

Experiences with Growing Deciduous Orchids

By Gary Lensmeyer, Photographs by Gary Lensmeyer

OGG member Gary Lensmeyer has developed a successful regimen for his deciduous orchids. The deciduous plants under discussion are *Cycnoches*, *Cycnodes*, *Calanthe*, *Galeandra*, *Catasetum* and their hybrids. Deciduous plants are characterized by a distinct period of rest, followed by the

emergence of new growth ramping up to rapid vegetative development culminating in the setting of flower spikes. Inflorescences eventually fade/drop and the leaves yellow/dry/drop and the plant cycles back to the rest phase.

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Galeandra baueri



Calanthe



Cycnoches cooperi



Cycnoches herrenhusanum



Cycnoches warszeniczil



No, this plant is NOT dead, it's dormant



Initial sprout, DO NOT WATER!



... finally, now water

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Culture

Deciduous orchids require a rest period, typically in the winter [thus they are the perfect orchid for snowbirds!] They cycle by a breaking dormancy/sprouting period (spring), active growth (late spring, summer, early fall), flowering period (early fall-early winter), moving towards rest period (late fall – early winter to late winter).

During the rest period, NO WATER, NO MISTING, NO NOTHING! OR AS Gary's mother would say "You mussn't, you dassn't water or the plant will rot." But place the plant in bright light at 60-70 degree F.

Breaking dormancy, NO WATER, NO MISTING, NO NOTHING! Continue to keep the plant in bright light at 60-70 degree F. Allow roots and leaf sprouts to reach about **3 inches** in length

Period of active growth. When the roots/shoot each or 3 to 5 inches long, repot. Under pot for best results. Start a regimen of heavy watering and fertilizing. Give the plant as much light as possible without burning its leaves.

Fertilizing

Fertilize at each watering during period of active growth.

Allow pot to set in saucer with water

Fertilizer Mix: 1 gallon R.O. water, 1 drop Physan, 2 drops Cal/Mag, 1 drop B-52. To this mix add, on a rotating basis, 1 teaspoon DynaGrow liquid high nitrogen(9-3-6); or ½ teaspoon Jacks Fertilizer(20-20-20); or ½ teaspoon Michigan State Fertilizer (13-3-16).

Aerate water prior to mixing in additives.

Flowering Stage

When flower spikes appear, use only Jacks fertilizer plus the other additives.

Don't allow the pot to set in water but continue the watering regimen.

When the flowers fade and drop/leaves turn yellow gradually water less and eliminate all fertilizers/additives.

Stop all watering as leaves yellow and drop

Do not water during dormancy

Restart watering only when new growth is 3-5 inches

Resources for plants, Clown Alley, Jumbo Orchids and Sunset Valley