

Clivia Club

Volume 1 Number 1 July 1992

Here we are as promised, but only just! I was very pleased with our Australian reception, especially as there was no direct advert in Australia. As I know from past experience, it is a great place for bulb enthusiasts. (Ed.)

A SHORT HISTORY OF CLIVIA

From the very earliest records, Clivia plants have been sent back to private and botanical collections in the U.K. and Europe, and many of these original plants are still in cultivation.

In fact they were held in such high esteem that as far back as 1886 in the Dictionary of Gardening Vol. 11 and Supplement, no less than twelve varieties and selections were identified and described in three separate articles.

They remained very popular in overseas gardens until the Second World War, when their popularity faded. In recent years this easy to grow and very rewarding plant has been making a world wide come back, with plant breeders in a number of countries taking up the challenge, and it appears that the future for the noble clivia is very bright indeed.

Clivia is a small genus of soft wooded perennials, endemic to South Africa, consisting of four species in the family Amaryllidaceae. The genus clivia was named in honour of Lady Clive by John Lindley when he described *Clivia nobilis* in 1828, thus correctly pronounced "Cly-vee-ah".

By chance the same plant was described on the same day in October by Hooker who named the genus *Imantophyllum*, this name was discarded by Roemer & Schultz in 1830.

Clivia miniata, locally known as Bush Lily, was discovered in the early 1850's and was recorded in 1854 by Hooker in the Curtis's Botanical magazine as *miniatum*, later changed to *C. miniata* by Regel in *Gartenflora* in 1864.

C. Gardenii was described by Hooker in 1856 and named after a Major Robert Garden who collected the material.

C. Caulescens was observed for several years before being identified as a new species, and was included with *C. nobilis* until given species status in April 1943.

Identifying the species.

Clivia miniata is very distinctive from the other three species, in producing broadly funnel shaped flowers in umbels of 12 to 25, ranging in colour from light apricot through shades of orange to red, with white or yellow in the throat, clear yellow and cream forms do exist but orange is the predominant colour. The distribution of this species, is the woodlands and forest margins of Natal.

C. nobilis was the first species described and is confined to the Eastern Cape, often growing in old sand dunes,

under brush and just overlapping with *C. miniata* at its northern range. The leaves of this species are usually stiff, leathery, and strap-shaped often abruptly rounded or blunt at the ends and a dark glossy green. Flowers are small pendulous and tube shaped, usually orange-green to red.

C. gardenii is very similar to the above in appearance, with usually more pointed leaf tips and softer leaves growing in forest shade, at altitudes of up to 1200m. The pendulous tube shaped flowers are usually pale orange with greenish tips, often hiding in the foliage.

C. caulescens is very similar to *C. nobilis* and *C. gardenii* but is confined to the Eastern Transvaal and the only major feature that distinguishes *C. caulescens* from the other two species is a basal stem that can reach 45cm tall on very old plants.

Jim Holmes
Stellenbosch

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept my nomination to the "Friends of Clivia". I run a small nursery dealing in Cottage Garden Plants which includes a high proportion of South African Species, inc. bulbs and Clivias.

I have the 4 species of Clivia but mainly concentrating on *Miniata* and *Gardenii* forms. To increase my genetic pool it would be appreciated if I could exchange seeds of either hybrids or original species of either *nobilis*, *gardenii* or *caulescens*.

Many of the so-called species available in W.A. appear to be hybrids or variables. The main horticultural species being sold are inferior *miniata*'s or various forms of *Cyrtanthiflora*. (hybrid) - the latter flowers almost continuously.

Currently I'm hybridising "*Miniata* Twins" (Selected forms) onto most of my stock to reduce the foliage height, improve colour, shape, flowers, and perfume.

I hope that by the F2 or F3 stage to obtain good white, yellow, orange or reds, squat broad leaf forms. This will take 10-12 years to accomplish as any seeds that your members can supply to shorten this process would be greatly appreciated. Purchase or exchange of good forms saves years of work,

I do not have either White or cream plants of *Miniata*. Variegated forms of *Miniata* or their seed are relatively rare in W.A. and therefore I haven't done any Hybridizing in this area. Basically most are *Striata* forms but not predominant enough to be of Horticultural value.

