

NEW ZEALAND  
CLIVIA CLUB INC



# NZ CLIVIA CLUB INC

## NEWZLETTER

Volume 8.1 Summer 2010

## NEW CLIVIA FORUM

The club has established an Internet Discussion Forum in order to improve communication between members. Using a Yahoo Group facility, the forum operates along the lines of similar international clivia enthusiast groups, but membership is limited to our club members. The address of the forum home page is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nzcliviaclub>.

Members are welcome to ask questions, post photos and express themselves on clivia matters by emailing the forum's email address [nzcliviaclub@yahoo.com](mailto:nzcliviaclub@yahoo.com). Such messages are then forwarded to all members, as are any replies or comments.

The forum has 38 members and the messages are slowly building up although understandably there is not a great deal of clivia activity at this time of year.

For the time being Alick Mcleman acts as moderator for the forum. To join just email him at [clivia@xtra.co.nz](mailto:clivia@xtra.co.nz) and your email address will be added to the forum.



## South Africa Tour

### East Coast Clivia Habitat Tour, 1st October to 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

Wild Coast Clivias is hosting an inaugural East Coast Clivia Habitat tour immediately after the 5<sup>th</sup> World Clivia Conference. A fabulous itinerary has been planned which is available on request.

Tour leaves from Port Elizabeth and ends in Durban after busy meander along the East coast of South Africa. The tour is unique as it will be the first to visit the Transkei, a wonderfully diverse region with a rich history. The coastal areas are especially scenic with many rivers entering the sea and large patches of forest, prime clivia habitat. We will visit superb wild clivia habitat and target four species, *c.nobilis*, *c.miniata*, *c.robusta* and *c.gardenii*, as well as visits to some of the best nurseries/growers en route. There will therefore be plenty of opportunity to purchase seed and plants en route.

Your host, owner of Wild Coast Clivias based in Morgan Bay on the east coast of South Africa a guest speaker at the conference in Cape Town and will be talking on Clivia Nobilis. Wayne is an experienced international guide and has himself been on a number of clivia tours including one to Japan two years ago.

The tour itself has been meticulously planned and every effort will be made to accommodate the individual requirements of all in the party. You will find your host articulate, attentive and very knowledgeable. Interested parties should contact Vivienne McIntosh via email at [viviennemc@polka.co.za](mailto:viviennemc@polka.co.za) for further details pricing, itineraries etc.



Diana and Rao setting up for the Clivia Club Display at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

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# Clivia in New Zealand

By Tony Barnes

New Zealand has often been called "A Nation Of Gardeners", and there are several obvious reasons why.

By far the majority of N.Z.'s colonising settlers came from the British Isles during the mid to late 1800s, many of them from working class rural backgrounds seeking a better life with opportunities for improvement. There were also, however, members of wealthy families who bought huge tracts of land, and built large country houses and surrounded them with large gardens, importing the plants they were accustomed to remind them of home. So the British love of plants and gardening, and the idea that it was an art form and part of their culture, was brought to NZ, while those with money, accustomed in their former homeland to having access to the wealth of new plants being discovered and introduced to the West at this time, continued to seek these, and bring them into their new country.

Stretching between 35 and 46 degrees latitude, NZ generally enjoys a temperate maritime climate with the majority of the country seldom experiencing summer daytime temperatures higher than 26 C or below 10 C in winter. Corresponding night time temperatures are 15 C and 0 C. Rainfall is regular and year round, with the wetter west coast of both islands receiving between 2500mm and 1500mm annually, while the drier east coasts receive about 750mm. We have a very high uv light intensity, lots of sunshine year round, and fairly good soils, tending slightly to the acidic in most places.

So for coastal parts of the South Island, and much of the North Island except the mountainous central area, summers are moist but not too wet and humid, and winters are mild and often frost free. Even within cooler parts of the country, most gardens have a sheltered, warm north facing spot with a microclimate that enables relatively tender plants to be grown. I have seen *Clivia gardenii* growing happily outside on a north facing slope in Dunedin, despite the fact that Dunedin receives brief winter snowfalls a couple of times a year. And *Clivia miniata* has been growing happily outside for decades against a north-eastern wall of the palm house at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, suffering only light frosting of leaves in some cold winters.

In short, it is easy to garden in NZ, with a very benign climate, few extremes of either temperature or rainfall, reasonably good soil, and a history and love of gardening in our ancestry, along with the urge to be adventurous and try something new.

The first record I have been able to locate of *Clivia* being offered for sale in NZ is in an 1892 nursery catalogue of David Hay, whose Montpelier Nursery in Remuera was Auckland's leading nursery for many years. Hay was an excellent plantsman, and also frequently corresponded with the great American plant hybridiser Luther Burbank, of Santa Rosa, California, from whom he may well have sourced plants.

