

Cape Clivia Club



Kaapse Clivia Klub

Cape News Kaapse Nuus

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Secretary: Joy Woodward

P O Box 53219, Kenilworth 7745, South Africa.
Telephone +27 21 799 8768. Fax +27 21 797 0002.

E-mail capeclivia@iafrica.com

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The **International Clivia Group** met on 3 April, 2004 via AOL Chat Room under the chairmanship of Jim Shields. The Clivia Society, Cape Clivia Club, New Zealand Clivia Club, Clivia Society of Australia and the North America Clivia Society were represented.

The most significant matter discussed was the difficulty being experienced by the Judging and Standards sub-committee of the Clivia Society in bringing out a report on their recommendations. Fortunately Roger Dixon, who has done most of the work on this report, was in New Zealand for a conference and Keith Hammett, who has had extensive international experience in judging and standards at flower shows, particularly dahlias, agreed to meet with Roger over the Easter Weekend. Keith has since reported that their discussions were very fruitful. The next meeting will be at 2pm South African time on 29 May, 2004 under the Chairmanship of Chris Vlok.

Editors:

Mick Dower, with
John Winter, Ian Brown,
John Van der Linde and Johan Schoombee.

Design:

Kathy Leslie with
Meg Winter, Jill Dower and
Claude Felbert.

The **Committee of the Cape Clivia Club** met on 19 April.

The following appointments to the Clivia Society were confirmed/made

Club Representatives on the Clivia Society

Gert Wiese	Alternative	Coen Calitz
Claude Felbert	Alternative	Gerrit van Wyk
Felicity Weeden	Alternative	Toy Jennings

Nominations to Sub-committees of the Clivia Society

Yearbook	John van der Linde, Claude Felbert
Registration of Genus Clivia	Joan Sadie
Website	Riel Lotter, Johan Schoombee
Research	Mick Dower
Standards and Judging	Felicity Weeden
PRO	Marleen Bilas

If there are any issues or problems which you wish to raise please do not hesitate to take them up with the representative concerned there-with.

John Winter has been nominated as an **honorary Life Member** of the Clivia Society.

Ian Brown finds that he is spending more and more time away from Cape Town and the time has come to hand over his **accounting duties**. Do we have any volunteers (especially from our younger members) to start learning from him?

Seed and seedling lists have been issued and are available from Joy.

The next **Club Meeting** will be on **29 May 2004 (not 12 June)** at the Goldfields Centre. Ferozah Conrad will report on the research being done into the *C.gardenii* complex and Hein Grebe will continue his en-thralling tale of his travels in China and Tibet. Members are also re-quested to bring flowering *C. gardenii* and interspecifics to the meet-ing.

Some issues regarding Clivia seeds

Coen Calitz has written as follows about seed in general, to which your editors have added their comment. Please let us have a lively debate with concrete suggestions for improvement on seed delivery!

The seed season is upon us. During a recent debilitating illness (beware of ticks, ye wanderers of the veldt), I had lots of time to think about many things, my failures, sins, priorities, things I still wanted to do, etcetera. And also, obviously about Clivia. Please allow me to share some thoughts and ideas. Your comments and criticisms would be welcome.

1. Quality of seeds

I have bought, exchanged and received as gifts quite a few seeds. Some were from other countries. Most of these reached me in good condition, but others were badly desiccated, shriveled or tiny. I always treat seeds by washing in any of a number of fungicides (a friend uses Hydrogen Peroxide, which also supplies extra oxygen to the seeds). These dry seeds almost always float even after being rubbed with the fingers. Of these floaters not a single one has germinated and grown. Imagine my frustration if several, up to 30% in one case, seeds float. Now you have a problem to contact the vendor, or even worse, your generous friend and tell your woes. So you keep quiet and mumble your frustrations.

Can the supplier not test these seeds? I know it is a hassle to dry and at the same time keep tabs on the different kinds of seeds. I also know that seeds do not come with any guarantee. But is it reasonable to simply supply the seed, irrespective of the size, elapsed time from cleaning, and treatment of the plant and health of the berries. Is it reasonable for the receiver to carry all the risk?

Clivia seed respond best when fresh, ie when sown as soon as possible, and preferably within 4 months, after harvesting. This freshness can be prolonged by refrigeration or storing them in their pods but experience has shown that the sooner they are sown after harvesting the better. The longer a buyer waits after July to buy seed produced in the Southern hemisphere, or January in the Northern Hemisphere, the more likely that he will be supplied with desiccated seed. EDS.

2. Parentage of seeds

Seed lists, plant markers and literature often confidently name this or that valuable or well known named plant as the pollen parent (father). How can you be sure of this? How many growers actually remove the pollen sacs as well as other rogue pollen parents in the vicinity? What about the many hours, perhaps days, between your hand pollinations? Do the flowers remain celibate?

I should like to submit that most crosses are probably selfed and/or the offspring of neighbours, unless proven otherwise by explanation of the breeding management and techniques used. I have seen many full heads of large berries from natural causes only, no hand pollination at all.