There are no commercial growers of Clivia in Australia that I know of and most of the hybridizing is concentrating on *Citrina* forms but with upright growth.

W.A.'s climate is, I believe, similar to the Eastern side of South Africa and Clivias are basically grown in a shadehouse (50% shade) but will grow and flower quicker in a glasshouse. Economically, because we have a small population, this is not usually viable.

Should any members wish to contact me it would be appreciated.

Yours
Roger Harrison
Harrison's Nursery, P.O. Box 161, Wanneroo W.A. 6065, Australia.

Dear Friends,

Congratulations! Help for Clivia growers is long overdue. Lots of folk grow a pot of them, mostly nobilis and miniata.

My interest started 25 years ago. Since then I have collected :- nobilis, miniata, ex RSA seed with the tapered tip, narrow petals, miniata var. citrina, wide petals, bought as Miniata "Aureus", cyrtanthiflora, gardenii, 36 hybrid seedlings (not flowered) from several sources, USA, pen-friends in eastern states, Queensland, and New South Wales. Guess I come under the "general growers" list. Western Australia custom fees are very high- \$250, so I would only want seed.

I am forgetting Cryptostephanus vansonii, a seedling purchased 24.11.86 for \$10.00 It now has two offsets and blooms April.

My plants are in the ground in the front garden under trees. In large tubs under a lemon tree, with all the seedlings in a shadehouse. Since they were put in there the growth has improved. The back garden is fed weekly through the sprinkler system with nitrate fertiliser called " Hippy magic"

Our chemist friend makes it up for us- he likens the formula to Phostrogen with trace elements added for W.A. sandy soil.

It is not my interest to hybridise Clivia. I like to grow them as they are when I receive them. The hybridising carried out in this garden is my Joe's interest. He has success with Amaryllis hippeastrums. The present project is Yellows and doubles from stock brought back from the USA in '85, '88, '89 when customs fees amounted to \$8.00 per bulb. We maintain a gene pool of species hippeastrums for the International Bulb Society- California.

The garden is full of pots of hippeastrums. My collection of small South African bulbs and corms fit in somehow.

I have handed your invitation to our editor to be published in the W.A. Gladiolus, Dahlia and Hippeastrum Society Inc., newsletter which has a big distribution.

Yours sincerely,
Les Larsson (Mrs. R.J)

Friends of Clivia,

At a horticultural meeting last Monday night I heard of your group and as an enthusiastic grower of Clivia I am writing to you. I have been seriously interested for about 10 years, starting with just a few locally obtained plants. I have since acquired seed from overseas, exchanged plants and seed with Eastern State growers with whom I correspond on a regular basis and generally gathered stock from wherever I could obtain it. I have now through this process and general breeding of my own acquired several thousand plants to the extent that I could no longer house them at home and now have them at a friends nursery where he cuts off surplus plants. I have stock of Clivia miniata in various shades of light orange to red, a few yellows but no whites. Would be very interested to acquire seed of this if possible. I have large stocks of Clivia Gardenii and could supply seed of this if wanted. I am not sure as to whether I have Nobilis or not. I have several forms which are generally larger than those on the East Coast, some say it is Nobilis but others say it's cyrtanthiflora or cyrtanthiflora cross. I do not have Caulescens and would be keen to acquire seed of this. Quarantine restrictions in W.A. are very strict but there is no problem with seed. In Sept.1988 I was asked to present a paper at the World Conference of

Gladioli and Hippeastrum being held here, I am enclosing a copy just for interest as it might just give you some insight as to our position here, although it is probably now a little outdated, the paper was followed by a presentation of plants and a general discussion of the various types as outlined in the paper. I am hoping to have a Japanese specialist grower visit here in Sept-Oct. this year and subject to language problems it should be most interesting, he speaks very little English and I speak no Japanese. At a later date I will send you some photos of my plants so that you will get a better idea of what I have. I wish you all the very best with your association and look forward to receiving your correspondence.

