



MASDEVALLIAS and DRACULAS

Roy & Dave's way



HOUSING:

Polyflute Covered Pitched Roof with a door in both ends for draught. There is also an area where the roof adjoins the sides where air can flow in (/-\ shape). In the winter there is as much light as the winter sun allows, and in summer we stretch some shade cloth over the roof section facing the sun.

BENCHING:

Most of the Masdevallias are up at least 2 to 3 ft. from the ground, and on wire benches, or bread crates, some of the more light sensitive ones eg igneas & Coccineas are lower to the floor.

MEDIUM:

We grow 99% in straight fresh Sphagnum Moss, we do not shred, cut or substitute with polystyrene beads. Some however are grown in straight bark, mainly larger ones, but we have equally grown larger ones in Sphag. with the same results. (Sphagnum is the preferred one) **do not pack the sphag, down tightly.**

WATERING:

As needed to keep the Sphag green and growing in your own conditions.

FERTILISING:

We use Manutec, Mainly Blossom Booster as it is very low in Iron. (Too much Iron will cause the Sphag to go slimy.) Very occasionally we will use a higher iron content. Every 3 to 4 weeks in the growing season and only sometimes when I can't remember when I did it last?

LIGHT:

Masdevallias require a fair amount of light to flower well. In Summer when the temperature is high, reduce the light and keep lower to the floor to escape the heat. In winter when the temperatures are lower, the plants can tolerate a lot more light. Because the plants have no pseudobulbs to retain moisture, the leaves will dehydrate quickly and the plant will suffer accordingly. If you have plants that back onto a wall, make sure that you rotate the pot to give maximum exposure to light.

I have read some good articles on growing Masdevallias, but the most information I got was from some older copies of the Australian Orchid Review, there were some articles written by Ray Thompson called "Masdevallias Speak".

To grow them well, he suggests that you look at the plant as a whole. If the leaves are very dark, long & limp, they are not getting enough light and will not flower well, conversely, too much light will cause the leaf to look dehydrated and bronzed with black tips which dry off and die. A happy medium would be mid green and plump with strength. They like plenty of moisture around them and do not respond well to drying out. If you have a very hot summer temperature in your area, the best for them would be outside under a tree or similar shade cloth structure suspended over water.

DRACULA

HOUSING: Any structure, although not too hot in summer, very similar temperature to Masdevallias but lower light.

POTTING: Use only mesh pots or gutter guard so that the flowers can come down and out through the sides. They almost always send the flower spikes down.

SITUATION: We suspend the pots from wire hangers underneath the benches, with other plants over the top on the bench above for shade. Very sensitive to heat and drying winds. If possible create a micro climate of a moist environment. Put buckets of water underneath for humidity.

WATERING: Keep moist at all times. (not soggy)

MEDIUM: Sphagnum Moss (not tightly packed) may have some very tiny bark as well mixed in.

FERTILIZER: **Very** little, once a month or 6 weeks, Manutec again.

TIP: If you have a flower that collapses, just spray with plain water and it will revive, which shows you that moisture is **so important** to Dracs.