Responsible breeders will ensure that the lobes of the stile of the mother plant are fully covered with pollen of the chosen pod parent as soon as they open and before the pol-

len of the mother plant ripens. They will also repeat that artificial pollination for as many as 3 consecutive days. Some pollen is very fine and covering the lobes with it is more effective if the lobes are first covered with sugar water to make them more tacky and receptive.

Breeders who do not follow responsible pollination procedures to prevent self or unwanted pollination soon become known when their seed does not produce the results promised by the given parentage. EDS.

3. Seeds in plastic

It is customary to remove seeds from the berry, clean and dry them, before storage for an indeterminate time in indeterminate conditions, before mailing or handing over seeds. Sometimes the seeds are even packed in a bank bag or other closed plastic container, such as a film container or pillbox. Should all seeds not be packed in layers of paper only? Too many seeds have built-in lethal spores of fungi and bacteria, nicely started and multiplied in the plastic container.

All seed should be treated with a cleanser such as Sporekill when it is dehusked. Storage in a plastic container does not seem to present a problem, provided it is opened regularly. However, orders should be packed in paper, especially if they will be confined for any length of time in the post. Again breeders who do not follow healthy anti bacterial and –fungal practices are soon found out. EDS.

4. Multiplicity and prices of seeds

Buying or receiving a seed and then spending much time, space and resources on it, is a massive act of faith. The validity can only be determined after 4 to 6 years, when many other factors could also have intervened.

Furthermore, we are all producing seeds. If an adult plant annually produces 20 berries, each containing 5 seeds, each of which produces 50 to 100 seeds in about 5 years, huge numbers of seeds will be produced within a few years. (Ask John van der Linde to work out the mathematical progression. You will be surprised at the numbers!)

Given the huge amounts of seeds, as well as the uncertainty mentioned above is it realistic to charge R10 to R50, per seed? Simply considering the case of the price of yellow Clivia plants over the past 10 years would indicate that in a few years you would hardly be able to give away seeds.

Should we as members of the Clivia fraternity, not accept the responsibility of allowing only the absolute best plants to produce seeds? And/or should we not contribute large numbers of the “not best” seeds to John Winter’s program of gift seeds to relieve the pressure on plants in the habitat? Any other suggestions about what to do with these seeds would be welcome.

Only seeds with named parents are sold through the Club, and we are trying to provide more and more information on the parents to enable buyers to make an informed choice. This practice enables the buyer to evaluate what seed is overpriced and should rather be contributed to John Winter’s program of gift seed. EDS.

5. Berries rather than individual seeds

Bear with me for one last musing (“Ledigheid is die duiwel se oorkussing!” of soiets): Would members be interested in selling or buying a berry, rather than cleaned seeds? At the last AGM in Durbanville, some berries sold as well as the (cheap) seed from Belgium. Some of the advantages are that you can be assured of a seed that is relatively fresh, stored in Nature’s own beautiful container. (Some berries, [in plastic!] were inadvertently left for three months in the seat pocket of my vehicle, living outdoors over the

summer of 2001. More than 50% of these seeds have grown well, with one due to flower this or next year.)

Research by Brown and Prosch reported in *Clivia Yearbook* 2, pp. 59 – 62, showed germination percentages at least as good for seeds in fruit as cleaned seeds (after storage at 5C). In my experience, however, seeds stored in the berry at room temperature are far superior to cleaned seeds that are kept for some time.

Another advantage is that at least in the case of some yellows, you can be more sure of the parentage of your seed. You can, at least partially, see if the fruit is healthy and large.

The supplier would also not have to clean and keep track of the individual seeds. Berries can be easily marked. Of course, the receiver would have to clean the seeds, but usually the numbers are small and it is (to me anyway) much preferable to boring TV, endless advertisements or musical/graphical fillers or introductions to programs.

Another disadvantage would be that the number of seeds in the berry would be difficult to determine. One could possibly work with classes (3 to 5, 5 to 8, 8 to 12, more than 12). And, per my argument above, these berries should be cheap, much less than the upmarket prices presently quoted.

The only drawback of buying berries is that you are limited to the pollination of that one flower. Is the better choice not from seeds pooled from all the berries produced from a particular cross?

See also the report by Hannes Robbertse quoted below on spontaneous germination of seed kept in the berry. EDS.

What are your thoughts and feelings about the issues raised? Don't call Coen or the Editors - contribute to Cape News / Kaapse Nuus!

Mealy Bug Host?

Coen Calitz, Stellenbosch

Over the past few years I have noticed that mealy bug apparently live on the growth points of the common wild olive (*Olea Capensis* and others), which are found everywhere in our gardens and parks. In my garden and the park next door, they are coming up in their hundreds where the birds have sown and fertilized them. Many of the young trees, with lots of growth points often have thriving colonies of mealy bugs long before I see them on my *Clivia*. Spraying only provides temporary respite.

Is this possibly one of the sources of contamination by this recurring pest? However, I have never seen them walking, flying or being carried over the lawns. Can someone enlighten us on how they move?

