



Message from the President

The MCG had a splendid start to 2011 with its February meeting. Chris Christou who runs a wholesale nursery growing Clivia and other plants shared many facts about his work and interests. With a lively exchange of questions and answers, the highlight of the evening was probably Chris's auctioning of four plants which he brought for display. We thank Chris not only for being speaker that evening but also for his generous donation of the auction funds (totalling \$179) to the club.

February was also the AGM and due to only one person being nominated to each of the six committee positions, the same committee was returned. I personally thank these individuals for their commitment to the MCG but for the long-term future of the group, it is to be hoped that other members will be prepared to share some of the work and responsibility in coming years.

The MCG appreciated Di Mathew's donation of a green-centered peach for the February raffle, which was won by Ray Begg.

Thanks to a kind donation from Sakkie Nel, the treasurer of the South-African based Clivia Society, the MCG library now has a copy of the very informative newsletter (Vol 19, no.2) on peach-flowering Clivia. See Julie at the meeting if you would like to borrow this copy. All back copies of the Clivia Society yearbooks are on order and we hope that they will arrive soon.

A committee meeting was held on 11 March and finalisation of the remaining 2011 activities took place. We especially look forward to the CLIVIA EXPO on 24 September and in preparation for this, a Workshop on preparing plants for display will feature in June in place of our regular meeting; same time, same place, with more details will follow in the next newsletter.

Also in anticipation of the CLIVIA EXPO, those who could produce or else help arrange clivia-related items to be sold on the day are invited to pass on their ideas and/or to start preparation. In the past I have seen splendid gift cards, postcards, clothing (eg caps and tea shirts), calendars and other items available at Clivia shows which have been attractive not only to Clivia enthusiasts themselves but to members of the public as well.

The MCG's Trading Table guidelines have been updated to accommodate seed sales from interstate or from other sellers who are unable to attend meetings. A copy is attached to this newsletter. Sellers are invited to contact George Simmler, the Trading Table manager, if they wish to take advantage of this service. Members are also reminded that the Trading Table has been set up for them, so do bring along to sell (10% to the club) anything you can spare. Alternatively, if you are after any special seed or plant, pass on your request and someone may be able to assist.

Thanks to the suggestion by a member, the committee is now in the process of preparing a Clivia package which can be used by anyone who volunteers to speak on Clivia at another garden club, if they wish to utilize it. It will contain a list of possible topics, some posters, MCG membership forms and invitations to CLIVIA EXPO.

The November social evening, which has now been held over three successive years, is attracting slightly less members each year, so the committee believes that it may be time to rethink the nature of this function. If you have any good ideas please do let us know as a decision about that evening will need to be made in the coming months.

The longer I grow Clivia the more I am convinced that after position, the most important things are potting mix, watering and fertilization. I thus hope to learn a lot regarding the latter topic from Chloe Thomson, a representative of the company Neutrog, at our meeting on 15 April. Members are most welcome to bring along other gardening friends that evening.

At the time of writing this newsletter introduction, we have heard of the massive earthquake and tsunami hitting a large area of north eastern Japan. To our knowledge, none of our Clivia associates (including our members, Shige Sasaki and Hiroshi Mitsuhashi) have been directly affected, but it goes without saying that the damage to a huge number of people has been colossal.

Helen Marriott

Longwood Clivia NACS Show & Symposium, Philadelphia March 2011.

Some photographs from the Longwood Clivia NACS Show & Symposium, Courtesy of Malcom Shrimplin





Editor's Message

We would love to hear from you!

We need and welcome your input. Please write to us with any clivia experiences, photos, articles, or questions.

This is your newsletter, and it needs your participation to reflect your questions and interests.

This newsletter I am delighted to present the transcript of a presentation given to the club by Chris Christou at our February meeting. It was a lively and informative evening, greatly enjoyed by all who attended. There is also the first of a series of short articles by Eddie Pang about Chinese clivias.

Could everyone please also note the guidelines pertaining to the Trading Table.

Autumn in the Garden.

Autumn also continues to be cooler and wetter than previous years, and the weather is now starting to cool down. The mealybug is still with us, so keep a watchful eye on your plants – they tend to congregate deep within the leaf margins.

Continue feeding your plants with your fertilizer of choice, take care not to over-water now that the heat has passed. Remember to water early in the day to prevent fungal problems.

FEATURE FLOWER



A beautiful interspecific owned by a member of the MCG.



PMM Pine Mountain Nursery

For quality clivias for the discerning buyer and collector, from seed to advanced plants, visit www.pinemountainnursery.com.au

FROM THE TRADING TABLE

If you have any spare seeds, seedlings or plants that you would like to sell, just bring them to the meeting so I can try to sell them for you. Seeds can be in lots of 5 in small bags or any other way you like, but these must be labelled. Seedlings and plants need to be labelled as well. If you don't have a TT-form, I will have plenty of spares on the night.

