



# Nz CLIVIA CLUB INC

## NEWZLETTER

Volume 8.2 Autumn 2010

## The gardenii are out!



The gardenii are looking good in our gardens



There are still a few stunning robusta out as well – this is one from Alick McLeman.

### Biggest Berry Contest



Have you got a big berry lurking in the undergrowth in your garden? Bring it along to the next meeting on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> for the Biggest Berry Competition. The berry with the most seeds wins!

#### **WILL YOU BE THERE?**

**Club meeting Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1.30pm - Venue is the AHC Building, 990 Great North Road, Western Springs, Auckland**

If you are in Auckland this coming weekend it would be great if you could join us. Dr Keith Hammett will be giving us a talk "Clivia Myths & Truths – Experimentation & speculation". This will be followed by the "Biggest Berry competition" (see the Clivi-arta cartoon on the back page). Last time the competition was won by Stephanie Blamey with a giant which produced 21 seeds. That will take some beating. Bring your berries along.

Please bring any clivia plants of interest for the show table. Hopefully we will have some of the autumn pendulous plants in flower to discuss and enjoy. As usual there will be plants and publications for sale. See you there!

#### **Annual General Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> August 2010**

We are planning this as an all day event.

##### **9.00 – 11.00am**

Dr Keith Hammett's clivia plantation will be open to visitors and Keith will be on hand to show people around. There should be interspecific clivia in flower amongst others and this will furnish an opportunity to see his great collection at a different time of year.

##### **12.00 to 1.00pm**

A sausage sizzle lunch at the AGM venue, Joy Plants in Pukekohe East to be followed by the AGM meeting. This will also provide an opportunity for a conducted walk around the Hatch's lovely property.

##### **3.00pm onward**

A visit to the nearby garden of Ian Baldick where many interspecific clivia will be in flower amidst his stunning magnolia, which will be in full bloom. A year on and Ian's clivia collection has grown and matured.

We had a good attendance at the AGM last year. Plan to be there. Maps and directions will be circulated to members prior to the event.



Stephanie Blamey, the last Big Berry Winner

### **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In terms of the clubs rules we hereby give notice that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 7th August 2010 at 1.30pm. Venue: Joy Plants, 78 Jericho Road, Pukekohe East, Auckland.

The agenda for the meeting and a copy of the audited accounts of the club for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 will be circulated to club members prior to the meeting.

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# Clivia in New Zealand (Continued)

By Tony Barnes

However, as society changes, so do peoples' tastes in plants.

During the 1960s, 70s and 80s Dow Seeds of Gisborne, were importing seed from European growers, Antonia nurseries in California, and various sources in South Africa. At a similar time Ken White of Parva Plants was obtaining Californian seed for his mail order plant business. Ken mentions going over to visit his clivia breeder, who was very sick, and being given all sorts of "special" plants. However Ian Duncalf, who bought Parva Plants from Ken a few years later, saw these plants and doesn't recall them being anything special. Ian was given two plants, a red called "Volcano", which flowers low in the plant, and a green throat.

Peter Lees, working for Barry McKenzie's Topline Nurseries in the mid-late 1980s, was importing up to 50,000 seeds a year for a short time from Miyaki in Japan, and these were shared with North Shore Nurseries (Bryan King) and Model Nurseries (John Davies) of Auckland. These were broadleafed, deep orange/red, and sold around NZ as Clivia "Grandiflora" when 2 years old. They were retailing at between \$15 and \$20 which most gardeners considered expensive at the time for a smallish plant. John Davies tells me that a couple of batches of variegated seed were also brought in, but germination was poor, and none were offered for sale. Topline closed down soon after, but Peter Lees tells me that North Shore Nurseries have continued to source seed from Miyaki right up to the present, to provide plants for the Kings Plant Barn chain of garden centres

New Zealand experienced a gardening boom and frenzy from the mid 1980s to the late 1990s, with three weekly gardening programmes on television, several gardening magazines, and a myriad of new nurseries opening to supply the seemingly insatiable demand for plants. Many plants that had been traditionally difficult to propagate and hard to obtain were tissue cultured, and suddenly available in large quantities. Everyone had to have a garden, even those who till now had not been remotely interested in knowing the difference between a protea and a pansy!