But Eric Heine and I have followed John Winter's advice in *Yearbook* 5. **Confidor** works! At first I poured it carefully from a jug around the *Clivia* stem, but subsequently sprayed it as usual, using a wetting agent and making certain that it ran down the stem into the soil. Now, 6 months later, in the high season for mealy bugs, there is no sign of them on any of the self-sown wild olives.

By the way, Randall and Koba Wicomb called their program of live music and song "Wilde Olywe". May there be many 'wilde ou lywe' in the Cape *Clivia* Club for many years to come!

Confidor is very expensive – more than R1300 per litre. Perhaps a group of can combine to buy and share it. It goes a long way, especially if you use a good sticker with the spray. Our WPK Agrimark has offered to order it for me, but there are other suppliers. We followed John Winter's recommendation of 1ml/litre, which is a much weaker mix than recommended in the pamphlet for fruit trees. I suppose the experts at Kirstenbosch tested this, because it seemed to work well for us. Lastly, if it is so very effective for insects, take great care in handling and spraying. Spray only where really necessary. It is very poisonous – take care of yourself and the environment.

Mick Dower found that when he sprayed Confidor the plants were damaged – probably because he used too strong a mix for Clivia. John Winter recommends that, to avoid the danger of inhaling spray, the pots can be drenched with a 1ml/Litre solution of Confidor. This will provide protection for a year.

John van der Linde has found that Effekto's Aphicide (active ingredient organo phosphate) is also effective. It is also systemic, but less poisonous, so that repeat spraying may be necessary, but it is a lot cheaper and more easily available.

Other products are also only available in bulk, but individual members only require small quantities. These include Sporekill (an anti-bacterial and –fungal cleanser), Bulldock (for snout beetle) and Nu-Film (a degradable sticker mixed with your sprays to ensure they are not washed off by rain). Kelpack concentrate is also available from Co-ops in 5 litre containers, as is KikStart (to counter transplant shock).

Do we have any volunteers to follow Oom Gert's example by taking paid orders from our members and breaking the bulk supplies down to meet the orders? EDS.

BLOMSTINGELS SONDER 'N BLOMSTEEL!



Sean Schickerling took this photo at Gert Wiese's home. It was the plant's first flower. He obtained the plant as a seedling from Lien Joubert and she also has a plant which behaves in the same way. As you can see, the flower has no stem but there are two flowers. What makes it even more interesting is that one of the flowers is multi-petal. Oom Gert says that he has selfed the plant. It will be interesting to see whether this plant flowers like that again and how the seedlings will flower.

GERMINATION USING GEL

There was a lot of discussion on the Clivia Enthusiasts Yahoo Group by overseas members during the last Northern Hemisphere sowing season about using 'SwellGel' to germinate Clivia seed. John van der Linde sent out an enquiry for more information on this product. Ian Coates, a member in England replied as follows:

"Could I suggest anyone interested looks at the web site www.pbi.co.uk and does a search there for 'SwellGel'. It gives you all the basic details.

Basically, it is an inert water retention medium used as an additive for compost to help it retain water. It works great for Clivia seeds too! I am having almost 100% success rate.



The photograph shows a seed tray full of swollen gel with divisions to separate various seed batches. The divisions are just seed pots with the bottoms cut out. One watering thus keeps all levels just below the gel surface."

We have ascertained that the same type of product is available from Starke Ayres - 'Wet-Pot-Basket' @ R74.50 per Kg and a more concentrated 'Terawet' @ R105 per 250 gms.

SPONTANEOUS GERMINATION

On 31 March 2004 Prof Hannes Robbertse wrote to the Clivia Enthusiasts Yahoo Group that he had to 'store' some of his seed on the plants and this is what happened. The seed ripened during July 2003 and these pictures were taken on 24-03-2004.



The first picture shows one big fruit containing a number of seedlings together with some smaller fruit on the same umbel with the roots of germinating seeds sticking out at the stylar end of the fruit.



The second picture is a close-up of the bigger fruit with the enclosed seedlings



The third picture shows the 14 seedlings taken from the one fruit- 100% germination

GROWING IMMATURE SEEDS TO MATURITY

Many of us have attempted, usually unsuccessfully, to grow immature seeds on a broken off stem to maturity by devices such as putting the stem in a bowl of sugar water.

Jim Holmes tells us that he was faced with this dilemma in a big way some 10 years ago. Yellow Clivia were scarce then, but he accepted an order from Japan for 100 yellows which had flowered. They were to be delivered by November. That was almost his entire stock of yellows, so, when they flowered he pollinated them, but was then loathe to send them off with their immature seed heads.

A friend had a lot of orange Clivia in her garden. She agreed to allow Jim to remove their flower heads and wedge graft the flower stems from the yellow plants onto their stems. The grafts were bound with grafting tape.

Jim says that in due course he harvested a good crop of mature yellow seeds from them! He did not notice whether any of the grafts had 'taken'.