



Nz CLIVIA CLUB INC

NEWZLETTER

Volume 5.4 Spring 2007

SHOW PICS

Auckland

Show photos courtesy of Sharron Booth, Alick McLeman, David Olsen



Thought Provoking Discussion
Keith Hammett, Jude Shapland, Conrad Coenan



Visitors' Choice - Apricot Delight
(Alick McLeman)



Heather Buckley with Alick McLeman



Starting them young – Chris Webb with new baby.



Barry Fergusson, Bev and Murray Gow, & cousin Mary McMeekin



Rex William's Recurved Peach



Rita Watson with a stunning bloom,
Diana Holt and Brian Sherman looking on.



Ian Duncalf Interspecific



John Meyer and Wendy Hickmott - two of our hard working volunteers manning the reception.

Tauranga

AGM and Interspecific Day



Photogenic Blooms, but camera-shy people.



AGM – Audience obviously impressed by the work of their excellent committee.

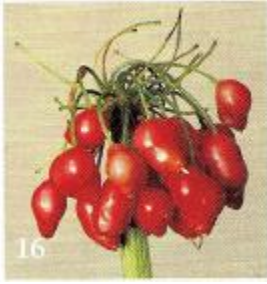


A Great View – The group following Terry Hatch through his beautiful landscape.

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GROWING AND PROPAGATING CLIVIA MIRABILIS

John Winter

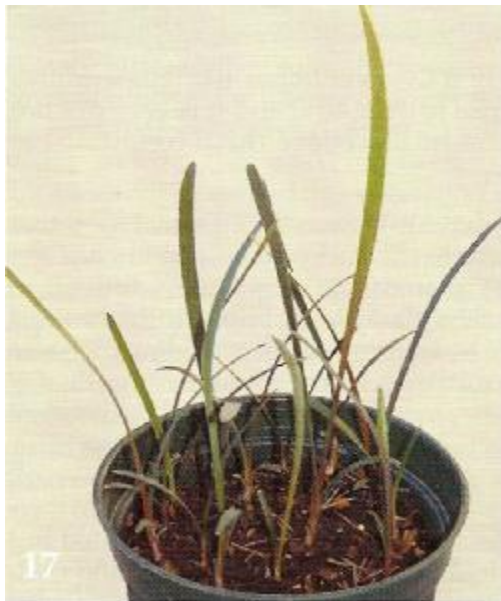
The first *Clivia mirabilis* collected by Johannes Africa, a Senior Ranger in Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve, was sent for identification to Dr John Rourke, Curator of the Compton Herbarium at the National Botanical Institute, Kirstenbosch. This alerted Dr Rourke to this new species. For the purpose of describing and researching this *Clivia* a permit to collect a limited number of plants and seed was granted by the Department of Nature Conservation of the Northern Cape to Dr Rourke. The tremendous interest shown in this unexpected discovery in the Northern Cape has raised concern for the safety of the population of *C. mirabilis* and as a result the reserve has been closed.

The first impression I had of *Clivia mirabilis*, the latest addition to the genus *Clivia*, was its resemblance to *Clivia nobilis*. The thick rigid upright leaves resemble a *C. nobilis* growing in an exposed situation. However, the leaf has a pale green stripe running down the mid-rib. The seed is small and also similar in size to *C. nobilis*. *C. mirabilis* flowers in November and the berries are ready for harvesting four months later in March. It is unusual for *Clivia* seed to ripen so rapidly, the four other species all taking approximately seven to eight months before their berries are ready for harvesting.

The known population of *C. mirabilis* occurs in the Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve where they are protected. This reserve is situated in the Bokkeveld Mountains of the Northern Cape where the climate is Mediterranean with winter rainfall of only about 415mm per annum. Winter temperatures can fall to nearly 0°C. In summer the temperatures can rise to over 40°C and it is very dry but coastal mists relieve these conditions at times.

They have extensive thick (20mm) roots that penetrate the rocky scree and anchor the plant securely making it very difficult to remove a plant. More importantly the roots serve as a storage organ providing moisture and nutrients to the plant during the dry summer months, supplemented by moisture collected by the leaves from the sea mist. They grow in partial shade and also in full sun without any sign of sun damage to their leaves - some leaf die-back was noted but this had been caused by stress arising from lack of moisture. Leaf litter provides nutrients.

As with all *Clivia* species, *C. mirabilis* can be grown in a range of media from simply coarse sand to a mixture of well-matured compost, coarse sand and milled bark.



One-year old seedlings grown from seed in composted medium

In their natural habitat their roots live in well-aerated rocky screes with leaf-mould, providing adequate oxygen, moisture and nutrient for the plants. To provide a similar growing medium I chose instead of coarse sand to use mainly seven parts of milled composted pine bark mixed with three parts of milled composted pine needles and one part organic fertilizer (Neutrog Bounce Back™).

