



Message from the President

At the first meeting of the year on 17 February we welcomed Chris Christou back to our meeting when he spoke on breeding Clivia. As usual, Chris brought along a splendid selection of plants for display, two of which he generously donated to the MCG for auction and a few others he later sold. Just after the last newsletter was finalized and was waiting to be despatched to members, news was received of the death of Kevin Walters, a pioneer breeder of Clivia in Australia, who also supported early collectors and growers of the genus in other countries. Many people have Kevin Walters's material, obtained either directly or indirectly. An akebono hybrid of his, 'Florence Cornford', was on display at the February meeting and a seedling of his cross of Akebono x 'Florence Cornford' was offered in the raffle and won by Judi Simmler. (The second raffle of a mature plant was won by one of our new members.)

The February meeting was the AGM and office bearers' reports are attached here with the minutes. Most of the outgoing committee members were renominated and thus the 2012 committee is as follows: Helen Marriott (president), Di Mathews (vice-president), Erika van der Spuy (secretary), Rae Begg (treasurer), and Brenda Girdlestone and Vu Dang as ordinary members. We thank George Simmler for his work on the committee in past years, but he assures us that he will continue to assist the MCG in various ways. At the same time we welcome Vu Dang to the committee and again look forward to his contribution to the 2012 CLIVIA EXPO in particular. Most of the office holders have been working voluntarily since the inception of the group, and I am sure that most will welcome a change-over in the near future. Nevertheless, there are numerous functions to fulfil outside the work of the committee and thus we appreciate the assistance of a variety of members to carry out these additional tasks.

At a committee meeting on the 23rd March, we engaged in a lot of productive planning for the year, including the commencement of some new initiatives. From our April meeting, we will begin a mentoring system whereby a group of existing members will mentor new members, making them welcome at meetings and advising them on any Clivia queries they have, and so on. If you would like to participate in this scheme, please do let me know. For the benefit of our newer members, but also often of interest to others as well, we will also revive the shorter segment which we used to incorporate into our meetings which deals briefly with the most basic topics relating to the cultivation of Clivia. Several other initiatives are also being planned and will be outlined at the April meeting.

Following the advice received at the last meeting, the committee has commenced building up a list of potential speakers from outside the group (local as well as interstate) who could address future meetings. If you are aware of a speaker whom you think would be suitable to invite to an MCG meeting, please do inform a committee member. We will also set aside some budget to assist with the expenses of these individuals.

This year the MCG has received more invitations than in previous years to provide speakers for other garden clubs. In most cases, only a very basic introduction to Clivia and Clivia growing is needed, and thus we hope that more members will help us out by volunteering to speak at one of these meetings. Erika will gladly add you to our volunteer list.



Melbourne Clivia Group Inc.

The MCG tries to support members through various functions, including the operation of a small library and Trading Table at the meetings, as well as produce a bi-monthly newsletter. From now on, copies of all the previous newsletter issues will be placed in our library and available for loan from Haydn Lomas. Lynn Rawson will take charge of the Trading Table this year, so do see her if you have any special requests. The newsletter, edited by Di, is another main activity of the group, and we would like to see more members making a contribution to it. Around the time of distribution of this current newsletter, a group of members will visit the nursery of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. I do hope that one or two participants will write up their tour for the next newsletter.

The topic "What flowers when?" will be led by Erika at the next meeting on 20 April. Those who grow non-minata, pendulous Clivia as well as interspecifics will be aware that it is possible to have flowers for the whole year, if not for most of it. Do come to the meeting and learn about the different flowering times for various kind of Clivia. This meeting will be timely followed by a workshop on interspecifics in June when we hope that many members will display some of the interspecifics they grow. All of us have experienced problems in growing Clivia or else we have learned various ideas from others. Entitled "Tips and Tricks, the July meeting will enable members to share their knowledge with others in the group. This will surely be an important meeting that should not be missed.

We apologize for the lack of hot water at the February meeting, but we have been assured that everything will be functioning normally from now on. Please do bring any flowering or even non-flowering plants for display at the April meeting.

Helen Marriott

New Zealand Clivia Tour - 2012

In 2008 the New Zealand Clivia Club hosted a very successful 'Clivia Tour' over 10 days taking in some beautiful parts of our North Island and visiting many growers here. This year it is planned to host a much shorter mini-tour over just 4 days which will be built around the Clivia Show in Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, on Sunday 7th October and will focus on clivia and visits to growers and clivia gardens in the Auckland through to Tauranga area on other days.