"*Clivea nobilis*. A splendid bulb for pot culture. Produces a profusion of large crimson flowers. Highly recommended. 2/-" Listed under "bulbs and tuberous rooted plants", it is interesting to speculate exactly what this plant was. The word "bulb", and the "large crimson flowers" description are slightly off putting when thinking of *clivias*. My guess is that it was actually the *miniata* x *nobilis* hybrid *Cyrtanthiflora*, which has been sold in NZ for decades as *C.nobilis*, the mis-identification only being recognised and rectified in the last twenty or so years. Another reason for thinking the plant listed was in fact *cyrtanthiflora* is that in Remuera/Parnell, the affluent suburb of Auckland where Hay had his nursery, very old clumps of both *miniata* and *cyrtanthiflora* are relatively common. Miss Harrison-Smith, a 93 year young gardener and member of our NZ *Clivia* Club, lived the first half of her life at her grandfather's property in Remuera, close to where Montpelier Nursery was. She clearly remembers the nursery on Shore Road, and also recalls well established plants of both *Miniata* and *Cyrtanthiflora* in their garden when she was a child. I have found these two varieties in large old gardens, both public and private, in Tauranga, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Wanganui, Wellington, Nelson and Canterbury.

To the best of my knowledge, *C. nobilis* was not actually in NZ until imported by Keith Hammett and Terry Hatch, about twenty years ago. Lyndale Nurseries of Auckland imported seed of *C. nobilis* from Cape Seed and Bulb Co in South Africa in 1998, and sold approx 1000 2yr plants to various growers around NZ. As far as I am aware, this crop is the only quantity of *nobilis* that has been sold commercially in NZ. I have never seen mature plants of *nobilis* growing in gardens, they have always proved to be *Cyrtanthiflora*, or occasionally *gardenii*.

The most widespread clone of *miniata*, both here and in Australia, is a narrow leaved, fairly rapidly clumping form, with soft apricot-orange flowers that have rather narrow gappy petals. It is undeniably attractive, but as the saying goes, familiarity breeds contempt, and it is often scathingly referred to by *clivia* enthusiasts as "*C.crappiata*". This form, along with *Cyrtanthiflora* and possibly *gardenii*, probably reached our shores via Australia over 100 years ago and would have been spread around the country largely by divisions swapped between keen gardeners.

Interestingly, the 1899 catalogue of David Hay did not list *clivia* again, and in fact despite searching literally dozens of old nursery catalogues dated between 1895 and 1930 I have not located any other listings of *clivia*. This would seem to suggest that they were not readily available, or greatly esteemed. Perhaps, because they are a slow growing and slightly tender evergreen perennial, they did not easily fit into the production techniques of either of the two main types of nursery (i.e. tree and shrub, or hardy bulbs and perennials). Maybe the fact that *clivia* had lost popularity in Britain and Europe had something to do with it, or even because of their ease of cultivation in NZ they were not considered enough of a challenge to grow.

With gardening listed as the country's number one pastime from the 1920s right up until the 1990s, (when walking took over as No 1), every rural and urban community was awash with horticultural and gardening clubs, all holding seasonal shows where members vied enthusiastically with each other to win the cup for the biggest, brightest, healthiest and best grown chrysanthemum, dahlia, gladiolus, daffodil, iris, aster etc. People WANTED plants and flowers that they could lavish time and effort on, which would reward the grower with bigger better blooms.

*Clivia* simply didn't fit the bill.

So for most of the 20th century *clivia* lurked in dark corners of old gardens, forgotten and neglected.

R.E.Harrison's bulb and perennial nursery was established in Palmerston North in 1920, and he was respected as NZ's leading expert in this field for almost 50 years. His comprehensive "Handbook of Bulbs and Perennials for the Southern Hemisphere", published in 1953, mentions *miniata*, *nobilis*, and "a most desirable yellow-flowered variety, deeper in colour at the throat, that is known as *C. miniata* 'aurea' ". Was this form already in NZ or had Mr Harrison seen it overseas, or perhaps simply read about it? It would seem the latter, as in his pictorial companion volume "Know Your Garden Flowers...Bulbs and Perennials", published in 1967, he states..."*clivia miniata* is usually found in this part of the world in the salmon-apricot-coloured form, but a range of other shades from pure yellow through orange to deep red is also grown abroad". The October 1950 and June 1955 issues of The NZ Gardener magazine contained articles about them, the latter, more comprehensive one authored by R.E.Harrison, who encouraged the importation by airmail of different coloured forms by importing seeds from US and UK catalogues..