Keen gardeners began to break away from the historical European temperate style of gardening, seeking new and different plants, pushing the limit with subtropical plant types, and generally being more adventurous with plant associations and garden design. At last NZers were developing a style of their own, fusing traditional plants and designs with the much brighter, luxurious and often flamboyant flora that would grow in our warmer conditions.

It was about now that nurserymen and plantspeople began to take a real interest in clivia, especially the hybrid forms offered by overseas nurseries. I believe this happened more because they were not widely known or grown, and so regarded as "new", than for their intrinsic beauty and easy care qualities, which have only really come to be appreciated about a decade later, after the bubble of gardening enthusiasm burst, and people realised that they'd been conned - gardens DID entail some work after all. Dratt. Let's forget the roses and pansies and look for plants that take care of themselves. Clivias!

It was at this time, too, that the clone named "Redgrove" appeared on the NZ market, one of the few named varieties to be marketed in NZ and also the first to be tissue cultured. There is a story attached to this, but for now let's just say the planned release co-incided with the demise of Topline, and that "Redgrove" was not a particularly noteworthy variety, merely one of the best available at a time when there wasn't much around.

At this stage of the story many different people enter, and integrating the strands becomes tricky, rather like weaving a tapestry, or hybridising a line of plants. I think for clarity's sake, (and my sanity), I will outline the broad picture, then tell you in greater detail later about individual clivia personalities involved and where their stock came from.

Yellow clivia were first offered commercially in quantity by Bruntwood Nurseries, who were supplied with plants by Ian Duncalf of Parva Plants. These were basically Solomone yellows. They hit the market in 2001.

Around the same time Keith Hammett began marketing his "Moonglow", "Fireglow" and "Sunset Glow" strains, launching an ambitious growing and marketing strategy partnership to ensure a plentiful supply to meet the rising demand, Terry Hatch of Joy Plants had clivia available, and Tony Barnes was selling a few hundred reds and Australian yellows annually from his Taranaki garden, Ngamamaku. Suddenly clivia were the "in" plant, gaining good media exposure, and the gardening public were scrambling to obtain them.

When the NZ Clivia Club was formed, many other addicts who had been playing with their clivia in isolation emerged. There was a focal point now, and these scattered individuals linked up and pooled knowledge and enthusiasm. Only since the Club's inception, and with the help from the SA Clivia Society, have the gaps in our knowledge about the plant been filled, and expanded. The club has been very active, bringing overseas speakers out to NZ, holding non-competitive shows in different parts of the country, initiating and funding some research into flower pigment, doing displays at various horticultural shows, organising social events and generally promoting and building up awareness of clivia to the gardening public. Unfortunately there are now no commercial or foundation growers on the driving committee of the club. The NZCC has at present just under 200 members, and I don't foresee this increasing dramatically in the near future as our population is small, and to the uninitiated clivia do offer limited variation. However this may change as interspecific hybrids become available, spreading the flowering season, and range of flower shape and colour.

I estimate that currently there are about 60,000 clivia sold annually in NZ, with seed still being imported from South Africa, Europe, and USA as well as utilising NZ sourced material. Seed is generally sown in June, and seedlings sold by liner nurseries in 5cm pots at ten months old, for \$1.20 (6 Rand). At retail level, a 2 year plant in a 1 litre pot sells for about \$8.00 (35 Rand). Some plants are grown to flowering size, retailing at \$25 (110 Rand), but premium priced product is not in high demand.

There is currently a glut of clivia available, brought about by overly optimistic estimates of the size of the market. While yellows were new, obviously demand was high, but there is now no premium for yellow plants as the novelty is gone, and large sales numbers have declined accordingly. Commercial nurseries need to work on space rental economics, and currently it is simply not profitable to grow clivia to flowering size when the public are not prepared to pay a realistic price. Perhaps when the 2 year flowering strain from Belgium is introduced this may change.