Initially the plants were kept fairly dry taking into account that they are accustomed to a dry environment particularly in the summer. Under these conditions no growth occurred until watering was increased and the growing medium kept fairly moist. The plants responded immediately and have since produced steady growth, apparently faster than in the habitat and certainly a lot faster than *C. nobilis*. Seedlings grown in a coarse sand medium have not responded as well.

As mentioned earlier the seed of *C. mirabilis* is ready for sowing in March. Two methods of sowing were used. One method was to remove the seed from the berry and wash in water that had a liquid soap added. This acts as a fungicide and also helps to remove the membrane that covers the seed. Finally the seed was washed in clean water and placed in a clean transparent plastic bag, sealed and kept in a warm place. Germination occurred in three to four weeks. As the seeds germinated they were removed from the plastic bag and planted in 15cm pots containing a medium similar to that used for the larger plants. The other method of sowing the seed is the conventional way of placing cleaned seed in the growing medium at a depth of one and a half times the size of the seed and keeping it moist. The root develops first followed by a narrow leaf. This method turned out to be just as effective as using the sealed plastic bag.

The plants of *C. mirabilis* have been grown in a tunnel with a wet wall at the one end and an extractor fan at the other. The young seedlings have been placed close to the wet wall that keeps them perpetually moist but this does not appear to have a negative effect on the seedlings. The tunnel is shaded but this also does not appear to have an adverse effect on the plants. If grown in a conventional *Clivia* shade house I imagine *C. mirabilis* will do just as well although the growth rate will probably be slower. The young seedlings produce long thin leaves but as the plants develop each new leaf is broader than the previous one.

Although *C. mirabilis* is not the most spectacular species within the genus *Clivia* it offers many opportunities to those interested in breeding new cultivars by making use of the unusual characteristics the new species offers - for example, the red coloured pedicels and ovaries, sun hardiness, tolerance of hot summers, cold winters, flowering in November and a faster growth rate than *C. nobilis*.

In conclusion it appears that *C. mirabilis*, although originating from an arid winter rainfall region, responds well to the same growing methods used for the four summer rainfall species. It will be interesting to observe when they will flower and produce suckers.



Clivia nobilis from Olifantskop, the most westerly recorded population, 800km from Oorlogskloof.
Grower: Michael Jeans

Editor's Note: Clivia mirabilis is now on the MAF Biosecurity Index of plants permitted to be imported into NZ. We are fortunate to be able to reprint John Winters article here on methods of growing C. mirabilis as well as an update note from him. Alick, the club secretary has placed an order for C.mirabilis seed at \$10 each. If anyone wants seed and hasn't ordered yet, you can still contact him and he may be able to increase the order. You can reach him on 09 521 3062 or at clivia@xtra.co.nz

JOHN WINTER'S SUBSEQUENT COMMENT:

I have been growing C mirabilis seedlings for a number of years now, and there are a number of aspects regarding their treatment that I would like to mention.

The seedlings tend to be prone to fungal infection so it is important to have good drainage. I grew the young seedlings in milled pine bark and in time this breaks down, drainage deteriorates and the roots tend to rot which is not unlike what would happen with all of the other species under similar circumstances. Regular repotting into fresh growing medium is advisable and care must be taken not to over water. I am growing these plants in a tunnel and they are watered automatically once a week for 5 minutes.

Two years ago I changed the growing medium to a 12mm bark which is a great deal coarser than what I was using previously. I find that the root development is greatly improved in this mix. I am now also growing C mirabilis in a mix of equal parts coarse sand and the 12 mm bark as an experiment with agricultural lime added. It is too early to make any recommendations but the plants have not reacted negatively to this.

The key seems to be drainage and watering but C mirabilis is certainly not as easy to grow as the other species.

TOOWOOMBA 2007 (A note written for the Toowoomba Clivia Society Inc.)

For the past few years I have been fortunate enough to have travelled the world to a limited extent seeking desirable clivia.

In 2005 I was in California for the NACS symposium and show in Los Angeles. I was blown away by the collections of growers like Joe Solomone, Dave Conway, etc. That September I also managed to time a visit to my son in Sydney so as to see the collections of some NSW growers, including the great Bill Morris. In September 2006 it was the Clivia2006 conference in Pretoria, related to which I saw wonderful plants at both the Pretoria and Pietermaritzburg Shows, and in the collections of people like Bertie Guillaume, Henrietta Stroh and others. So without fear of contradiction I can say that I've seen some of the most beautiful Clivia in the world. My visit to Toowoomba in September this year was like the cherry on top.

Linda Richards, a friend in Kingaroy, had sent photos of plants she had seen at previous Toowoomba festivals and recommended a visit. I had a burning desire to see how Anderson's Peach compared with the Cameron's and Victorian Peaches, and to meet the legendary Kevin Walters. To make it appealing to my wife I combined a brief holiday on the Gold Coast so that I could wind up in Toowoomba on Friday/Saturday 24th/25th September, the opening days of the Festival of Flowers and the Toowoomba Clivia Society Show.