A few passionate plantsmen scattered around the country, such as Dr Ray Freeman, and Max Goodie of Auckland, imported seeds from Schenkel in Germany, and *caulescens* from Gordon McNeil, about 30 years ago, while Felix Jury and Jim Schumacher of Taranaki and Stevens Nurseries of Wanganui appear to have done the same in the late 1950s or 1960s. Donald Odering of Oderings Nurseries in Christchurch tells me that he was importing seed from Hurst Seed Co in London during the 1960s, but that because they were slow plants to grow, and demand was not large, they didn't do many, and few of his nurserymen colleagues could be bothered with them. Dave Austin of Kaitiaki and David Thorns of Nelson both imported seed from Santa Barbara in California in the 1960s, and hybridised and sold plants locally for many years.

*Clivias* were seldom offered for sale (an old gardening friend in Taranaki, Mrs Gwen Masters, recalls purchasing her first three *miniata* plants from Pettigrew's Nurseries in Stratford in the early 1940s), but tended to be swapped and exchanged among interested plant friends more as a curiosity than a plant of any value or real use.

This is the first part of Tony's article to be continued in future newsletters.

# New in 2009

A preview of some of the flowers that were new for our members in 2009. More at the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March!



Colourpot – Alick McLeman



Firedance – Alick McLeman



Gail's Peach F1 – Alick McLeman



Green Throat Split Peach – Alick McLeman



Florid White Lips – Diana Holt



C. robusta White – R & D Williams



Green Throat – Diana Holt



Tutti Frutti – Rex & Dee Williams



Tangerine Dream x Kapiti Bronze – Rex W.



Hammett Dark Red – David Olsen



Rex W. Pink Flamingos – David Olsen



South African Ghost – David Olsen

# New in 2009



Kings Ransom x Buttermilk – Rex & DeeWilliams



Four Marys – Murray Gow



Strawberry Ghost – David Olsen



Alick's Peach x Wittig Pink – Stephanie Blamey



KZN 133 #1 – Rex Williams



C. nobilis – Bryan Sherman



F2 caulescens x miniata – Keith Hammett



C. robusta – Ian Baldick



Sarah Jane – Rex Williams



Parfait Strain 1.09 – Alick McLeman



Dilute Pastel – Keith Hammett



Short Leaf Yellow – Rex & Dee Williams



Marshmallow – Rex & Dee Williams



NCC 174 #2 – Rex & Dee Williams



Dilute Pastel – Keith Hammett

## **Importing Clivia Seed.**

After the stimulating talk from Alick at our July meeting and his comments on purchasing seed from overseas, this article may help you make it all a bit easier to bring in new developments in Clivia seed and progress the diversity of what is available and give you great choices to have fun foolin' around with your Clivia. Bringing seed into New Zealand is legal as long as a few rules are followed. We must all be aware we are all responsible to protect this country from any overseas pests of any sort.

### **Customs Clearance:**

#### **Posted seed:**

Biosecurity allows the hobbyist to bring all species of Clivia into this country in small lots, as long as it is clearly marked what it is, the seed is well clean with no damage or 'funny little black spots' showing on the seed. Clearly marked means on the outside of the package has a statement such as "Cleaned Seed of Clivia miniata, (or whatever species) "The package is normally opened and checked and if the seed is healthy, they will forward it on to you with little delay. If they do find a problem they will let you know and you have a choice of having the seed tested or having it destroyed. In two cases where I have had this problem, the seed was not up to standard and I accepted their verdict.

#### **Bringing seed back as Personal Luggage:**

The same rules apply as to cleanliness and clear labeling. On entry to NZ declare you are carrying seed and preferable in your hand luggage. Your seed will be taken from you and checked while you wait for their inspection. At Auckland Airport this is just by the exit where friends maybe waiting for you. Clearance should not take long. There has been some problems in this area but I have been assured that new rules and standards have been issued to Customs Officers in Auckland to ensure Clivia seed will now be recognised and passed if meeting the standard and you have every right to your seed without hassle.

#### **Payment for overseas seed purchases:**

Depending on country of purchase, each has their own system.

Seed from South Africa often means a Bank transfer on top of seed purchase. When you send funds your bank will tell you your cost to send from here, but in SA there is another fee for their bank to clear the funds. I have found the supplier is not always aware of this value so you need to establish with them an extra cost to cover this. If you are a Member of the Clivia Society, their Year Books gives lots of contacts for seed purchases. I did get some great seed from Tino Ferero in SA.

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

In Japan, Shige is the main exporter and he uses PayPal as does some of the exporter of seed from China.

Setting up PayPal is fairly simple via your Credit Card.

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

Once you have set this up it is so easy to pay for your purchase. Many people in other countries such as USA also accept PayPal. I have not tried to purchase seed from eBay and definitely unless you know the supplier, you need to be aware of unscrupulous sellers. Being a member of the clivia enthusiasts group will give you a chance to hear about or check out sellers on eBay. But remember, buyer be aware, if you don't have recommendations to the seller. Of course, with the next Conference in South Africa in September 2010, you can go along and bring back lots of seeds, great contacts and make some great friends. This article has been written from my personal experiences so there maybe situations I am not aware of. Comments are appreciated to assist all of us to continue developing our addictive hobby.

