



BRASSIA REX

The genus *Brassia* consists of about 33 species found throughout tropical America. Similar in growth to *Oncidium*s, all *Brassias* grow well in bright dappled light and intermediate temperatures. Commonly known as spider orchids, *Brassias* have long thin sepals and short thin petals. The lip is full and often trilobed.

One of the most popular *Brassia* hybrids is *Brassia Rex*, a primary hybrid cross of *veracrusa* X *gioreoudiana*. The inflorescence grows from the base of the pseudobulb and can be up to 24" tall. A well grown specimen plant can have over 10 inflorescences with 10 or more flowers on each.

Flowers are up to 16" or more vertical and 6" wide with sepals of 6-7" long. Petals are short but similar to the sepals. The color is usually chartreuse often banded with mahogany.

Pictured above is *Brassia Rex* "Tahoma" AM/AOS, one of the most awarded of all *Brassias*. When first judged, this was the largest *Brassias* on record.

Like most *Brassias*, *Rex* has large flat pseudobulbs, 4-6" tall with several fine to medium textured leaves on each. A specimen plant can have 40-50 pseudobulbs.

Rex usually blooms in Florida mid-winter, with February being the peak blooming time.

Roots are fine and need frequent watering and excellent drainage. I grow *Rex* in a clay pot with coarse bark mix supplemented with some aliflor and perlite. The plant gets watered twice a week in winter and three times a week when in active growth. Fertilize weakly weekly with a low phosphorus fertilizer. I use 13-2-13 with CalMag, 2 tsp/gallon.

You can also mount *Brassias* on a raft or driftwood. If you do, you will need to water more frequently particularly in the hot summer months, to keep the roots supple and the pseudobulbs from shriveling.

