

Orchids

Tool and Pot Sterilization

Using the following procedures will help to ensure or inhibit the transfer of pathogens, including virus, from possibly infected plants or contaminated containers. Growing areas need to be clean and infected plants need to be isolated.

Cutting Tool Sterilization

Flaming Procedure

1. Wipe blade clean of attached debris.
2. Pass propane flame over heavy part of tool. Avoid overheating the cutting edge. Edge is grossly overheated if there is a color change.

Chemical Procedures (This procedure is very practical and requires a minimum of judgment.)

1. Use a glass or steel container with sufficient depth to cover cutting areas of tool.
2. Prepare a saturated solution of Trisodium Phosphate (TSP). Add enough salts to show some undissolved residue on the bottom.
3. Wipe blade clean of attached debris.
4. Soak tool for 3-5 minutes. It is best to have several tools in use to allow the needed soak time.
5. This solution is highly alkaline and contact with your eyes must be avoided.
6. This solution will corrode aluminum but will not promote corrosion on steel.
7. Solution need not be rinsed off before use.
8. Solution is useful until severely discolored.



Sterilizing Pots

Reason

- 1.** To preclude re-use of a pot which may harbor a plant pathogen. These are not easy or in most cases possible to detect. Virus is the most significant culprit.
- 2.** Most pots are recyclable many times, especially those made of fired clay.
- 3.** Recycling is monetarily desirable.

Procedure

- 1.** Scrub pots to remove all traces of old roots, mold, algae, and debris.
- 2.** Allow to dry thoroughly.
- 3.** Arrange pots in a saltable container so as to allow a solution to freely contact all surfaces.
- 4.** In a separate container, prepare a chlorine laundry bleach solution using nine parts water and one part bleach.
- 5.** Allow pots to soak several hours. Using rubber gloves, remove pots and rinse in clean water and allow to dry completely before using. Dry in sun on a bench. Do not put on grass or soil.
- 6.** The chlorine solution is reusable if recycled immediately.



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