

## Specimen Plants and Flower Boosters 2019

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Definition: Anything that will empower my Orchid to grow and spike more reliably with maximum flowers. It can be cultural adjustments like more light, water quality, and air movement. Also, nutritional like fish emulsion, bone meal, and specialty fertilizers. Most of us would like to spray a magic potion and the Orchid will grow and flower like magic.

For Florida: The best growers have several things in common.

1. Maximize light for the genera they are growing. "Principles of light by Dr. Erik Runkle, Orchids Magazine, May 2008.
2. Have good air movement. Roots are well aerated.
3. Low salts in the root zone. Flush plants regularly. If well water, flush 45 minutes. If city water, 10-15 minutes. Weekly. If you grow in the rain, a 1 inch rain fall will do the same. For indoor growing use rain water or reverse osmosis (RO) water.
4. Have fantastic roots. Pest and disease absent.
5. Understands water quality and how it dictates fertilizer choice. Best article. "What's in Your Water?", by Jack and Cari Peters, Orchids Magazine, May 2012. City water can be moderately alkaline. Well water usually very alkaline. Rain and RO water have no alkalinity. What does it mean? Best article is by Dr. Bill Argo, Blackmore Company. Search on line and the SAOS (St. Augustine Orchid Society) has it on their web site. Many thanks to Sue Bottom. What needs to be done is for one person in your area to do a water test by J. R. Peters and the alkalinity value is the most important. High alkalinity and total dissolved salts require the most flushing. Best fertilizer will be 20-20-20 or 18-18-18. You can confirm this with J.R. Peters after doing the water quality test. Florida growers usually need some Epson Salts, magnesium sulfate. Rain water has no Calcium or Magnesium. Michigan State Fertilizer best. High phosphorus is not necessary for anything. 2-3% of NPK sufficient. Best article is in Orchids Magazine, "Without High Phosphorus by Jan Szyren, June 2003. Recommends less nitrogen on mature plants to increase flowers.
6. Understanding Water Quality. Best explanation is by Dr. Bill Argo. One of the designers of the MSU Michigan State Fertilizer. Best water is rain water or RO water. Must be paired with the MSU RO special fertilizer. Best growers know how to balance their light, temperature, plant type with a small amount of fertilizer. Ask the best growers in your society that matches your growing conditions and do not exceed their fertilizer recommendations.

Roy's secret potion. On mature plants. Just before spikes appear. Apply more calcium based fertilizer 1/2 teaspoon per gallon with micronutrient package like STEM by Peters or Microplex by Millers Chemical. 1/8 teaspoon per gallon of the micros. Weekly until spikes and flowers appear. Maximum 3 months. If it does not give you the best flowering ever..... We need to do a diagnostic review. Happy Growing.

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