Kind Regards
C. Grove
39 Pandora Drive
City Beach 6015
Western Australia

Dear Mrs. "Clivia"!

I'd be most happy to join your Clivia Club, as I have app. 2000-2500 in my garden It is Clivia miniata, and I would love to start propagating other colours as well. Do you really have the yellow Clivia? I know the seeds are sterile, so it must be root propagation.(?)

Love to hear from you !

Sincerely
Laila van Heerden

Dear Vivian,

Many thanks for your reply to my letter to you. I am sorry to hear that you have not had a good response to your advert but perhaps not so many people get the publication (Veld & Flora) and/or pay so much attention to the ads in it. Perhaps you should try putting an article in the Garden & Home. The response should be bigger as this magazine is read by many more people.

I have been growing Clivias for some twenty odd years with very good results. I have the miniata and the nobilis species. of the latter I have the pinkish top with green tip (flowering at the moment). I read an article some time ago that you get another colour in the nobilis, if I recall right it was a red colour, but I could never obtain this one. I also have the broad leaf variety with a burnt orange colour flower. Perhaps you can tell me if this is a caulescens species and perhaps the gardenii is the white colour of which I managed to get a plant. I also have the yellow one. I was told by a horticulturist that the yellow one's seed will not produce yellow flowers and was advised to cross- pollinate them with, say the miniata. Perhaps this also applies to the white species. What is your view?

The majority of my plants are housed under fibreglass roofing with bright light and they flower year after year. This past summer I experienced a bad infection of the yellow dry patches, and I cannot agree with you that these are scorch marks as they do not get direct sunlight. Of course the summer was extremely hot and dry and I put it down to the severe dry climate. They are under sprinklers but because of my working away from home, I cannot turn the sprinklers on as and when I would like to. I water them thoroughly at weekends. I also fed them preferably kraal manure in liquid or dry form every two months until going dormant and also not when in flower. I cut the affected leaves off and discard them totally. This past season was the first time I experienced mealybugs in my plants but after treatment this problem was cleared up.

I am also aware of the variegated leaf clivia but have not been able to get a plant of this, having only seen it in pictures.

The friends that I had who were also collectors of Clivias, have alas died. Many of my other friends have the odd plant or two but not the colours that I have and at the price of these rarer colours one does not freely dispose of them, even to friends. Von Lynker Nursery in the Cape were selling the yellow (only limited stock as he said) at R 300 per plant. The white one is not on any nurseryman's list, at least not to my knowledge.

Should you know the source of supply of clivias that may interest me, I will be most grateful for such information. I have two different types of the Clivia miniata, one is an open flower, centred yellow flowing to orange and the other is a cup type flower of which the petals overlap each other and does not open like the loose petal one.

For some strange reason I have one of the broad leaf clivias with the burnt orange flower in bloom at the moment. Unfortunately the stalk of the flower did not mature. The flower itself formed just between the broad leaves, making a very attractive picture but not the clivia as we know them.

Anon. April 1992.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was delighted to come across your advert, as I have been looking for yellow clivias for some years now without success. My eldest son Adrian is crazy about clivias and plants all the seed we can get from ours. We have about two hundred common ones in the garden (our is a very shady garden).

He is a horticulturist at the Verwoedburg Parks Dept. Would you be so kind as to send me all the particulars of the club as I would certainly like a yellow clivia. In the overseas bulb books I see even pink, red and white advertised, and I once saw a pink one on our T.V. It was gorgeous.

Thank you,
Yours sincerely,
Mrs. W.E. Allison.

Dear Sir,

I was so thrilled to see the little advert in Veld & Flora. I love Clivia, mainly I think because they are the only plant I can grow well down here at the coast. We are right near the sea and the Nahoon river mouth so get lots of salty wind, and I have been able to give many away.