The tour will be organised and hosted by committee member Tony Barnes who is away overseas until the end of April. The tour will only be able to accommodate a limited number and at this stage we are inviting expressions of interest.

Some overseas visitors may wish to use the tour as the starting point of a more extended visit to the Land of the Long White Cloud.

Kindly confirm your interest to Jocelyn Day jocelyn.day@xtra.co.nz, indicating the type of accommodation you would prefer. Jocelyn is preparing a list of interested persons on a first-come first-served basis for Tony's return. She will acknowledge your email and the club will get in touch with you to formally register for the tour in May/June this year



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Below is an outline of the tour prepared by Tony before he left for South America. The pricing mentioned is provisional at this stage but will give you a good idea of what to expect.

Alick McLeman

Treasurer/Membership Secretary

NZ Clivia Club

clivia@xtra.co.nz

www.nzclivia.org

KIWICLIVIA 2012 5th – 8th October 2012

Here's a great opportunity to visit some of NZ's leading clivia growers and breeders, meet other clivia lovers from around the world, and see some fantastic clivia! In the ten years since the NZ Clivia Club was formed there has been a great deal of hybridization done, as well as seed imported from overseas breeders, so that the variety and range of plants to be seen in the collections and gardens of NZCC members has increased hugely in its diversity.

KiwiClivia 2012 begins with an evening meal and get together at Alpers Lodge, Newmarket, Auckland on Friday 5th October. The next day the bus takes us to spend the morning at Dr Keith Hammett's property, where the extensive plantings of habitat collected material and hybrids are fascinating and surely one of the best collections in the world. Later in the day we will visit the delightful garden of Murray and Bev Gow which features mass clivia displays, and the notable and very diverse collection of Alick and Frances McLeman.

Sunday 7th Oct sees the group heading southeast to Paeroa, and the wonderful garden and clivia collection of Rex and Dee Williams, then on to the Tauranga Clivia Show, staying at the Geyserland Hotel in Rotorua.

The return trip to Auckland on Monday includes two garden visits, and stops at the gardens of members Ian and Shirley Baldick, and Terry, Pam and Lindsay Hatch, with a farewell evening meal at Alpers Lodge again.

The cost of the tour is \$595.00 per person for double/twin share or \$835.00 p.p single room. This cost includes 4 nights accommodation (Fri – Mon), cost of bus trip, 3 evening meals, 2 midday lunches, 4 breakfasts and visits to seven clivia growers.

The Auckland Clivia Show is the following weekend, Saturday 13th Oct, but anyone participating in the tour and wanting to stay on a few days could visit other clivia lovers in the top part of the North Island, such as Barry Ferguson at Mahurangi near Warkworth, David Olsen, at Greenhithe, David Brundell at Waiuku, or even venture south into the real lush garden country of Taranaki to visit Tony Barnes and other interesting gardens.

Express your interest now by contacting Jocelyn Day at jocelyn.day@xtra.co.nz



Editor's Message

Events & Contacts

This newsletter contains the talk given to us by Chris Christou, a commercial clivia grower, who kindly spoke to the MCG at the February meeting.

There is also a re-print of the article about Kevin Walters which was printed in the newsletter about 2 years ago, but which has been reprinted for the benefit of new members who may not have known much about Kevin and his clivia breeding over many years.

Autumn Care of Clivias

Autumn also continues to be warmer and drier than previous years, and the weather is still very balmy, so ensure that your plants do not dry out too much...

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, Remember to water early in the day to prevent fungal problems.

FEATURE FLOWER



A beautiful green throat cream bred by the late Kevin Walters of Toowoomba.



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

The MCG Committee has appointed Lynn Rawson as the Trading Table Manager for 2012. A copy of the revised Trading Table Form is attached.

The committee would like to thank Lynn for agreeing to do this important job.



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

NEXT MEETING
Friday 20th April 2012
7.30 pm
Uniting Church,
Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Rd,
Burwood

What Flowers When – Group Discussion

.15 June 2012 – Interspecific Workshop
Kerrie McElroy
20 July 2012 – Potting Mixes

17 August - Workshop for CLIVIA EXPO
22 September 2012 - CLIVIA EXPO

19 October 2012 –TBC

November End of Year – TBC.

COMMITTEE

Helen Marriott

- President

Di Mathews

- Vice-president

Erika Van Der Spuy

-Secretary

Rae Begg

- Treasurer

Brenda Girdlestone

- Committee member

Vu Dang

- Committee member

Number – 0410 929 510Melbourne

Clivia Group Phone

Please let us know if you have any other news or items of interest to share.