George



The Trading Table run by George, with an array of clivias for sale.

CLASSIFIEDS

2 Year old *C.miniata* seedlings for sale. Seeds are from NZ and South Africa. Interested people please email me - george-oz@hotmail.com

Events & Contacts

NEXT MEETING

Friday 15th April 2011
7.30 pm

Uniting Church,
Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Rd,
Burwood

Neutrog – Organic Fertiliser representative.

Repotting.

17 June 2011 Workshop – Displaying Plants

19 August 2011 - Ken Russell – Clivia

24 September 2011 10am – 4pm – CLIVIA EXPO

21 October 2011 – Dermot Molloy – Clivia in Melbourne Botanic Gardens

18 November 2011 – End of Year Function to be decided.

CONTACTS

Helen Marriott – 97964365
hmarriott@ozemail.com.au

Di Mathews – 98531566
akdesign@bigpond.net.au

Erika Van Der Spuy- 95610487
evanderspuy@rdns.com.au

Rae Begg

George Simmler - 9761 3790
george-oz@hotmail.com

Brenda Girdlestone - 9390 7073
macstone@hotmail.net.au

Melbourne Clivia Group Phone Number – 0410 929 510

Please let us know if you have any other news or items of interest to share. Deadline for next issue – 15 May 2011

OUR ADDRESS
Melbourne Clivia Group Inc.
PO Box 811,
Lilydale, VIC 3140

www.melbournecliviagroup.org.au
secretary@melbournecliviagroup.org.au



The Melbourne Clivia group was absolutely delighted and also very fortunate to enjoy the company of Chris Christou in February, at their first meeting for 2011. Chris was kind enough to travel across town from Werribee to give a presentation to the lucky members who attended on February 18, and this is an overview of the talk that he gave.

The nature of his presentation was not in any strict order, and this article seeks to give a reflection of the talk that Chris gave, not necessarily in any particular order.

Not only did the members listen to a fascinating presentation given by an experienced grower, but they were also the lucky participants in an impromptu auction run by Chris at the conclusion of his talk, where he sold several of his plants and donated the proceeds to the club.

Chris began by introducing himself, and explained that he is a commercial grower, producing both general plants, succulents, and clivias.

In recent years he has grown 50,000 clivias per year, and is now growing approximately 100,000 clivias annually.

These are grown for commercial use, to sell on to nurseries and garden centres, and are of a mainstream garden variety.

In the last five years, there has been a push towards new colours in clivias, and this is largely due to more interest in colour from the clivia-buying public, resulting in more research and development in trying to isolate and establish new colours.

There are some growers who will just give plants a name, with no mention of colour on their labels.

The perception of colour is difficult to establish – if you show a plant to 10 different people, you are likely to get 10 different responses and interpretations of the colour of the flower.

Chris has made it a practice to grow everything to flowering stage prior to sale – it is a matter of sound ethics – people know exactly what they are buying.

He spoke about peach clivias – is now selling peaches bred by Keith Hammett that have been hand selected.

He is always trialling colours, and accepts there are different approaches to this – there is a need to isolate colours, and to practice this from an ethical standpoint.

Chris is a grower, and says he is not a breeder – the two aims are separate, although he is concerned to try and introduce new colours and styles to the market.

He needs to produce at least 1000 plants of each type and needs a consistent supply of seeds to do this. He sources his seeds from several places – some come from collectors who are also breeders, and he works with about four breeders/collectors.

He derives enormous satisfaction working with these breeders, and makes it a practice to give the breeder the first pick of the batch of a particular cross when it flowers.

Chris can grow seeds to flowering in 3 years with good cultural practices.

He has 30,000 peach X yellow clivias at the moment.

He regards the purity of colour as very important.



Chris also has another side of him that is a collector, in addition to his role as a producer, and he firmly believes that we should enjoy what we have, and have fun with them.

In his words “imagine if everyone loved plants as much as we did - imagine how many friends we'd have in the world.”

Chris produces his clivias in igloos, and has found through experience that with 75% shadecloth the clivias grow better. He finds 50% shadecloth harsher and not as good.

He tries, as much as possible, to re-create nature in his production methods.

He uses a premium potting mix, but will 'open' it up a bit, with either 14mm bark and/or coarse sand. He prefers to water when it suits him, so that he has full control of the plants.

Chris lives and grows his plants in a rain-shadow, and he is of the belief that if he has full control of watering, he can have flowering in three years.

His plants are grown on the ground, sitting on gravel, which helps to create some humidity.

The igloos are well-ventilated, with roof vents as well, to promote and maximise air-flow. This good ventilation is also important, as by necessity, his plants are “jammed together”. To counteract any problems associated with this, fungicides, such as Mancozeb, are used.

Plants are potted up every six months, and are liquid fertilised.

