



## Message from the President

The MCG can be proud of its first CLIVIA EXPO held on 24 September. So many individuals contributed to its success. Attendance alone was an important contribution but in addition, many members assisted in the planning, preparation and implementation of the day. It seems unfair to single out all those individual members who helped so I will only mention the regular committee members as well as Lynn Rawson and Vu Dang who came to make up the CLIVIA EXPO committee. In addition, many others made valuable contributions in the lead up, for the set-up on the Friday evening as well as on the day itself. Most important of all however, was the display of plants (totalling 106), flower umbels and individual flowers, so we sincerely thank all those members who brought these. Although we also organised other activities (including walking tours, seed sowing, pollination, dividing plants, and plant and seed sales), I'm sure that it was the excellent display which was the central attraction of the day. Do have a look at George Simmler's photos included in our gallery (<http://www.melbournecliviagroup.org.au/gallery.html>). We are now evaluating this event and welcome your feedback (while memories are still fresh) about improvements or other suggestions for 2012.

Our particular congratulations go to Brenda Girdlestone, whose plant of 'Apricot Queen' (a hybrid of David Banks) was voted the most popular plant in the Peoples' Choice competition at CLIVIA EXPO. A total of 181 nominations were made in this competition but we are sure that not everyone lodged one, suggesting that our visitors on the day far exceeded this figure. Five visitors that day who nominated the winning plant received either free 2012 membership or else a selection of special seeds. Six Clivia plants or seedlings (from Brenda, Ray Perks and myself), or items from Sage Horticultural, which was a sponsor of our event, were also offered in the raffle, drawn three times during the day.

Our August meeting now seems a long time ago but we were very fortunate to welcome Ken Russell from NSW as the main speaker. Ken outlined some of his growing experiences and also discussed the importance of glucose and calcium for Clivia, amongst other topics. Ken's impressive poster of Clivia flowers and his seedling sales were popular that evening. We are indebted to Mark Cant for donating an impressive 'Cant Europeach' for our raffle - which was won by a visitor - and to Ken for his generous donation of three important seedling crosses (won by Yvonne, Erika and Steve). We also received generous donations of berries or seed from Graham Osborne, Eddie Pang and Jeanne Marten. It was an excellent evening and we thank all those who helped add a sparkle to the night.

Four of us (Brenda, George, Judy and I) manned a MCG table at the Pakenham Garden Expo at the beginning of September. The free berries seemed to be our main attraction and we hope that at least some of the recipients do actually grow the seed.

We are pleased that our next meeting on 21 October will be led by Dermot Molloy whose topic is Clivia in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. We also look forward to hearing about interstate Clivia shows and, time permitting, some discussion on pollination.

Friday meeting dates (unless otherwise indicated) for the MCG at 7:30 in our regular Uniting Church venue, Burwood East, in 2012 are as follows: 17 February, 20 April, 15 June, 20 July, 17 August, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September (all day) and 19<sup>th</sup> October. Note that we have added an extra meeting in July so that we have the opportunity to see a wider range of interspecifics.

Our membership details for 2012 are elsewhere in this newsletter. Those who wish to increase their knowledge of Clivia further are strongly recommended to join the South-African based Clivia Society. In recent years, membership has been \$35 per annum. The Australian contact person for the Clivia Society is Ken Smith (mobile 0415 181 449 or leave message; email to [cliviasmith@idx.com.au](mailto:cliviasmith@idx.com.au)).

I look forward to seeing new and old members at our next meeting and trust that we will be able to mount a mini display of good plants once again.

Helen Marriott



## Announcements

### Mini Competition

Our October meeting will include another of our mini competitions. It will be open to all members, and we urge everyone to participate. This competition is in addition to our normal display table, and will enable members who are unable to bring in display plants the opportunity to become more involved in the night's activities.

The category for the night is -  
Clivia Seedling: Variegated – from seed grown 2010 /11.

The seedling can be in a single or community pot, so have a look through your seedlings and bring along your seedlings. Let's see how many we can assemble, and the variety of variegation found.

### November Get-together

For our end of the year gathering this year we are trying something a little different. John and I are opening our house and garden on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011.

Members and partners are welcome to come along and spend a few hours wondering around our garden, meeting and socializing with others, in a relaxed atmosphere.