The general public merely want a plant that looks pretty, or one that will do a job. They are not interested in breeding or background, and don't seem to like orange, preferring red. There is general interest in pastels, peaches, green throats and variegates, but these are not yet available in retail outlets, and the few offered by specialist growers/breeders are quickly snapped up by collectors. Rare and novel plants are in demand, but the connoisseur market is extremely small, and not lucrative.

A few years ago two yellow clones were successfully put into tissue culture by Sandra Simpson of Multiflora Laboratories. She found that good pupping varieties also multiplied well in tissue, but that others were very slow. Plants ex tissue had to command a high price, which was economic briefly, but now that demand for yellows has dropped, and the price of seed is also low, it is far more economic to grow from seed than tissue.

There is little enthusiasm among clivia breeders and growers here to formally name plants. Because demand is not great, and clonal division would be so slow, it is not considered worth doing. General consensus is that unless a plant or flower is different enough to be noticed from the back of a galloping horse, it does not warrant a name.

Who knows what the future of the clivia is. Things will change radically within the next five years due to the huge increase of diversity in the gene pool. Seeds have been sourced by enthusiasts from all around the world, and amateur hybridists are frantically cross pollinating here just as they are in Australia, Japan, USA, South Africa and UK. Undoubtedly some wonderful material will emerge from all these places, and yet the popularity of these glorious plants still depends upon the whim of the public at large.

Back to California – March 2010

Once again I was lucky enough to head back to California to look at Clivia and attend the NACS Show at Huntington Gardens in March this year.

Starting off in San Francisco, I stayed with Marilyn Paskert where William McClelland from LA and Marianne Ciola from St Louis, joined us for a few days in the Bay area to see a couple of Clivia people locally.

Time with Ilie Gaceu (he was at the SA Conference in 2006) was interesting as we examined his garden with both Clivia and an interesting mix of other plants. As he works at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens we had a very full tour throughout including a visit to the Conservatory of Flowers (a tropical wonderland) A delightful dinner with Mary Meeker in Walnut Grove saw us really enjoying her excellent collection of Clivia. Her husband Don grows Bonsais that are just so cute.

Then off to Watsonville to Solomones, now called Plant Horizons run by Manuel Morales with his very able assistant, Maricela. The large houses stretch away out so took a few hours wandering up and down isles looking for the real special ones in flower and there were plenty of them. If one wants to purchase a plant but there are none available to sell, a name label is put into the pot and when an offshoot is available, you get your plant! I was not on a buying trip so once again I could only admire while others sort out their purchases.

Marilyn's sister Eileen (also a Clivia collector) had joined us for our trip south, so after William and Marianne headed back to LA we took a leisurely drive down the Pacific Coastal Highway to stay the night at a Cambria with a bit of retail therapy in the morning and not a Clivia in sight!

We stayed in Pasadena, not far from the Huntington and spent the next two days at the Show. They do run a competition and there appeared to be a prize for so many sections that I lost count. The NACS do have a website with the main winners now on show so well worth a visit. Go to [www.northamericancliviasociety.org](http://www.northamericancliviasociety.org)

Manuel brought about 40 to 50 plants to the show and nearly everyone was one I would love to have. Unfortunately a number of blooms did get damaged in the trip but still beautiful.

He had given each one a name but it was his wife that created them with none of them registered at this stage. Names like 'Delicate Love', 'Angel Touch', 'Captured Daylight', 'Captive of my Heart', 'Easter Morning', added a nice touch and certainly made it easier to keep track of the photos I took. A lot of these plants are a further development of the "Watercolor" as created by Joe Solomone.

James Comstock's 'Outrage' was the one that really caught my eye and had to keep going back to it time and time look again.

A multipetal with curling tepals at the top of the flower, tipped with a soft orange, a lime green yellow center and the lower tepals seem to lie out flat like a big tongue. I have no idea to the background of this plant. Another plant of James was one he called "Breathless", a soft buttery cream with recurved tepals, did take your breath away with its beauty, or like a creamy custard one could almost eat.

There were many other really nice plants on Show but somehow I didn't get much past the first two growers I mentioned.