The clivia did not disappoint.

When it comes to variety the club does not have to stand back for others. They have it all. Inter-specifics, Chinese & Japanese forms, Variegates, and miniata of every sort and form, all displayed *en masse* so as to provide a kaleidoscope of colour. Breathtaking.

What were some of the things that impressed me and that made Toowoomba different?

1. The mass display with every plant carefully & informatively labelled. It is not the practice at competitive shows around the world to label plants which are normally displayed in categories. The clear labelling added a whole new dimension to the enjoyment of the plants which were well presented.

2. The busy throngs of spectators were a feature. The club is fortunate that their miniata flowering coincides with the week-long Toowoomba Festival of Flowers which attracts visitors from all over. But what a daunting task to man the show for seven long days. Hats off to the willing volunteers.

3. Another feature was that so many participated by exhibiting their plants, a sure sign of a healthy club.

4. But above all was the fine spirit and friendliness of the Club members who made us feel so welcome and at home. It was great to meet so many and the hospitality was much appreciated, from the kind invitation to officially open the show to an enjoyable barbecue on the Saturday evening. Everyone was so friendly that I wouldn't wish to single anyone out by name.

And I got to meet Kevin Walters, who kindly gave us a conducted tour of his shadehouses, although it must be said that his best plants were on display at the show. Some lovely blooms. And I not only got to see Anderson's Peach, but meet Ian Anderson in person. But then I found out that there were other similar plants like Jordan's Apricot, John's Surprise, Jelena, Pink Mist, etc., all apparently spontaneous mutations. Where did they come from? That's a mystery that will draw me back to Toowoomba.

Then there were the lovely 'green throats' on display and plants like 'Larsen's Green girl'. And then there were the mouth-watering 'Samba Magic' & 'Lambada Dancer', progeny of Bill Morris' Tango. And I could go on and on with all the lovely picotees, bicolours, pastels, etc. that I would like to have taken home. Toowoomba you have some lovely clivia and I would encourage others to get to see for themselves in future years. A big THANK YOU for your warm reception and for dazzling me with your lovely clivia. I hope to meet some of you again in New Zealand in October 2008.

Alick McLeman

Secretary, New Zealand Clivia Club



Ian Anderson and his peaches



Toowoomba Show Display



USE OF THE INTERNET

It is now a year since we switched to newsletters in their current format, printed in full colour. Overwhelmingly the response to the change has been positive. About 30, or a quarter, of our 127 memberships are not on computer and would previously have received their newsletters printed in black & white. Others of us just find it easier to get a printed version rather than have to waste ink printing a copy for ourselves.

However there may be some members who would prefer to get their newsletters by email as before, or who would like to get an additional email copy sent to them to store on their computers. If so please advise the secretary of your requirement at clivia@xtra.co.nz and we will arrange accordingly.

Then some may miss the earlier flow of email photos and updates. We just don't have the manpower to provide such a service at present. Your small committee is considering the reintroduction of a club website which would serve as an internet notice board and partly fill the need. However for those who would like to see a steady stream of 'cyber' information we would draw your attention to the international Clivia Enthusiasts Group. This is a Yahoo internet group which has about 1000 members worldwide and acts as a store of information and photos. All postings to the group are automatically emailed to all members via a moderator. It is a wonderful source of information and visuals on clivia, and you can start each day with a host of clivia messages.

The group's URL is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/clivia-enthusiast/>; and you can join at clivia-enthusiast-subscribe@yahoo.com or via the moderator Pen Henry at cliviagdns@iprimus.com.au.

There is no charge to be a member.

We also take this opportunity of drawing your attention to the website of The Clivia Society to which our club is affiliated, www.cliviasociety.org, which also contains a wealth of information.

What's Happening



Lambada Dancer



Yellow C. caulescens
First flowering in NZ



Bronze C gardenii

Next Club Meeting

Wednesday 5th December at 7.00pm.

Join us at the AHC rooms, 990 Great North Road, Western Springs, AK The meeting includes a visual presentation 'Towoomba 2007' with a look at some of the best clivias Australia has to offer.

2008 DIARY

Club Meetings

Saturday 23rd February 2008 at AHC

Monday 7th April 2008 at AHC

Gardenii Day

Saturday 24th May 2008

Club Meeting

Wednesday 30th July 2008 at AHC

Interspecifics Show and AGM

Saturday 23rd August 2008

Auckland Show

Saturday 4th October 2008

Tauranga Show

Tuesday 7th October 2008

New Plymouth Show

Saturday 11th October 2008

Club Meeting

Saturday 6th December 2008



Keith Hammett Picotee



Lady Frances



Member's Garden – These blooms are from the garden of Murray and Bev Gow in Auckland.



Seasons Greetings

From David your Editor, hope you have enjoyed the newsletter this year. All the best for Christmas and the New Year.



Belgian



Ella van Zyl Ghosting



Pastel



Picotee

