# Flower Horn – Luo Han
**By Tad Storm**

A little history on the flower horn. It was first developed in Malaysia in 1998 by crossing a Red Devil cichlid, the Red Parrot cichlid (itself a manmade cross breed) and the Trimac cichlid. The result was a large aggressive cichlid with the huge protruding forehead of a Red Devil, the body markings of a Trimac and the color of a Red Parrot. The markings led to the first part of the name, “Flower”, and the protruding forehead led to “Horn”. This is a hybrid that is fertile and breeds true. It is also easily crossed with other South American cichlids.

The demand for the fish came from Asia where the god of longevity is portrayed by any living creature with a large protruding forehead, and the body markings resembled Chinese characters, reiterating the message of good fortune. Thus the wealthy looked for fish with larger foreheads and more distinct markings, and the prices went up and up and up into the tens of thousands of dollars.

More recently, the market has fallen out, and for several reasons. These fish are easily bread, so everyone was starting to breed them (because they were bringing high prices). The fish are very aggressive, so you can only keep one of two in a tank. They are large fish so you need a large tank, and not many people have a spare large tank for one or two fish.

I did not raise this pair of Flower Horns, I borrowed them from a friend of a friend. They were already mature and had spawned several times before I obtained them. I put them in a 70 gal tank with three young flower horns that were just becoming adults, to see if they would pair up differently. The two new adults eventually killed two of the young ones and I removed the third before it happened again. There were other fish in the tank also, which I had to eventually remove until only the flower horns were left.

I left the tank at about 78 degrees, as that is what I typically had it at. I fed them flake food, pellet food, live night crawlers, and frozen blood worms.

As they got ready to spawn, the male developed a lot of color (red) under the gill area extending over the entire belly. Both the male and female started to rearrange the tank. I use an under gravel filter and a canister filter. They moved the gravel (2 inches deep) from one end to the other. They also moved a lot of java moss and even large pieces of driftwood. They did this twice before laying eggs on the bottom plates of the under gravel filter. I could not recover the eggs from the plates, and they eventually died.

A couple of weeks later, they were ready to spawn again, moved everything around again, and this time I covered the exposed area of the under gravel plates with some slate. Some of the spawn ended up on the slate, which I removed and put in a 5 gal tank to hatch out. You need to be careful when removing the eggs, these fish are aggressive!

At 80 degrees, the eggs hatched to wigglers in about 3 days and in 5 more days were free swimming. I added methyl blue to the tank as a fungicide. I fed them baby brine shrimp as their first food and on to flake food after they were about a half an inch long. They readily adapted to the flake food or anything else. They were always eating.

I had two spawns before I gave the adults back to the original owner. One spawn of about 180 and one of about 300. The parents would lay probably 1000 each per spawn, but many were on the bottom of the tank which I could not recover.

I found that if kept the fingerlings heavily crowded, they didn't grow much, but they didn't die either. If I thinned them out, by the time they were about an inch long, they started to kill each other. I lost quite a few to aggressive siblings. Finally, because of a lack of space, I put them (about 300) in a ten foot diameter by 2 foot high swimming pool outside (this was in the summer time). They did OK out there until we had some very unseasonably cold weather. When the water temp reached about 55 degrees, they started dying. They continued to die until all I have left are these for the BAP.