperatures are colder (December–February). I prefer to use a balanced fertilizer that includes micronutrients.

Caution: Fertilizers are salts. Salt build up may retard growth, especially for pot keiki production, so repot every 2-3 years.

Dormancy

In nature, dormancy is a time of suspended or slowed growth. This period usually runs from December–February, which is Asia's summer (Hawaii's winter). During this period, the canes harden and sheaths form; leaves turn yellow and fall off, and the process of bud production and blooming begins. Stop fertilizing and reduce watering to 2-3x a week. End dormancy when buds appear: resume weekly fertilizing and water daily to support pot keiki growth.

Sanitation & Plant Health

The best treatment for insect and disease problems is prevention. Keep your plant healthy! Treat for slugs and snails regularly. Remove dried, dead vegetation and weeds from the growing area. Keep everything as clean as possible. Work on newspaper and discard it after every repotting. Wash your hands regularly.

Viruses are spread primarily by using a contaminated cutting tool. Sterilize cutting tools with a hot flame or torch before use on a plant.

Root/fungal diseases may occur from too much water and lack of a drying period. Be sure pots drain well and have good air flow.

Bulbul birds snip buds and may shred leaves. Doves are attracted to slug bait and bring weed seeds into the growing area.

Flower thrips are a concern during the blooming season. I use insecticide before dormancy and again when buds emerge to protect the buds and flowers from thrips.