I would love to have a yellow one - could I please join the club and learn about what is going on. We are a retired couple now and enjoy the garden and the birds.

Mrs. L. Robertson.

W. Morris
37 Brocklesby Rd, Medowie, N.S.W. 2301
Australia

SOURCE OF YELLOW CLIVIA SEED!!!!!! Available Aug-Sep. each year
Also many other types of bulb seeds.

Wanted in exchange seed of:

- S. A. bulbs particularly crinum. (not moorei, bulbispermum or macowanii)
- Any brunsvigia, cybistetes, ammocharis etc. (i.e. amaryllids)
- Gladiolus, watsonia, ixia etc.
- Also wanted, gasteria seed preferably wild collected with locality stated. Not from cultivation unless hand pollinated.

This is your Editor. The above advertisement is from one of Australia's leading breeders of Clivia. Mr. Morris has produced strains of yellow Clivia which are hardy, resistant and viable. I have imported seed from him and expect a few of the three year old seedlings to flower this year.

Mr. Morris has promised to contribute an article or two in the near future, so watch out for some interesting news. Please be sure to pack any seed securely and enclose it in a cardboard box to prevent post sorting machinery from damaging it. Also the seed must be marked with the correct botanical name, and the contents stated on the outside of the box. This avoids problems with Australian Customs. The S.A. authorities have no restrictions on the export of seed, but one should obtain an import permit from plant control in Pretoria, although they turn a blind eye to most small imports.

The letter from Mr. Grove mentions an article which he sent with the letter. We shall be publishing this article next time around. When will that be? That depends largely on you Clivia people out there. We need your letters articles, queries and complaints. We do not mind criticism, it is a lot better than being ignored. We must have subject matter to fill the newsletter and then I can get it out. We are here to help and encourage beginners. We can get you the best help in the world. We will do our best to assist all trading and swapping of plant material.

Mr. Yoshikazu Nakamura is a leading Japanese breeder and has the most astonishing collection of Clivia which he has bred in the most diverse colours and shapes. Unfortunately, he has little English and I have less Japanese. He will probably sell you some astonishing seeds for a reasonable sum,

Contact him at:

*Clivia Breeding Plantation
4-28, Kurodo Mobara-city 297
Chiba Prefecture
Japan*

Where are our South African breeders? I am certain that there are quite a few, and would be glad if they would come forward. I have been told quite chilling stories by one well-known breeder who wishes to remain anonymous, of raids by predatory types who steal and remove yellow clivia plants and seed. I have heard the same about cycad thieves who strike in the night and steal great big cycads. Anonymity will be protected if so desired. The last thing I want is for these plants to fall into the hands of those who will sell them for gain or keep them hidden as they have been dishonestly come by. What I do want is for us to better utilise the material which is available and by pollen and seed exchange rapidly build up good stocks of excellent material.

There are several letters which I still wish to publish, which have been held over until the second newsletter which has tentatively been scheduled for August/ September. It is very helpful when trying to describe a plant to enclose a photograph of the same. If you wish it returned, Please write return to " whoever" on the back of the photo.

*Well now, there is a start at least. Nothing marvellous, but we can improve and bring you lots of informative articles. We are trying to get some information on the Gordon Macneil plants, and perhaps what became of them. For those of you who are wondering what *Cryptostephanus vansonii* might be, it is a plant closely related to *Clivia*. It is a much smaller plant with a less showy flower, and crosses readily with *Clivia*, but so far as I know, no results have been published yet.*

*Until next time, Best Regards,
N.W. Primich (editor)*

Members

Mrs. W.E. Allison, 10 Vestness Rd., Valhalla. 0185. General
Mej. M. de Bruyn, Bel Monte 43, Maianalaan, Brummeria, 0184. General
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Mr. A. Gibello, P.O. Box 253, Little Brak River, 6503. General
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Mr. J. Holmes.
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Mrs. V. M. Rodel, P.O. Box 9206, Cinda Park, 1463. General
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