From 11.00am onwards, at: 8 MacDonnell Crt,  
Taylors Lakes, 3038.  
Mel ref. map 3 - J11

Bring your lunch; we have a BBQ available for anyone who wishes to use it. Tea and Coffee will be supplied, any other beverages you will need to bring with you. We do ask if you could bring with you a cup for tea/coffee, chairs – we do have some.

This is intended to be a very informal gathering, and although there probably will be no clivia in flower at this time of the year, it will give members the opportunity to see how we grow our plants. You may be able to take away some ideas to think about or even incorporate parts into your own system of growing. It will be a good opportunity for our partners to meet other partners, who I'm sure, will find many things to talk about, not the least what life is like living with our obsessions.

So we can get some idea of numbers can you please let me know if you are intending to attend before the 18<sup>th</sup> November by either Phone 03 9390 7073 or email [macstone@hotmail.net.au](mailto:macstone@hotmail.net.au).

We look forward to meeting many members.

Brenda Girdlestone



## 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.

Memberships Now Due for 2012!

Single - \$15 (\$20 if requiring a printed copy of the newsletter)  
Each additional family member - \$10

## FEATURE FLOWER



The beautiful People's Choice "Apricot Queen" owned by Brenda Girdlestone.

**PMM Pine Mountain Nursery**



For quality clivias for the discerning buyer and collector, from seed to advanced plants, visit [www.pinemountainnursery.com.au](http://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.

## Events & Contacts

### NEXT MEETING

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011  
7.30 pm  
Uniting Church,  
Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Rd,  
Burwood

Dermot Molloy – Clivia in Melbourne Botanic gardens.

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

November End-of Year Night - See announcements.

### COMMITTEE

- Helen Marriott  
- President
- Di Mathews  
- Vice-president
- Erika Van Der Spuy  
-Secretary
- Rae Begg  
- Treasurer
- George Simmler  
- Committee member
- Brenda Girdlestone  
- Committee member

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 November 2011

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<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Melbourne-Clivia-Group-Inc/130556943692834>



Ken Russell

Yvonne Hargreaves

Born in Dungog, N.S.W., Ken Russell has been a passionate plant lover and grower all his life. He comes from a nursery background and his love of growing plants was fostered by his Mum who was a great gardener.

At the age of 14 he was taking out Blue Ribbon prizes for his Carnations and doing the Dahlia Show circuit.

The Russell family had moved from the country to be closer to the city for the education opportunities but when Ken's Dad's health began to fail in the city air they returned to Dungog.

Leaving school at around 14 Ken trained as a butter maker and became Manager of the Dungog Butter factory at just barely 20.

He became interested in growing orchids at around 18 and this rapidly developed into a lifelong passion. Alongside his full time work as Manager of the Dungog Butter Factory "Orchid Glen Nursery" was begun, in a climate that was ideal for growing many types of orchids.



Marrying his fiancé Noelene, they settled into family life together and have been great mates ever since. Married to Noelene for over 50 years now, they have a family of three, two daughters and a son.

Noelene has been stalwart partner and support for Ken in his many endeavours. Ken's interest in local and interstate Orchid Shows became an integral part of the family life style.

As well as his, family, work and the nursery Ken was –and continues to be– a great community man. Involved in many sports; Tennis, Cricket, Footy and Lawn Bowls--excelling in them all.

A great club man he assisted and participated in many areas and many ways.

After many years with the Butter factory an opportunity for change presented itself and Ken took up full time work for a large Agricultural Chemical company –where he stayed for 25 years.

This job entailed a great deal of time on the road, interstate and overseas and Ken spent a lot of time away from the Orchid Nursery.

During his absences Noelene continued with and cared for the orchid nursery and family.

Noelene has answered countless thousands of calls from folks looking for Ken and is an excellent message taker.

She had to develop this skill as Ken was a great traveller –heading off on orchid hunting expeditions or fishing trips on a regular basis.

They have shared a lot of interstate trips away together and done quite a bit of overseas travelling—mostly to do with orchids, but in more recent years it has become more and more to do with Clivias

When Ken retired from his job in 1994 he was able to put a lot more time into the Orchid Nursery and work more on the relatively new interest in growing Clivias.

These Clivias were some given to Ken by Bill Morris in approximately 1990.

