

How to Propagate *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps*



Taming the Tiny Alligator: A Guide to Propagating *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps*

The world of orchids is as diverse as it is fascinating, boasting an array of shapes, sizes, and care requirements. For those intrigued by the unusual, the *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps*, nicknamed the "Crocodile Head Orchid" due to its reptilian bloom, presents an exciting challenge. But don't let its unique appearance intimidate you! This blog post delves into the specifics of propagating this miniature marvel, making it an attainable treasure for your indoor jungle.

Understanding the Beast: Basics of *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps*

Originating from the cloud forests of Ecuador, this epiphytic

orchid thrives in humid environments with dappled light. Unlike its namesake, the *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps* isn't ferocious. It prefers a well-draining medium, consistent moisture without soggy roots, and moderate temperatures. Now, let's talk about multiplying your mini-menagerie!

Two Approaches to Propagation: Division vs. Keikis

1. Division: The most common method, division, involves separating mature plants with multiple growths.

- **Timing is Key:** Ideally, divide during spring or early summer when the plant is actively growing.
- **Sharp and Clean:** Use a sterilized blade to cut the rhizome (the horizontal stem), ensuring each division has at least 3-4 healthy growths.
- **Potting Up:** Plant divisions in a well-draining orchid mix, securing them gently to prevent movement.
- **Patience is a Virtue:** Maintain humidity and monitor watering closely while the divisions establish themselves.

2. Keiki Propagation: Occasionally, *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps* will surprise you with keikis—miniature plantlets that sprout on flower spikes.

- **Ready to Roll:** Wait until the keiki develops roots at least 2-3 inches long.
- **Gentle Removal:** Carefully detach the keiki from the mother plant, ensuring minimal damage.
- **Independent Living:** Pot the keiki as you would a division, providing the same care and environment.

Creating the Perfect Nursery: Tips for

Success

- **Medium Matters:** Opt for a well-draining mix specifically designed for orchids. A combination of bark, perlite, and sphagnum moss works well.
- **Humidity is Key:** Mimic their natural habitat by maintaining humidity levels of 60-70%. A pebble tray, humidifier, or grouping plants can help.
- **Light Right:** Provide bright, indirect light, avoiding harsh, direct sunlight that can scorch their leaves.
- **Water Wisely:** Water thoroughly when the potting mix approaches dryness, allowing excess water to drain completely.
- **Fertilize Regularly:** Use a balanced, diluted orchid fertilizer every other week during active growth periods.

Patience Yields Rewards

Propagating *Pleurothallis crocodiliceps* might require a touch more patience compared to other houseplants, but the reward of watching new growths emerge is immensely satisfying. Remember to observe your plants closely, respond to their needs, and celebrate the small victories. Soon enough, you'll have a miniature crocodile head orchid family to admire and share with fellow plant enthusiasts!