

What a great year for the genus! Feedback from Catasetinae growers confirms this was a spectacular growing and flowering year. There have been many awards given by the American Orchid Society judges. Congratulations to all of you who received them!

Now that winter has clearly arrived, your Catasetums should have matured growths and be mostly done flowering, Cycnoches will be finishing their blooming, Mormodes should be flowering now, and Clowesia should be starting soon.

Those of you in Florida and southern states may already have dormant plants. Those in more temperate areas like here in California should be seeing the starts of dormancy with the lower leaves starting to turn light brown and drop off.

The first indications of leaf yellowing and leaf drop signal the beginning of dormancy. This is when you should stop fertilizing and cut back on watering frequency. You want to simulate the end of the wet season, as it happens in nature. This change in culture will cause the pseudobulbs to harden of, in preparation for dormancy. When most leaves are yellow/brown and have dropped off, cease watering altogether. This marks the start of the dormant period.

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. Generally, this process occurs naturally; however, when the plants are cultivated in warm growing areas such as in the home or under lights, dormancy sometimes needs to be encouraged. I have found that stopping watering in late December, regardless of the number of green leaves, will trigger dormancy in plants that are resisting the necessary transition.

By late December, it's important to get your Catasetinae into the dormant stage; to provide them with an adequate rest period so that they will 'wake up' early in the spring to a long growing season.

As my Catasetinae go to "sleep" for the winter I am reminded of an old proverb (with apologies to Ben Franklin) "Early to bed and early to rise, makes you healthy, happy and floriferous."