



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a great day our third CLIVIA EXPO was on Saturday, 21 September. There was a tremendous variety of plants expertly displayed, lots and lots of enthusiastic visitors, many plants and seedlings for sale, superb refreshments, and fine weather and so on. Thank you to all those members who assisted throughout the day, in many cases this being for the whole day. We also are extremely grateful to those family members who provided invaluable help, often for all day as well.

At our August meeting we discussed how to hasten the flowering of our plants but actually we should have shared ideas about how to slow them down. Probably due to a warmer August, many of us have seen most of our *C. miniata* flowers reach their peak a bit earlier than usual and, in some cases, flowers had finished or were finishing prior to our planned display. Timing will always be a bit tricky, especially as our members are spread out, but we still managed to mount a superb display.



Laurens Rijke with People's Choice Award first prize winner - Chubb Pretty Pink

This year 152 plants were displayed by 18 exhibitors, compared with approximately 160 plants submitted by 19 members last year. I would like to commend all those who brought plants for the display and, in particular, congratulate the three winners of the People's Choice competition - Laurens Rijke, Terry

Edwards and Peter Haeusler. However, the fact that 60 plants or almost 40% of the plants on display were selected by attendees as their People's Choice indicates how a wide range of different *Clivia* appeal to different people.



The demonstrations were popular

The MCG is very grateful to the sub-committee which spent months planning and preparing for this big event, particularly Peter Haeusler who chaired the group consisting of Di Mathews, Vu Dang, Haydn Lomas, Lynn Rawson and myself. I am sure that I was not the only one who went home feeling very tired after CLIVIA EXPO but it was worth it. Definitely, our efforts prior to, as well as on the day were rewarded by seeing the enthusiasm, surprise and delight expressed by our visitors. I understand that many members also enjoyed the day as there was much to engage our attention. A club such as ours can only function effectively if members, or at least a majority of members, pull together as a team. Thank you for a great **TEAM EFFORT**. Further details on the People's Choice competition and raffle are found in this newsletter.

It is our practice to reflect carefully on how we prepare for, and also run CLIVIA EXPO so I invite everyone who attended to provide us with **feedback**. Please send in your comments or advice directly to me (hmariott@ozemail.com.au) or else pass them on to us at the October general meeting. Undertaking this self-reflection helps us to better prepare for the coming year.

As announced previously, we wish to feature a main section on members' favourite flowers in our next and last newsletter for the year. Please send us a paragraph about a favourite flower (interpreted broadly) of yours, together with a digital photograph (if possible, at least 400K). Personally I have many favourite flowers but intend to write about just one which I admired when it flowered a few weeks ago for the second time. Please send these contributions to Lisa Fox (lisa.fox@gmail.com) or myself before 15th November.

Two monthly meetings have been held since the last newsletter was issued. A Potting Workshop was held in July, with four members demonstrating and describing their potting methods. Some notes from that meeting are included in this newsletter. These notes contain lots of 'tips and tricks' which will be useful to many of us. At our August meeting, which was primarily devoted to preparation for CLIVIA EXPO, Vu Dang led a discussion and comparison of the Cant seedlings which were distributed last year. We had a nice range of display plants at these and other meetings during the year but the August meeting contained an excellent assortment of *Clivia*, brought by seven members.



Display area

There has been a recent change in the MCG's treasurer, with Lisa Fox taking over the role for the rest of the current year. The committee thanks Rae Begg for her services to date, Lynn for advising in the transitional



period and Lisa for taking over the role; Lisa and Lynn are currently updating our banking and recording processes, making these electronic wherever possible. PayPal will be a further payment option in the near future, which is something which should make payments easier for members who do not regularly attend meetings.

The MCG is pleased to acknowledge the formation of The Clivia Society of NSW which held its first meeting on 25 August. Chris Ong has been elected president and Michael Mouyat vice-president, with Ken Smith as secretary. Details for membership can be obtained from Ken in the future once they have finalised various arrangements (cliviasmith@idx.com.au).

