

Growing and caring for Platyceriums

Platyceriums are very rewarding ferns to grow; they are beautiful specimens in cultivation and many are long lived.

Common name Stag horns, Elkhorns, Silver Elks

Cultivation Platyceriums are generally epiphytes (growing on hosts) or lithophytes (growing on rocks). They grow in brightly lit humid conditions from dense rainforests to open vegetation. They grow on trees with non-shedding bark.

In cultivation Platyceriums can be grown successfully in shadehouses under 70% shadecloth or on shady trees or under verandahs and eaves of houses. Many are hardy and easy to grow. They are not suitable to grow in the ground. They are grown on mounts fixed to walls or on boards or on trees. They require high filtered light and need protection from excessive sun. Hardy species are cold tolerant in winter but tropical species need glasshouse conditions in cold wet weather.

Potting Mix Platyceriums can be grown in containers as long as the potting mix is very coarse, well drained and well aerated. A good quality potting mix and orchid mix at 50/50 ratio with additional materials such as tree fern fibre, charcoal, perlite, peat moss, leaf mould or peanut shells make an ideal medium. Avoid plastic baskets. Baskets lined with coconut fibre or paperbark are suitable.

Watering Platyceriums need plenty of water during the warm growing period, spring to autumn, and less water in winter.

Fertilisation A slow release fertiliser and well rotted cow manure can be added to the moist sphagnum moss when mounting. During spring to autumn a liquid fertiliser at half strength such as seaweed extract or fish emulsion or liquid cow manure can be applied.

Some hardy Platyceriums to grow

Platycerium bifurcatum

Platycerium superbum

Platycerium veitchii

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