His passion for Clivia skyrocketed-- with the avid encouragement of Mr Morris

They have worked, both together—and separately --on various ideas and methods ever since



They continue to share ideas and observations, pollens and plants, creating more and more beautiful Clivias and developing ideas on good growing practices.

Bill Morris is still very regular visitor to Ken's shade houses at Dungog.

Through a radio broadcast out of Coffs Harbour about 15-16 years ago, where Ken was a guest speaker, he met the late George Hellen, also a great 'orchid man' and a Clivia grower. They quickly became fast friends and many trips were made between Dungog and Aratula. George passed away in 2002 and is still sadly missed by all who knew him. His work is remembered by many lovely cultivars now grown from his hybridising.

A self effacing person Ken has been reluctant to promote himself as a Clivia breeder but he has finally been persuaded to name and register at least one of his lovely plants.

This is "RAINBOW MAGIC" This plant has been on the display table at the MCG meetings a couple of times and has drawn many admiring comments.

Always willing to share information and growing practice ideas with Clivia lovers Ken especially enjoys helping new comers to the world of Clivia to get a grasp on growing them well.

He is generous to a fault, as the contents of our Raffle Table at the last meeting of the Melbourne Clivia Group would attest.

Ken has no particular favourite amongst the Clivia -like many of us -he loves them all.

He has no adversity to chemicals but tries to dodge them where possible.

One of the very best methods to eradicate the pesky Mealy Bug is the use of a 'tea' made from coffee grounds. (see earlier issue of the MCG Newsletter)

Ken had been using this idea for some time and found it to be highly effective—inexpensive and environmentally beneficial.

When Ken spoke at the August meeting of the Melbourne Clivia group he mentioned the importance of the appropriate pH in our pots and how we can make sure that it is correct for optimum growth and plant development and health.

Firstly he suggested we invest in new pH testing kit from a local nursery -or Bunning's have them for around \$16.00

The "balancing feed" mixture is

1 litre of sand

1 litre of Blood and Bone powder

1 litre of Dolomite

1 litre small pelletised slow release fertilisers, for example: Nutricote or Osmocote.

1 litre of Calcium carbonate powder

This one can be a tad hard to get hold of—it is a form of lime that is 99.9% accessible and by far the better product if you can obtain it BUT if not, use garden lime as well as the Dolomite

Mix well and use at the rate of one teaspoon - sprinkle on the surface of a large 8-10" pot, a half teaspoon on smaller pots and a pinch on the tops of tubes

Water in well.

This makes up quite a bit of the mixture -so seal unused portion in a lidded container and test again a few months later to see how the pH is

By keeping the pH balance at around 6.5-7 we give our plants the best opportunity to take up and utilise the nutrients we are giving them.

(I came home and did what Ken suggested and found almost every pot to be around 5.0 —naturally a mix of Ken's "balancing feed" was made up and spread around a.s.a.p.)

Something else Ken brought to our attention is the benefits of giving our plants glucose in one or more of its many forms

Yes—"sugar"—although actual sugar is not the top of Ken's list. He prefers honey or molasses.

Well diluted, and watered into the pots he feels it is of immense value to the health and vigour of the plants, most especially at flowering and pollinating times.

A day or two prior to the flowers being pollinated, a teaspoon of honey dissolved into two litres of water –or a teaspoon of sugar into a litre of water can be watered around the base of the plant you plan to pollinate. This ensures the plant has sufficient nutrient within it to 'take' the pollen much better—resulting in a better seeds rate.

Small seedlings also benefit from a foliar feeding of weak molasses of honey water—and ants are not a problem when using this.

Another use for the honey is to smear it around the base of a plant that you are keen to have send offsets—it has been known to help initiate new growths—worth a try, eh?

To help control the dreaded rot in our Clivias Ken recommends FOSFORIC ACID, which may be available from produce stores and nurseries. It is purchased in liquid form and is put out by both HORTICO and YATES

The YATES one is called ANTI ROT and is beneficial in preventing basal and or collar rot. When used at the rate of ½ mil per litre it can be used as a foliar spray and on the potting medium's surface.

ECO OIL is another product that Ken has found very useful in keeping his plants healthy and clean.

Once again used at the rate of 1 mil per 1 litre is can help as a miticide and pesticide.