At our next meeting on Friday 18 October (7:30pm, Uniting Church, cnr Blackburn road & Burwood Highway), which is the last meeting for the year, we welcome back David Francis from Duralite, who will cover the important topic of fertilising. We look forward to seeing new as well as old members and we hope that many of you will be able to bring a *Clivia* for the display table.

Helen Marriott



AN OVERSEAS CLIVIA ROLE MODEL

Some members may have heard the news that Marguerite Blaser, who lived to the age of almost 109 years, passed away in August, 2013. She was a keen grower and lover of clivia, particularly peaches, and was awarded honorary membership of the Cape Clivia Club, South Africa, when she turned 101 years of age. Apparently, on her 106th birthday she proudly displayed a cream miniata to the then Mayor of Cape Town who had visited her on that occasion, explaining that she had cross-pollinated and propagated the plant from seed when she was 101 years old.

I think Marguerite Blaser is a great role model to anyone who thinks they are getting too old to grow clivia.



MCG EXPO 2013 display

➤ [View more photos from the MCG EXPO 2013 on our website gallery](#)

Please note: Membership renewals are now being accepted for 2014. You will find a membership form on the last page of this newsletter.

NEXT MEETING
Friday 18 Oct 7.30pm
Uniting Church
Cnr Blackburn Rd &
Burwood Hwy
Burwood

Clivia Culture: what, when and how to fertilise (David Francis, Duralite)

18 Oct 2013
Clivia Culture - what, when & how to fertilise - David Francis - Duralite

COMMITTEE
Helen Marriott - President
Vu Dang - Vice President
Coral Aalbers - Secretary
Lisa Fox - Treasurer
Lynn Rawson - Committee member

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Number - **0410 929 510**

*Deadline for next issue -
15 November, 2013*

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CULTIVATION NOTES

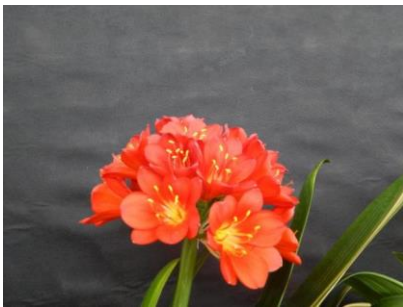
Terry Edwards

I would expect that most growers have already started their seed germination but if not my method is as follows. I wash my seed in warm water with a little dish washing detergent and then rinse them. I lay these on two sheets of moist paper towel and place them in a clean take-away food container. I leave these in a warm place in the house, ideally at 22 degrees.

When most of the seeds have germinated, they are placed in 5 inch deep growing containers in a sifted medium of around 5 ml of pine bark and coconut fibre, and some perlite. As the seed gradually disappears, I spray them with a solution of weak fertilizer to keep the surface moist. When the plants have grown sufficiently, they are placed in their own individual pots (3 inch tubes).

At this time of the year, I also undertake some pollinating. I simply break off an anther (pollen cap) and place some of the pollen onto the three-pronged stigma (the female part of the flower). Sometimes I collect the anthers in a vial. I then shake the vial to get pollen on the lid and rub the lid onto the stigma. Six anthers have pollinated eight umbels in this way.

I feel that a good quality balanced fertilizer with trace elements should be used regularly to make the plants and new seedlings grow strongly and healthy.



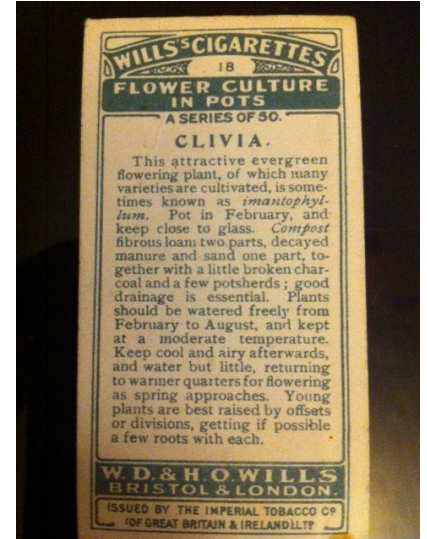
CLIVIA EPHEMERA

Michael Barrett

The term ephemeron and the plural ephemera are derived from ancient Greek and refer to something short lived or lasting only a day. In library and archive collections, ephemera are collected to document and preserve history. In examining ephemera, insights are gained to particular epochs' views and popularity of all manner of subjects. It therefore might not surprise the reader that Clivia may be examined under such a microscope.