Diana Holt.

### Clivia Books for Sale

Our Spring Newsletter updated all the books we have available, both for sale or borrow via the Club Library.  
A reminder to members, that we have a few copies left of "Clivia-Nature or Nurture"  
We will have all books available at our March meeting.  
For any queries on the Club books, please contact me:  
Diana Holt at [dianah@edgeofeden.co.nz](mailto:dianah@edgeofeden.co.nz)  
Or phone me on (09) 833 5769

I always love the miniata that flower out of season. They don't get lost in the mass and there is more time to admire them. The plant in photo is in flower at present, an immature F1 Florid White Lips. I first saw this strain in the photo on the cover of the Clivia News #2 2006, the Clivia Society newsletter. . The original plants were bred by Dirk Lootens of a Belgian company, ID'Flor, in the Floréac group and there was an article in the newsletter on how the plant had been bred from a

Belgian strain which in 1985 first started showing traces of colourless areas in the petals. By 2006 they had developed the strain to the point where crosses produced almost 100% 'white lips'. With some difficulty I eventually managed to get hold of Dirk through the internet and persuaded him to sell me some seed.

That was in 2007 and low and behold the first of the seedlings has now flowered albeit with a very small umbel. But by my calculation the plant is now only 2 years old. Wow!

Although not as impressive as the plant on the cover the 'white lips' can clearly be seen in the florets that have opened thus far. Hopefully the umbel and appearance will improve as the plant matures. And I have other seedlings still to flower.

Alick McLeman's Forum post.

## What's Happening

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 7.00pm

New in 2009. Slideshow and presentation of new flowers from various growers in 2009.  
Venue is the AHC Building, 990 Great North Road, Western Springs, Auckland.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1.30pm

Dr Keith Hammett – Clivia- Myths & Truths  
Also 'The Biggest Berry Competition' and an exhibit of gardenia & robusta in flower. AHC Building.

Saturday 7 August

AGM

Tuesday 21 September

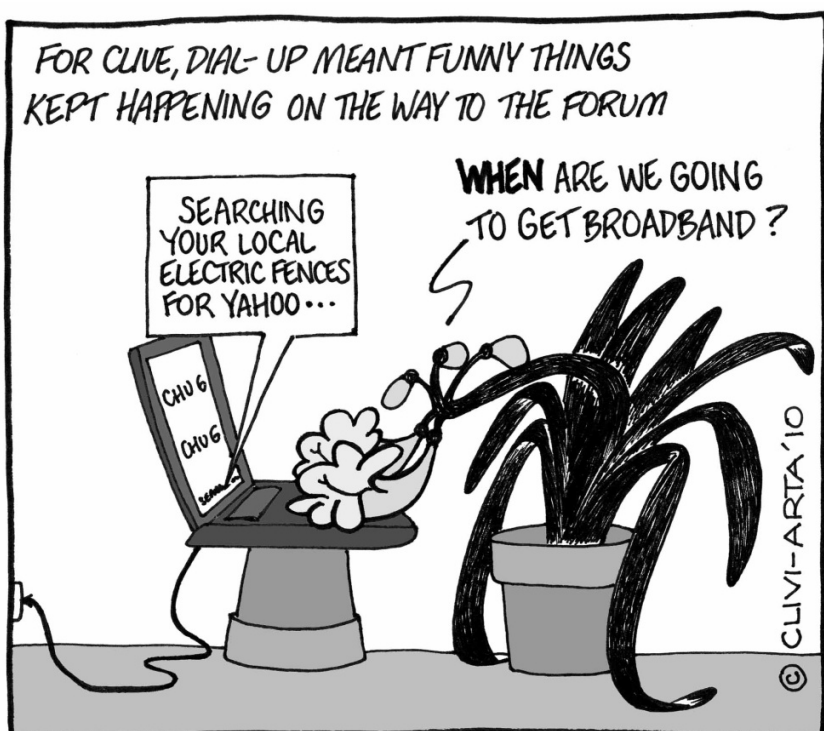
2010 International Clivia Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. Register now if interested in attending.  
[www.miniata.co.za](http://www.miniata.co.za)

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 9am – 4pm

Annual Clivia Show at the Botanical Gardens, Hill Road, Manurewa.



Alick's F1 Florid White Lips



### CLUB WEBSITE

The club has established a website [www.nzclivia.org](http://www.nzclivia.org). Check it out.

Some features include links to the websites of The Clivia Society and other clubs worldwide. The 'Publications' page has a list of all the clivia publications available on loan or for sale through the club library. And the 'Newsletters' page has an archive of all club newsletters since inception. These can be downloaded from the website.

Please make full use of these new facilities.