He requires his plants to flower in order to market them.

Chris propagates his seeds using a seed-raising mix in square pots, then lightly covers them with sphagnum moss to create their own microclimate and retain some humidity. He will sow 30 seeds per pot.



Chris maintains that night temperatures are important for flowering. It is the fluctuations in the night temperature that triggers flowering in most plants.

Chris is a commercial grower, which means he is out in the public arena – it is important that he can supply the plants required. It is not so much the price, but the ability to supply that is important.

His plants go to independent garden centres – he does not supply chainstores or supermarkets. Nurseries that stock his plants include Beasley's Nursery, Warrandyte, the Greenery, and Poyntons Nursery.

There is a market for interspecific plants, Chris believes, and the marketplace needs to be educated. First, however, there needs to be more “wow” factor in interspecifics, and there is more work to be done in this area.

Chris sources his seeds from many areas and growers – Europe, the US, Australia, China, to name a few, however, he prefers not to buy seeds from South Africa.

His view is that every seed is unique, and will do what it wants to do.

Breeding is full of unknowns – what is fact? What's not fact?

His ultimate aim is to see clivias in every garden – to popularize this fabulous plant to that everyone can enjoy not only its hardiness and drought tolerance, but also its extraordinary beauty.



In the last 5 years, the interest/demand in non-orange Clivia miniata has been growing rapidly within the Chinese Clivia community! Thanks to the few pioneers (breeders) who have been working persistently against the main stream for the last 20 years. At present, we can enjoy Chinese Clivia hybrids in some new flower colors as well as the well established leaf quality and shape.

I will show some of these precious Clivias to our members with photos of Mr. He Shi Zhong's plants. These include his broad leaf yellow blush Darumas (Little Swan, Golden Sparrow, White Horse Prince & Golden Phoenix), F1 of broad leaf yellow blush Darumas crosses, 'Bai Jin Long' - picotee hybrid, 'Cai Xia' - bicolor hybrid and **genuine yellow 'You Jiang' hybrid** (yellow flowering Painter hybrid). I have to post them separately due to the size limitation.



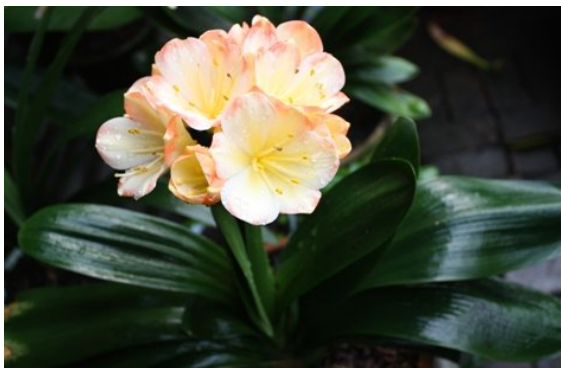
I will start with the photos of the No.1 and No. 2 offsets of Little Swan. The No. 1 offset is with me in my Melbourne greenhouse & No. 2 is kept by Mr. He.

The leaf width of offset #1 is 110 - 120mm. (Left)



Below photos are the last season bloom of Mr. He's Cai Xia which is a bicolor hybrid. Apart from the pinky orange picotee like pattern, the flowers opened up to a very wide angle.

Mr. He has some F1 of [Cai Xia X Little Swan] which should flower during this season. However, there is no past record or evidence which can confirm this bicolor inheritance. That's the reason why Mr. He never released any of his Cai Xia crosses to the public.



Some of the florets of Cai Xia were pollinated with Little Swan's pollen for the consideration of producing filial generation with improvement in the leaf width and painted face appearance. The balance were pollinated with pollen from Mr. He's green throat yellow 'You Jiang' for the consideration of producing filial generation with Painter hybrid's protruding veins, improvement in the leaf width, brightness and the overall leaf texture.

The ripe berries of Cai Xia are creamy yellow color with light blush color at the tip