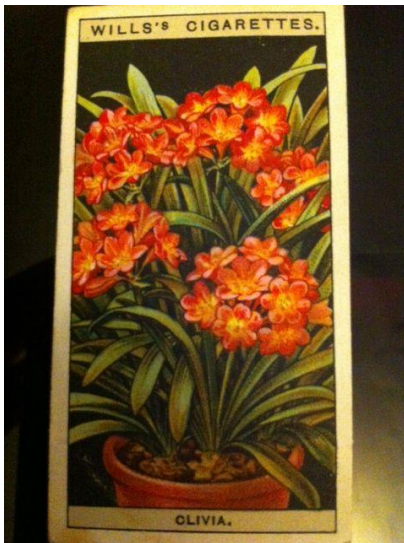
One instance of Clivia being the subject matter of short-lived printed material is the case of tobacco trading cards. Following the marketing strategy of USA companies, the UK firm of WD & HO Wills introduced specific sets of cards in 1887. Sets would have a narrow theme, i.e. ships, landmarks, royalty, entertainers or sporting personalities and nature. These cards were issued with each pouch of tobacco, collected and traded with fellow smokers as to complete a set. In 1925 Wills issued a set of 50 *Flower Culture in Pots*. This set includes aloe, hippeastrum and nerine. Card number 18 is Clivia. On one side the illustration depicts a terracotta pot of *Clivia miniata* in flower and with multiple offsets. The flowers, found amongst the foliage, are orange with a yellow throat. The tepals are semi-broad rather than narrow. The leaves are narrow and both short and long leaves are depicted for artistic purposes. The reverse of the card gives a brief description of the cultural care of each species. In this case the first sentence is of note in that it gives the non-authorised synonym of *imantophyllum*. The preferred medium is prescribed as two parts loam, one part each of decayed manure and sand. Good drainage is explicitly noted as essential. Winter cool is recommended and a return to warmth as spring approaches. With regard to propagation, the division of

offsets is advised with each plant having a few roots being the ideal.



The inclusion of Clivia as card 18 in this set is of note because it documents the popularity of Clivia as a potted plant. While WW1 had reduced the leisure time devoted to ornamental gardening, with focus being directed to food production, some respite was sought in beauty. The nursery production in Belgium was devastated by the war, where previously Clivia had been commercially produced.

The card interestingly does refer to other varieties, but does not detail these by name (*C. nobilis* and *C. gardenii* being recognised in 1828 and 1856 respectively). Also the description does not make reference to cream flowers (discovered 1888, with *C. miniata* var. *citrina* being officially recognised in 1899).



Tobacco cards were massed produced and many have survived more than one day, mainly due to sets being assembled and stored away from light and heat. The cards in this set are readily available online for a few dollars each.

References

State Library of Victoria, (2013) *Ephemera*. Retrieved from <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/our-collections/what-we-collect/ephemera>

MEMBER PROFILE

Ray Perks

My recognition of clivias dates from 1990 when I was attempting to re-locate my then 80 year-old mother to Melbourne from my childhood home in Sydney. As one might expect, the move was subject to intense negotiation and was nearly abandoned when I tried to renege on an earlier agreement to transport one of her large clumps of "Sydney Common" clivias (not "Sidney Common" as seen in some catalogues) down the Hume Highway. By way of background, "Sydney Common", as it is known, is prolific around Sydney, growing in huge clumps in public parks and bordering driveways of older style

homes in much the same way as agapanthus dominates the Melbourne garden scene. It has narrow strappy leaves and bears profuse pinkish picotee-like flowers.