Gerald Tom took out the two main prizes for the Show. Best of Show and People's Choice. A large Belgium with an equally large round umbel of a very deep orange.

There was a wide range of florets, but somehow never really took any photos of this area.

I did get a chance to walk through the Huntington Gardens mainly to look at the selection of 'Conway's' Clivia that are all growing under Camellia trees and of course in flower at this time of year.

Attended the society meeting where Dick Storch gave an interesting talk on how Clivia are judged and the various points taken into consideration on awarding a prize. The President, Tom Wells also presented a Clivia Picture to Marilyn Paskert for all her work in both taking on the role of Webmaster and financially assisting with upgrade of the website.

I have joined the NACS so that I can continue to receive their magazine (Now only available to members) and keep in touch with new developments happening there – only \$US20 pa.

Two days of intensive Clivia was great and certainly a great learning curve for me personally. But more Clivia to come!

We headed south the next day after the Show stopping to visit Gerry and May Tom in Fountain Valley, Gerry being the 'Big Winner' of the Show. They had a very attractive back yard full of Clivia and orchids.

Interesting to see how other people use all their space for their plants so it doesn't make me feel bad with the vast array of plants I have, in fact I do have some lawn left.....



Marilyn, William and Marianne



Easter Morning



Marilyn and Norman Nakamishi

Then it was on the road again to see Eric Anderson in Fallbrook. His Grandfather did some very interesting hybrids many years back, one being 'Andersons Peach', that was never registered but now been recovered. Unfortunately due to Eric's workload his clivia have seemed to deteriorate since I saw them in 2007.

We stayed overnight in Oceanside on the coast not far from San Diego so the next day, Dick Storch (visited us for KiwiClivia in 2008) picked us up to go and look at his Nursery. High up in the hills almost on the boarder of Camp Pendleton, a very large area owned by US Marines and from his view mostly dry scrubby growth in a desert type area that will never be developed like a lot of the land on the main state highways going into San Diego. Dick has a great setup with a very long strongly built shade house that is overflowing with Clivia. I can't remember the length but certainly would like the space. His Clivia were still coming into flower. Dick also grows many other plants including a lot of various citrus. Rows of Staghorn's along the walls of the shade house were very impressive.

We then called on his neighbor, Reinhold, who has all sorts of shade houses full of all sorts of plants and even a big cage full of Cockatiels of all colours. He loves his Clivia and certainly had some beauties.

Then on to a wholesale Nursery not far from there and a beautiful drive through some lovely countryside. Lush lands, bigger houses, horses and trees: This looked like a more expensive area to live!

Rancho Soledad Nurseries was our destination. Dick has visited here quite often so we were left to our own devices to explore. Row after row of large orange of every shade of Clivia in large shade houses. Everyone was examined in great detail. Marilyn found a real special one, a bit like a 'Charm' small bronze flower that I would have dearly liked to bring home (she selfed it so I hopefully I will get seed in December) It takes quite awhile to examine every plant then Dick took us to another area where again many oranges but these were first flowering plants priced at \$7.50 each.

Marilyn's vehicle was now filling up with plants bought at the show and now a great selection to purchase here.

A late lunch back at Oceanside and we now headed back up north to Norman Nakamishi in Anaheim. (Near Disneyland)

After talking to Norman at the Show, I found out he also grew Bromeliads and knew people I knew in the Bromeliad world so I was keen to visit. At his home, his whole back of house was just one Big shade house plus a glasshouse full of orchids. Beautiful Bromeliads, masses of succulents, begonias and of course, Clivia! He then took us to another place nearby where his father had lived but has since passed away. Again the whole back section was a mighty shade house with a bigger selection of everything. Then on through another side door took us to another section that was more open with a large vegetable garden, a large plastic house with all his seedling Clivia and large Avocado trees.

As they say, everything is big in America!

It had been a very intense day of trying to absorb so much.