MCG Trading Table Guidelines

1. A trading table will be set up at meetings for members wishing to buy or sell clivia plants, seedlings, seeds or pollen, thereby facilitating access to materials difficult to obtain elsewhere.
2. The sales will take place at the end of the main meeting component, from around 9:15 during supper time. Cash only will be accepted.
3. The items for sale may be brought in and placed on the two tables in the corner at the front prior to 7:30 or else kept outside and brought inside when the trading table starts.
4. In 2011 the trading table will be managed by MCG's Trading Table Manager, George Simmler. Those selling stock are expected to help George and be available to give advice to potential buyers when the stock is being sold.
5. Any seller who wishes to bring items for sale to a meeting should submit the Trading Table form to the Manager, either in advance or on the night. This form will include the number of items for sale, price and plant description. Alternatively, this information can be telephoned to the Manager by those without internet access, but the form must then be completed upon arrival.
6. Sellers are requested to label all materials for sale with the correct botanical names, where known. The materials should also be free of pests and diseases.
7. In accordance with normal garden club procedures, a commission of 10% will be payable on each item sold on that occasion; the balance of the sales will be paid to the seller on the night. Unsold items should be claimed by the sellers.
8. The product being sold or exchanged is the responsibility of the seller, and is in no way the responsibility of the MCG or committee.
9. Since clivia are highly variable, it is important for buyers to understand the principle of "buyer beware".
10. Sales will only be available at the meetings.
11. Sellers who will not be present at the meetings should contact George Simmler in advance and follow the guidelines outlined here for the trading table. Unsold items will be returned at the seller's expense.
12. If sellers do not want to go through the trading table, instead they can place an advertisement in the newsletter. Members may submit up to 5 lines free of charge in the classified section, with a boxed ad costing \$5 per issue and \$20 for advertising in the 6 annual issues. Members can then contact the sellers directly. Note that newsletters are issued bimonthly.

13. It is important that we keep the venue clean and all sellers are expected to assist in this regard and to thoroughly clean up at the end of the night. A ban of 6 to 12 months may be placed on a seller who does not abide by this rule. In the worst case, we may have to discontinue the Trading Table if this condition is not adhered to strictly by all.
14. Those members who wish to utilise this opportunity to sell are also expected to take part in other club activities, eg bringing a plant for display, contributing a substantial plant for the raffle and/or participating in some of the public events of MCG.
15. Donations of items for sale will be gratefully accepted.



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 18 February 2011

Venue	Uniting Church, Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Roads, Burwood
Meeting commence	7:35 pm
Committee	Helen Marriott, Erika van der Spuy, Rae Begg, George Simmler, Brenda Girdlestone, Diane Mathews
Apologies	Ray Argent Yvonne Hargreaves Ross Simmonds
Welcome	Helen Marriott Welcomed all the members as well as new members of the MCG and all visitors.
Minutes of Previous AGM	Accepted by : George Simmler Seconded by : Lynn Rawson
President report	Accepted by : Brenda Girdlestone Seconded by : Rae Begg
Secretary report	Accepted by : Julie Milligan Seconded by : Pam Dryden
Treasurer report	Treasurer report Opening Balance (Bank) \$ 2 410.94 • Income – Memberships/Raffle/TT Membership/Donations \$ 2 112.20 • Total Expenses/Payment \$ 1 610.03 • Balance (including petty cash) \$ 2 912.81 Accepted by : Lynn Rawson Seconded by : Ray Begg
Election of office bearer	The President thanked all the committee members for their time and effort over the last year assisting the MCG. Nominations / proxy procedure We have received the following nominations. President : Helen Marriott Vice President : Diane Mathews Secretary : Erika van der Spuy Treasurer : Rae Begg Committee members : George Simmler Brenda Girdlestone All were thus elected.

	<p>We would like to have new faces to generate new ideas in the next committee.</p>
Introduction/Announcement	<p>Donation to Library</p> <p>Received a copy of a newsletter on peaches from the Treasurer of the Clivia Society, Sakkie Nel, who donated it to MCG.</p> <p>Clivia Society Yearbooks The MCG has also ordered the previous year books from the Clivia Society. Have not received the books yet.</p> <p>Neutrog Speaker The next speaker is from Neutrog, who will bring a small gift for every attendee. Could also put your name on e-mail list to gain their club. The company also published Jane Edmondson's book 'From the ground up', which normally retails for \$59-95. They are offering to sell to club members at \$59-95 and donate \$15-00 to the club. The committee is happy to sell it at the reduced price of \$45.00. Must receive the book orders not later than 31 March 2011.</p> <p>Garden Clubs talks Received one invitation to date We are often invited to other garden clubs to provide a talk on Clivias. We normally receive the invitations to present a talk well in advance. We are looking for members who are prepared to give such talks. Can you please provide your name to Erika, and mention any preference for the content of what you could cover.</p>
Main Presentation	<p>Chris Christou : Growing Clivia commercially</p> <p>Chris is a commercial grower of plants. Growing Clivias for 20 years. Production of Clivias is up to 100 000 plants a year.</p>
Raffle	<p>Plant donated by Diane Mathews is a Green centre peach.</p> <p>Raffle won by : Rae Begg</p> <p>Chris Christou donated 4 plants to MCG which he proceeded to auction, raising \$179 for the club. We thank Chris for his generosity.</p>
Short topic	<p>Watering – Due to the interest in the main presentation this was not covered during the meeting.</p>
Display table	<p>Various plants were on the display table. Chris also discussed the history of his plants.</p>
Questions and Answers	<p>Many questions were asked during Chris Christou's session.</p>
Next Meeting	<p>Our next meeting will be the 15 April 2011.</p>
Trading table & Supper	<p>Various plants were available to buy.</p>

END