Deadline for next issue -15 May 2012

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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 2012. Chris was kind enough to travel across town from Werribee to give a presentation to the lucky members who attended on February 17, 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.

Chris discussed clivia breeding and his thoughts on the subject, both from the point of view of a commercial grower, and also the hobbyist.

Chris believes that everyone is looking for something different, so therefore people need different formulas for different outcomes.

He suggests that different approaches are needed, and there is no such thing as being wrong.

He mentioned line breeding, which is basically the crossing of the best of siblings together to stabilize the gene, open pollination, back crossing, which is similar to line breeding, and the “pollen bomb”, which is different pollens just mixed together.



There are basically only two forms of breeding –

- Open
- Selective

In the marketplace, there is a lot of uneducated breeding happening, and there is a need for people to understand chemistry, genetics, to have some sort of scientific background, and then to formulate their own equation to get a result.

Most people just use a lucky dip approach to clivia breeding.

The biggest problem with clivias is that something special is a “one off”

Chris suggests we are not isolating the genetics, and we’re not selecting and narrowing our breeding enough.

Chris gave the example of Belgian Hybrids, which he argued used to be identical. The gene pool is now muddled, and they are all different.

Time is the biggest factor in isolating any gene or gene pool.

Clivias have a five year cycle from seed to flower, which makes time the biggest “x” in the equation.

It could take up to 15 cycles to get exactly what you are looking for – that means 15 cycles X 5years, which amounts to about 75 years to isolate the colour you are seeking.



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He asked the members “What is genetics?”

When breeding , we are picking the plants that have the characteristics that we want - that have the traits we're looking for – for example – a nice shaped flower, colour, throat, etc.

This leads us back to the mathematical equation of what we're trying to breed.

For example - suppose we are looking to breed a good red clivia.

We want – for example:

- Solid red colour
- Tulip shape
- Large flower
- Broad leaf
- Variegated leaves
- Perfume
- Vigour
- Early flower set
- Sun hardy
- Frost tolerant

The breeder must then work out the mathematical equation according to the importance of the desired characteristics.

List these in order of importance, and cross out some that are not so important.

Most breeders put the importance in the wrong place.

Breeders must breed for vigour.

The list can then be narrowed down - for example –

- Colour
- Shape
- Vigour
- Early flower set
- Perfume, etc

By doing this we can get to the place where they can be commercially reproduced, and where every plant is the same.

We try and isolate the genetics of plants that have shown all the desired traits that we have selected.

We then create a colony, but need to remember – the bigger the colony, the greater the diversity.

If you bring a new plant into the colony, you are basically starting again.

So, if you have a special plant, isolate it from the colony you are working with and keep it for later.



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The genetics are all stepping stones – we don't know the genetics of plants, however genetics have been enhanced enormously in the last 20 years, and we now have access to global genetics.

Chris gave the example of passionfruit, which is a very old plant, but there are new varieties through mutation

In nature, plant colonies are isolated.

We don't know what clivias started with – they mutate and do different things due to different conditions.

The commercial goal is to reproduce the same plant.

No seed is the same, but the aim is to get similar results with breeding commercially.

How many colonies should you have? A colony is the group of plants you have selected to breed with.

A good number is three, and then selectively breed them, choosing the best attributes and strength from your plants.

Plants, and clivias, do evolve.

The breeder has to grow to flowering stage – most breeders breed for the flower.

The breeder also wants to repeat, and randomness doesn't repeat.

Clivia breeding is an art form, and the most important thing is to enjoy it, and enjoy your plants.

The difference between the commercial grower and the enthusiast is that the commercial plants must repeat themselves.

Each person has different goals - there is no right and wrong.

Everything is basic – it depends on what you want to achieve.

As Chris said last year, and also repeated this year – “enjoy your plants.”



“Orange is the colour of exuberance and vitality, and that enlivening splash of orange in the spring garden colourscape means that old favourite *Clivia miniata* is in bloom.”

(Kevin Walters – 1987)

Kevin Walters, from Toowoomba, Australia, who was regarded by many in the clivia fraternity as one of its ‘leading lights’ , died unexpectedly at his home on January 29, 2012.

Kevin, along with Nick Primich, and a small coterie of enthusiasts, was one of the founding members of the Clivia Society, and through this, he formed lasting friendships with people from around the world.

Kevin was a pharmacist by profession, and had a keen, analytical mind, which he put to good use



with his clivia breeding. He was also very generous by nature, as the many people who were gifted plants and seeds from Kevin will readily attest.

He bred and nurtured clivias for nearly forty years, and during this time, he very closely collaborated with Jeanne Marten, his cousin, who is also from Toowoomba.