(I think this product which is made from Neem Oil is available at Bunning's Stores.)

Much to his delight Ken has only recently built a large new secure shade house to contain some of the many excellent plants he has bred himself and or collected and been gifted from other top growers.



Lisa Fox and I made the journey to Toowoomba again this year to participate in their annual Carnival of Flowers. Toowoomba turned on perfect weather for us for the duration of our stay, with cloudless blue skies and balmy temperatures in the mid-20's. Toowoomba seems to have done an amazing job cleaning up after their catastrophic floods early this year, and to the visitor's eye, there seemed to be no sign of the havoc and heartbreak that ensued following that terrible day.

The Toowoomba Clivia Society had their annual show at the Tafe building, and there were some wonderful plants on display. We saw many beautiful creams, oranges, reds and bronzes, Esmond Jones, Jelena, as well as the Anderson Peach progeny in all their glory. The Toowoomba people are very welcoming to visitors, and we again met Ian and Greg Anderson, Kevin and Coral Larsen, Huxley and Lyn Althous, and Brian and Merle Stevens.



The famous Esmond Jones clivia

We were also very fortunate to make the acquaintance of Bill Morris, the breeder of the famed Tango plant. We had a very long talk with Bill, who was by profession a biochemist, and because of this, brings a very scientific approach to the whole subject of colour breeding. He is of the view that peach clivias are due to a "colour leakage", that overlays the yellow petal. He has examined these flowers under the microscope to ascertain the different colours of the cell layers, and said there is both a red layer as well as an orange layer of cells. He also said, when asked about Tango, that he really can't remember how it was bred, despite the theories about its background.

We also visited Jeanne Marten's Clivia Show at the Wilsonton Shopping Centre in Toowoomba. Jeanne and Lionel have been holding their shows for some years now, and their display this year was magnificent. We again had the pleasure of seeing Esmond Jones, Vannery Imam, beautiful bronzes, creams, peaches and deep oranges. The

plants on display were bursting with health and had huge flowerheads on long flower stalks above the deep green foliage. The proceeds from this show have always been given to charity, and this year the money was donated to the Highfields Volunteer Ambulance Service.

Over the years, Jeanne and Lionel have raised many thousands of dollars for charity, and keep none of the proceeds for themselves – a huge effort for them, considering that their show runs for ten days. They do it with the assistance of a few trusted friends who willingly give their time.

We visited their show twice, and just after we had left the second time, Tino Ferero, the well-known breeder from South Africa arrived, so we were very disappointed to miss meeting him.

We also made a brief visit to John and Gail Craigie of Pine Mountain Nursery on our return to Brisbane. John and Gail had their house virtually washed away when the water from the Wivenhoe Dam flooded the Brisbane River near their house and nursery. The main shadehouse of plants and seedlings survived the onslaught of water, and they are now back living in their completely refurbished house, and the nursery appears to be thriving once again.

They had a wonderful display of clivias there, and some very interesting variegates as well.

It was a most enjoyable visit, and we would encourage anyone with the time to make the trip, and enjoy the hospitality of our northern friends.



Jeanne Marten's display





## CLIVIA EXPO 2011

The Melbourne Clivia Group held their first Expo on 24<sup>th</sup> September and there have been positive reports received from around the world, especially since George Simmler's wonderful photos went online.

The Expo was a huge success, and it attracted a large number of the general public to come and see the magnificent plants which were on display. Data compiled by Lynn Rawson regarding people's sources of information re-Expo.



Source	Number of instances
Age	53
3AW	15
Word of mouth - unspecified	15
Website	14
Newspaper (unspecified)	10
From MCG Member	9
RHSV flyer	9
Is MCG member	8
Radio - unspecified	4
Advertising	3
Orchid show	3
Pakenham Flower show	3
Don Burke	2
Ferny Creek Hort Society Spring Show	2
Macedon Plant show	2
Nursery ad	2
Beaconsfield Baptist Church	1
Croydon Radio	1
Emerald Garden Club	1
Garden Club at Bunnings Oakleigh	1
Leader Newspaper	1
Newsletter	1
Post Office Nursery Woodend	1

Radio 1238 DB	1
Sign - unspecified	1
Sign at Greensborough Railway Station	1
TCS	1
Wife	1
Wife made me	1