

DISAS

With erect stems holding richly-coloured, hooded flower, these popular summer orchids bring joy and magnificence to any garden.

This genus forms part of the family Orchidaceae and contains approximately 100 species. They are deciduous, sometimes evergreen, found at low to high altitudes in Madagascar, South Africa as well as central and east Africa.

Disas are cool growers, performing wonderfully between temperatures of 10-25 degrees Celsius. They can, however, withstand colder or warmer temperatures for short periods at a time and will even tolerate temperatures of 30 degrees or higher provided they have adequate moisture, humidity and air movement. They prefer light shade so plant them where they will receive about 50% shade.

Never allow the roots to dry out, but avoid overwatering as well. In summer, water every two days in the morning (even every day if it is extremely hot and dry). Come winter, the watering can subside to one or two times a week when it isn't raining. Tap water will be fine for watering if it is not heavily chlorinated. If chlorine is a problem then allow water to stand in a bucket overnight so that it evaporates off.