Kevin was an active and highly valued member of the Toowoomba Clivia Society, and regularly exhibited in their renowned annual Clivia show, where his plants, most notably his creams, were highly revered.

Kevin was thrilled, when two years ago, a submission that I presented to the Clivia Society in South Africa nominating him for Honorary Life Membership, was unanimously accepted.

This submission was assisted by the wholehearted support of people such as Roger Fisher, Keith Hammett of New Zealand, and also the untiring support of Jeanne Marten, who was one of Kevin’s closest confidants.

Kevin Walters quietly bred some of Australia’s best clivias for decades, producing some superb orange and yellow clivias, known for their large recurved flowers and beautifully formed spherical umbels. He also bred some stunning peaches and bronzes. One of his most notable peach plants is Esmond Jones, which was bred from Schenkel seed from Germany.

It had the early name of Poo’s Pink, until Kevin changed the name to Esmond Jones, in honour of an old friend of his.

Kevin was fascinated with bulbous plants as a young boy, and this interest was piqued by the garden of his paternal grandmother Charlotte, which was full of bulbs such as Belladonna lilies, hippeastrums, narcissus species, and “drifts of freesias in the front garden”. He was given his first clivia in his early teens by his grandmother, who could scarcely have imagined how he would develop them as an adult.



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When Kevin first started with clivias as a young man, there was almost no information available on such plants. The books and magazines dedicated to these plants had not yet been written, and it really was a case of trial and error, and waiting patiently, sometimes for years, to see what worked.

Kevin dabbled in clivia hybridising for about fifteen years, but it was only after he used a good form of yellow clivia that he began to achieve his spectacular results. He managed to acquire two Belgian hybrid seeds from Goodwins in Tasmania in 1964. One of these seeds grew to maturity and flowered, and he called this plant '1964'.

In the early 1970's, Kevin acquired his first yellow clivia – 'Aurea', from a Mr Pollard in Caulfield in Victoria. It must be remembered that at this time, yellows were indeed rare and prized plants.

He made his first cross 'Aurea' X '1964' in 1976, and the progeny of this cross included the well-known and highly regarded 'Relly Williams', 'Valerie Martin', and 'Valerie Martin Supreme' – all orange flowering plants with large full flowers, which were 'split for yellow'.

Relly Williams is probably the most well-known cultivar bred by Kevin, and it is renowned for its huge orange flowerhead. Relly Williams is also used to produce stunning creams, with big heads of large recurved flowers.

Kevin made another cross in 1979 – 'Aurea' X a Kewensis orange. This orange had an interesting history – the first seed of it came from the Kew Gardens in England, brought back hidden in a handbag. The plants resulting from this cross comprised about a third yellows, one of which had a green throat and was later named 'Monica Conquest'.

The well-known clivia breeder Bill Morris was among the many admirers of these yellow clivias bred by Kevin, and Bill visited him many times, further enlightening Kevin about observing his plants for form, as well as for colour. Kevin credits Bill for opening his eyes to the concept of the flower form; these lessons were further reinforced by the noted iris breeder and judge, Rita Caldwell. Rita explained to Kevin that "the gardener goes for colour whereas the breeder's main concern is form" (Kevin Walters 1987).



Clivia Esmond Jones - Right

Kevin was making friends around the world at this time in his life, and often corresponded with Les Hannibal of California, a well-known bulb breeder as well as something of an expert on crinums.

It was 1992, however, that Kevin remembers with great clarity and pride. Ken Smith of Sydney organised for Yoshikazu Nakamura, universally regarded as the one of the world's best clivia breeders, to visit Australia. Kevin met with Nakamura on several occasions, and Nakamura was so impressed with Kevin's plants that he took a quantity of pollen back to Japan to assist in his own breeding program.



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Kevin also sent plants and seed to Japan, and some years later, he received back from Nakamura some seed of 'Walters Yellow' X 'Vico Yellow', 'Walters Yellow' X 'Vico Gold', and 'Monica Conquest' X 'Vico x Kevin Walters Yellow'. Nakamura also named one of Kevin's plants. This plant was an interspecific (cyrtanthiflora X miniata) bred by Kevin, the colour of which Nakamura said reminded him of the cherry blossom at home, so he named the plant 'Sakura', which means cherry blossom. By this time, Kevin had also made contact with clivia growers in South Africa, notably Nick Primich and others.

He made the acquaintance of Dr Keith Hammett when he visited from New Zealand, and Bob Pearce, a wholesale nurseryman who accompanied Dr Hammett. These men were also very taken with the yellows that Kevin had bred.

