

## Success with Hardy Bletilla Orchids

Hardy Bletilla orchids are easy to grow if you provide their basic needs. They like woodland conditions. They should be planted in dappled shade or morning sun/afternoon shade. They do not like hot sun, but they need some light to bloom well.

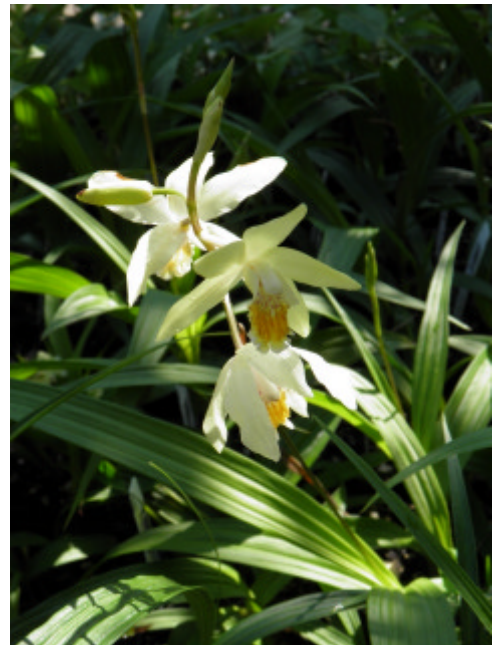
Work in lots of organic matter (compost, rotted leaves, and/or potting soil) to a depth of one foot and a diameter of two feet. (About 50/50 organic material and native soil is the right mix.) Plant in the middle of the prepared bed—Bletillas slowly spread and become more beautiful each year.



'Kate' (*Bletilla yokohama*)

Plant the bulbs at a depth of one to one-and-a-half inches in the prepared bed. They need good drainage and they also need regular water. Bletillas are not dry land plants.

The tops will die down in the fall. Pink Bletilla orchid varieties (*Bletilla striata*) have been hardy in our USDA Zone 7 garden for many years—including one winter that got down to 7 degrees for about a week.



'Chinese Butterfly' (*Bletilla ochracea*)

Yellow Bletilla orchids (*Bletilla ochracea*) are also rated as hardy to Zone 7 but are reputed to be more sensitive to cold than the pink varieties. Both species' hardiness for the occasional extremely cold winter will be greatly improved by mulching with leaves, compost or bark to a depth of about 6" or more in the winter. Remove the mulch in the spring.

Fertilize with a mild organic fertilizer in spring when the plants start growing again. We use Nurti-Rich pelletized chicken manure.

Read more at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bletilla>

<http://botanyboy.org/the-only-easy-to-grow-terrestrial-orchid-bletilla-striata/>

<http://www.plantdelights.com/Hardy-Terrestrial-Orchids/products/521/>



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