Instead of staying locally, we decided to just get on the main highway and head north to San Francisco. It was getting dark by now, so a quick snack and coffee for the driver, we were off. About 10'ish with still 4 hours of driving we pulled off and found a motel for the night at a place called Lost Hills (\$US20 a head – comfortable clean bed and good hot water)

Wendy's for breakfast and by midday back at Marilyn's home in Port Costa. What a great trip. By that time many more of her flowers had come into bloom so more time to look closely and take more photos. A couple of days later I was on my way back home to New Zealand.

Marilyn is a great hostess and a great friendship has developed through Clivia when we first meet up in South Africa in 2006. It was also great meeting up with others I knew through Clivia and meeting new people, all with a common interest.

I felt I had learnt a lot more, now spending time looking at what I have and really planning my next step of growing Clivia. Roll on spring!



James Comstock

Outrage – James Comstock



Marilyn - Tricolour



Plant Horizon – Moon Landing



Speed of Light



James Comstock - Breathless



Bronze – Mary Meeker



Plant Horizon – Quincouera MP



Dick Storch's Nursery



Tom Wells and Marilyn

## Observations on Peach seedling stem colours

By Bill Morris

James Comstock recently suggested in an email discussion on the Enthusiasts' Group that the anthocyanin in peach seedling bases could vary so that various breeders give conflicting reports for identical crosses and that these variations might be caused by different light conditions.

I agree with James that this is the explanation of the problem – in particular the amount of ultraviolet (UV) light in the seedlings' environment. This could also explain why some seedlings start out as green based and later start to show pigmentation.

We all generally give germinating seeds special conditions – particularly keeping them more shaded than our mature plants. As well, our conditions vary. In Australia as against the Northern Hemisphere, seedlings are often grown in “shade houses” rather than glass or plastic roofed houses (although the latter are becoming more common in Australia).

Shade houses are usually covered with woven plastic cloth and light enters via the spaces between the woven threads. Thus the light entering contains the usual percentage of UV. I am not a physicist but I understand that both glass and the treated plastic sheeting most often used for covering growing structures block out UV light.

So structures built with these covers let in visible light but little or no UV light.

In summer (at least) it is also often necessary to add extra temporary shading in the form of shade cloth and this in turn reduces the light still further.

Other growers may even germinate their seed indoors perhaps under artificial light (again, little or no UV light) or in a well-lit via glass windows (but no direct light).

There are even now plastic covers being manufactured which can be placed over individual seedling trays to create miniature “glasshouses”.

All of the above suggest to me that low light – particularly with little or no UV light can prevent and delay the production of anthocyanins in the basal tissue of young clivia seedlings. How much pigment a seedling can produce is roughly related to how much is later produced in the flowers. Because Chubb Peach (the original clone) is a very pale peach, its seedlings gave rise to the idea that all peach flowers had to have green based (unpigmented) seedlings. However, ‘European’ peach flowers are often a markedly deeper peach colour and thus their seedlings can have pigmented bases. But the green based (unpigmented) bias has meant that many of these seedlings have been discarded in their early stages. Further confusion has also reigned as often the green-base seedlings of ‘European’ seedlings also became pigmented as they grew.



Dawn's Daughter



James Comstock Ghost



James Comstock

## Peduncles and Pedantry

**Peduncle:** A stem or stalk supporting flowers or fruit.

**Scape:** A flower-stalk arising at or underground.

A scape is therefore a specific type of peduncle.

Clivias have peduncles.

Amaryllis (Naked ladies) have scapes.

Thought : Maybe we should become a Clivia and Amaryllis Club. My Amaryllis are mighty right now with most of the flower shapes we associate with Clivia, but in a different colour range.

Complementary seasons, closely related yet opposite in so many ways.

Maybe an Amaryllis Day in place of the Gardenii day ?

Big draw card if we bill it as Naked Ladies Day.

Some thoughts from Keith Hammett.



# What's Happening

**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)

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September 1.00pm – 4.00pm**

**Tauranga Show** at Plantstruck Nursery  
139 Te Puna Road, Te Puna.

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

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



C. robusta Preferred form

C. robusta

Rex and Dee Williams



C. robusta var. Maxima

C. robusta – Rex and Dee Williams



C. robusta 'Fallen Angel'

C. robusta – Rex and Dee Williams