Over the next decade, Kevin was honoured with gifts of seed from Nakamura, as well as growers from South Africa, including Nick Primich, James and Connie Abel, Dawn Strydom, and in more recent times, Sean Chubb and Felicity Weedon. Kevin, of course, reciprocated these favours, as well as sharing and exchanging seeds and plants with other growers in Australia.



A green throat cream clivia bred by Kevin – Right

In his later years, Kevin had the desire to return to his beginnings, in regard to one of his early crosses. In 2005, he again crossed 'Aurea' X '1964', and he was also evaluating some of the first and second generation crosses that Nakamura did with his yellows, as well as assessing the progeny of his clivia 'Sakura'.

Clivias bred by Kevin are widely sought after, and are in collections of people around the world, including Japan, South Africa, and North America, as well as in his home country. Collectors worldwide admire and desire the sumptuous flowerheads with the beautiful large recurved petals, for which Kevin's plants are renowned.

He was keen to establish the area where he lived and worked all of his life to become a centre of excellence for the plant he spent his life trying to understand and improve.

The world of clivias was a source of never-ending fascination for Kevin, and we are all very saddened and left much poorer by his premature passing.

References

Kevin Walters Australian Garden Journal Vol 6 No 4 April/May 1987.



.On 30 March 2012 Dermot Molloy led a team of four MCG members through the labyrinth of glass houses and growing sheds used for plant propagation at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Dermot mentioned that clivia were not one of the plants generally used for display in the Royal Botanic Gardens, but he had been building up a collection, principally as a result of donations of material originating from David Bearlin and Helen Marriott, as well as some of his own plant cross-pollination.

Most of the clivia collection are *miniata* and included a small number with variegated leaves. Some standard orange clivia have been growing at the entrance E on Birdwood Avenue for many years.

Dermot Molloy with some MCG members – Right

The clivia *miniata* plants now fill one shed, so the watering and light conditions have been changed to remove the humid conditions encountered in most of the other glass houses. The glass roof panels are coated with a whitewash prior to summer each year so that the light reaching the clivia plants is reduced. Dermot will shortly be washing off the white coating to encourage flower development over winter.

The MCG members were taken through the 100+ year old shed used for potting up all the RBG seedlings. There are three different mixes of growing media used for propagation and re-potting of all Royal Botanic Garden plants.





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TRADING TABLE – APPLICATION TO SELL ITEMS

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of items to be sold	Type of sale item (seed, plant, seedling, pollen, other)	Description (include botanical name, breeding or any other relevant information)	Price
	seeds		

I give consent to the Melbourne Clivia Group Inc. to sell my plant/seed/pollen and agree to pay 10% commission on the sale.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this completed form to Lynn Rawson.

Revised March 2012.



Melbourne Clivia Group Inc.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING – 17 February 2012

Venue	Uniting Church, Cnr Burwood Hwy & Blackburn Roads, Burwood
Meeting commence	7:35 pm
Committee	Helen Marriott, Diane Mathews, Rae Begg, George Simmler, Brenda Girdlestone, Erika van der Spuy
Apologies	Laurens Rijke, Julie Milligan
Welcome	Helen Marriott Welcome all the members as well as new members of the MCG and all visitors.
Minutes of Previous AGM	Distributed with Newsletter last year Accepted by : George Simmler Seconded by : Brenda Girdlestone
Announcements	Kevin Walters and Mick Dower passed away recently.
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 : Hayden Lomas Vu Dang Brenda Girdlestone Lyn Rawson The following members were elected: President : Helen Marriott Vice President : Diane Mathews Secretary : Erika van der Spuy Treasurer : Rae Begg Committee members : Vu Dang Brenda Girdlestone

Presidents Report

Accepted by : Rae Begg
Seconded by : Lynn Rawson

Secretary report

Accepted by : Ross Simmonds
Seconded by : Helen Marriott

Treasurer report

Opening Balance (Bank)		\$ 1 165.00
• Income – Memberships/Raffle/TT	\$ 3 498.00	
• Expenses –	\$ 1 721.12	
• Balance (including petty cash)		\$ 4 664.79

Main Presentation

Chris Christou : Colours in Clivias

Raffle

Two plants donated by Helen Marriott

Auction of plants

Chris Christou made two plants available for auction.

Display table

Members could talk about plants on the display table.

Questions and
Answers

Many questions were asked about Chris Christou's presentation.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be the 20 April 2012.

Trading table &
Supper

No plants on trading table.

End