

**Subject:** January 2021 Sunset Valley Orchids Catasetinae Growing Tips

**From:** Sunset Valley Orchids <fred.clarke@att.net>

**Date:** 1/19/2021, 7:30 AM

**To:** sbottom15@bellsouth.net



## January 2021 Sunset Valley Orchids Catasetinae Growing Tips

Now that it's the middle of winter, all but the last of the previous season's mature growths of *Catasetum*, *Cycnoches*, and *Mormodes* have finished flowering. However, some plants don't even start to develop inflorescences until after all water is stopped and the plant is leafless! It's time for the *Clowesia* species like *Cl. rosea*, and *Cl. warczewitzii* and their hybrids *Cl. Rebecca Northen* and *Cl. Grace Dunn* to bloom. Their strong citrus fragrance always reminds me of the furniture polish, Lemon-Scented Pledge.

The onset of dormancy is caused by several factors: the maturity of the pseudobulb, shortening day length, cooler day/night temperatures and a reduction of root zone moisture. This change in conditions causes the pseudobulbs to harden off in preparation for the upcoming months of dormancy. By now, most leaves are yellow/brown and have fallen off. It's time to cease watering completely. This marks the start of the dormant period.



These 4 plants illustrate the progression of late season Catasetinae dormancy, from left to right: 1) leaf yellowing & abscission, 2) near leafless plant with one yellow leaf, 3) and 4) leafless plants.

The gradual reduction of watering frequency and an increasingly longer dry interval usually is accepted by the plants without complaint. Of course, there are exceptions. If pseudobulbs show signs of shriveling late in the growing season, watering once or twice will quickly plump them back up.



A shriveled pseudobulb



After one watering and 24 hours later, it's plumped back up.

The onset of dormancy generally occurs naturally; however, when plants are cultivated in consistently warm growing areas, such as in the home or under lights, dormancy sometimes needs to be encouraged. I have found that managing irrigation is one of the best tools to trigger dormancy. If you still have plants in January with a full complement of green leaves, it's time to take a more aggressive approach. Allow the media to become dry, regardless of the number of green leaves. Let the media stay dry for 3-4 days, then water sparingly, about one or two ounces of water. The water may flow right through the media, and that's okay. Allow the media to dry and wait 4-5 days before following the same stingy irrigation procedure. Repeat this process, increasing the dry interval between waterings. This process will trigger dormancy in plants that are resisting the transition. Not all plants lose all of their green leaves when dormant, and it's not uncommon for some to hold a few leaves well past the point when irrigation has stopped.

By late January, it's important to get your Catasetinae into the dormant stage and provide them with an adequate rest period so that they will "wake up" early in the spring to a long growing season that will help them to develop big bulbs and lots of flowers!

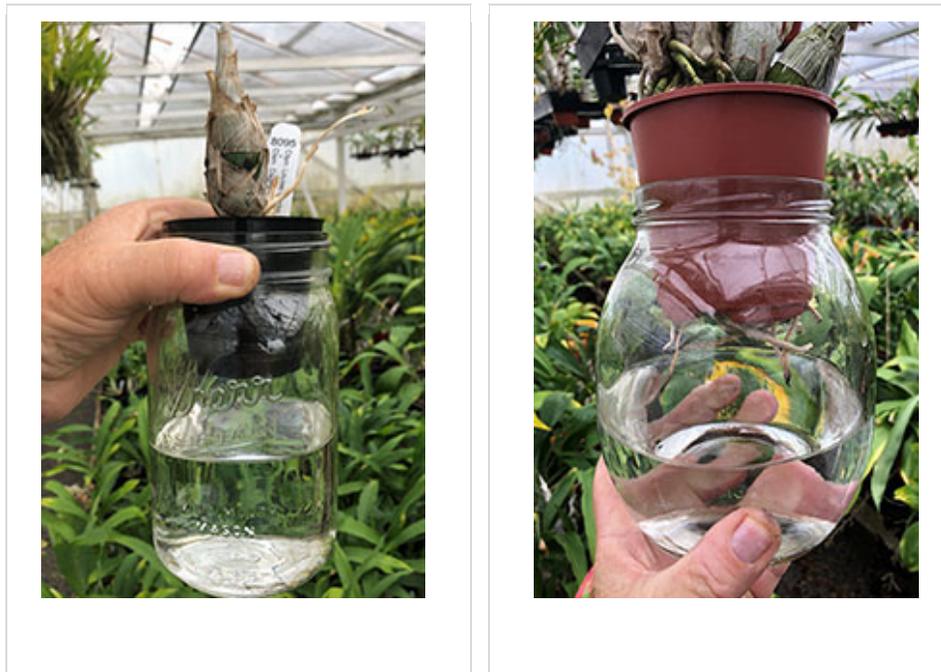
Those of you in Florida and the southern states might already be seeing the first beginnings of new growth. Remember to start watering and fertilizing when new roots are approximately 3"-6" long and new growths are 6"-12" tall. Generally, these early new growths will develop slowly until day length begins to lengthen significantly.

I've been getting questions about indoor light levels during dormancy. It is best to keep the plants in nearly the same light levels as in the growing season: target 2000-2500 foot candles. It is easy to download a Foot Candle Reader app for your phone. If you're growing under lights, you do need to adjust the day length throughout the year, as all Catasetinae experience changes in the number of daylight hours per day. This adjustment is important for all your orchids that come from areas where day length changes during the year.

Light level management Indoors

**Growing under lights for optimal results:**  
April – October: day length should be set at 15 hrs.  
November: reduce light schedule hour to = 14 hrs.  
December: reduce one more hour = 13 hrs.  
January: and reduce one more hour = 12 hrs.  
February: add one hour = 13 hrs.  
March: add one more hour = 14 hrs.  
April – October: back to a day length schedule of 15 hrs.

I shared this idea before, and it's worth sharing again. If you've had challenges overwintering your Catasetinae plants, it is most likely due to excessive dehydration, perhaps caused by long periods of low humidity. Here is a solution being used successfully by some ingenious growers to increase localized humidity around the roots while keeping the potting media dry.



Set the pot in a jar with water, making a loose-fitting seal with the rim of the jar. The water should not touch the bottom of the pot. The reservoir will maintain high humidity around the roots, even while the plant remains dry during dormancy. This innovative technique produces great results! We have had lots of positive feedback from growers who are using this method.

Now that the days are getting longer, I'm looking forward to seeing the first signs of new growth from my resting Catasetinae in the very near future.

**Please join our [Facebook page](#):**

**Fred Clarke and Carlos Lopez**

**Sunset Valley Orchids Inc.**  
**(760) 310-0778**  
[fred.clarke@att.net](mailto:fred.clarke@att.net)  
[www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com](http://www.sunsetvalleyorchids.com)

Sunset Valley Orchids Inc. | [Website](#)



Sunset Valley Orchids | 1255 Navel Place, Vista, CA 92081

[Unsubscribe sbottom15@bellsouth.net](mailto:sbottom15@bellsouth.net)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by fred.clarke@att.net powered by



Try email marketing for free today!