

Catasetum rosea – How I Grow That

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Catasetums are group of deciduous orchids that produce distinctively difference male and female flowers. The male flowers literally shoot their pollinia at visiting insects, where it adheres tightly to whatever surface it makes contact with. Most species bloom in the fall when the leaves are dropping. This is an American continent Genus found from Mexico south through much of S. America.

My plant came labeled as Catasetum rosea; however I can not find any reference to that species in any documentation. I believe I may have luetto-roseum; however I have not been able to confirm that. It consistently sets inflorescences on new bulbs within weeks of their emergence in spring. So far this year I have 7 new bulbs, each has set at least one inflorescence, which appear to be maturing one after the other. All the blooms on an inflorescence develop and open simultaneously, remaining open for about two weeks. The blooms are a pale green with red-brown spots. This plant is entertaining and easy to grow.

Light

I grow this plant in a West facing window box in the breakfast nook of our home. It sits on the table where it gets bright, indirect light most of the day, getting brighter as the day progresses. It gets filtered direct light starting about 2 hours before sundown. This plant can take much more sunlight than it is getting. It has only produced male flowers in the two blooming seasons that I have grown it. More direct sunlight might result in the production of female flowers.

Water & Fertilizer

I generally water and fertilize my potted orchids once each week. That computes to once every 6 to 8 days. I use RO water mixed with ½ teaspoon of Grow More 20-20-20 per gallon. I water each plant heavily at the sink, which gives me a weekly opportunity to inspect each plant closely and identify and correct insect or other problems. About once every 2 months, I flush each plant will copious quantities of tap water to flush out any salt build up in the potting medium.

Catasetums like water and fertilizer when they are growing, which is only between late March and the end of October. Their leaves turn brown and drop off around Thanksgiving. The plant then remains dormant during the winter. While the plant is dormant, it should be kept dry. I tend to dampen the pot about once a month. I've read that some growers of Catasetums remove their plants from the potting medium and keep them in a dry corner of the green house until they start to grow new bulbs in the spring.

Temperatures & Air Flow

Our home generally is very stable, with a daily temperature swing of less than 10 degrees during the winter and 15 degrees during the summer. We average 60 – 70F during the winter months and 65 – 75 during the summer. I would guess the house median temp is 70 degrees year around. The windows are open almost all year around during our waking hours, providing a steady breeze through the plants in the window box. As Nipomo is often foggy in the evening through early morning, the breezes are cool and damp. If you need to close your windows, use an oscillating fan on low to keep air moving around your plants. I would recommend temperatures between 65F and 90F during the growing season for this plant.

You could grow this plant successfully outdoors while it is growing, but it would need more frequent watering. I'd move it inside November through March, while it's dormant and not in leaf. As long as it does not freeze, I suspect cool winter temperatures may be OK, which would imply that you could grow it outside year around, but you would need to keep it dry while not in leaf otherwise the bulbs may rot.

Potting Mix

The plant is currently in 100% fine fir bark; however, I intend to change that to a mix of 3 parts fine coconut chips and 1 part #3 perlite when I next repot this plant. Repotting should be done with the first new growths in the spring. The plant is dormant during the winter and should not be repotted except with the new spring growth

