



*Catasetinae orchids to delight; above, l to r, Catasetum pileatum, C. x Cycnoches, C. x Mormodes and Clowesia dodsoniana. Below, l to r, Clowesia x Clowesia, Cycnoches warscewiczii, Mormodes maculata and Mormodes x Cycnoches (Stephen Moffitt photos)*



**WANT AN ORCHID  
ADVENTURE? BRANCH OUT  
WITH CATASETINAE**

By HOUSTON ORCHID SOCIETY

[houstonorchidsociety.org](http://houstonorchidsociety.org)



[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

STEPHEN MOFFITT of Houston Orchid Society, recommends *Catasetinae* if you want to branch out beyond the grocery store *Phalaenopsis*. Orchids in this alliance are easy to grow and bloom readily once you understand their cultural needs. With lots of water, they explode with new growth during the spring and summer growing season. Most blossoms have a pleasant spicy or citrus fragrance. They go dormant during the winter when they are kept dry.

*Catasetinae* can be grown easily without having to be in a greenhouse, and they grow in just about every kind of medium. Stephen grows in clay pots with a mix of sphagnum moss and charcoal or large sponge rock. He sprinkles on some time-release fertilizer and tops with a thin layer of sphagnum to keep the fertilizer from splashing out when watering. Stephen grows all his plants outside under a shade house covered with 60% shade cloth, then brings them inside when the weather turns cold and they go into dormancy.

In the spring *Catasetinae* send up a new growth and start the growth cycle over again. This is a good time to repot by removing the plant from the pot and cutting off most of the old dead roots, leaving just enough to stabilize the plant. Stephen repots the plant slightly below the top of the previous year's growth in the center of the pot. He moves the plant to a warm growing area with moderate light, but he says, "DO NOT WATER AT THIS TIME!" Wait until the new growth opens up and the new roots are at least four inches long. Only then do you start to water and feed the plant.

Around mid-October, Stephen brings the plants inside, as most begin to develop yellow leaves that will eventually drop. He stops watering, even if they are blooming for the second or third time. Temps below 55°F are a no-no, but a windowsill or somewhere without water or high sunlight is best for dormant *Catasetinae*.

These are truly rewarding orchids and perfect for the local climate.