Figure 1 Ray Perks

Anyway, shortly afterwards, I began to notice that my mother's new found Melbourne friends, being volunteers from the National Rose Garden at Werribee Mansion and members of the local garden club, were mighty impressed with Mum's exotic import from the North. My curiosity was aroused and so I began to look out for other examples of clivia. In those days, early 90s, nurseries universally stocked what I now know to be a giant Belgium, marketed as a Kaffir Lily, which failed to appeal to me. The moment of arousal for my interest in clivias probably dates to my discovery of a bench of young clivias (probably 2-3 yr. old) at my local Mitre 10 and my observation that one at the back had a flower. Moreover, the flower looked "strange". I didn't appreciate the "strangeness" till nearly a week later, after I had purchased the plant, when I came to the realisation that this flower had eight petals. Lucky you say. Well, not so lucky. Would you believe that was the ONLY time that plant ever, ever had a multipetal flower?



Figure 2

Shortly, thereafter I purchased a young 'Flowerdale' (yellow, also known as 'Aurea') from a boutique nursery and then found the late David Bearlin's nursery at Burwood. In those days David imported clivia plants in addition to seed and it is safe to say that he didn't have many customers. After a four-hour visit I purchased a dwarf Belgium mature plant and two one-year old seedlings, one of which was simply labeled 'Trop. S/S' to which I'll refer in more detail later. Over the years, like many other clivia enthusiasts, I had numerous dealings with David Bearlin and despite regular disagreements I'm so pleased that I had the opportunity to know him.

A pivotal time for my involvement with clivias commenced in late 2002 when my late wife suffered a severe stroke. Over the next seven years till her death in 2009 I spent all my time at home, save for attending work. Thus I had a great deal of time to indulge my only hobby.

At this time, in addition to taking stock of my life I also took stock of my interest in clivias. I wasn't interested in being a collector. I'm reluctant to use the term "breeder" in respect to myself because it greatly overstates the simplicity of my actions, but for the sake of a better term I decided to specialise in breeding a clivia that I liked. Even though I had fewer than 30 clivia at that point in time I foolishly considered that I could use my existing gene pool to good effect. From this beginning I now have



several thousand plants, some of which (about one half) will go to the tip after their second flowering. Some of the better ones will be sold and about one per cent will be retained for F2 or F3 crossings.

To be honest, I can see beauty and interest in all living things, including all shapes, colours and species of clivia but I specialise in Miniata, dwarf to medium plant size, with flat, open flowers (that is, not recurved or tulip-shaped flowers). The colour of the flower is usually the last thing I consider when looking at a plant but if pushed I do like red and currently I'm also having a love affair with ghost flowers (refer figure 2) and I'm playing around with several plants with mauve/purple characteristics. Alright, I hear you say, I've seen you with interspecifics and very large yellow plants. The simple answer is that I carry them but my wife, Mrs Chee Perks, is the rightful owner.

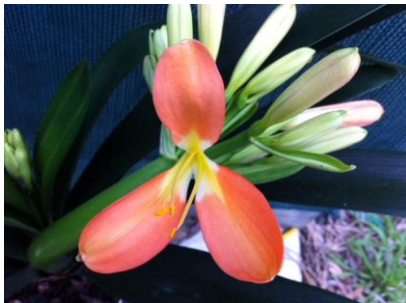


Figure 3 Ladies and gentlemen I give you the latest rage in clivias: the "Helicopter" a Sydney Common F3 . ALSO NOTE the double budded flower stem to the right of the flower.

All my clivias are now grown in pots, most commonly placed on a gravel base in a shade house though I'm slowly moving to benches in recognition of my aged body. Fortunately, I don't have snails and have few slugs but most of my ground-based pots become infested with baby centipedes which don't really harm the clivias but lead to some interesting moments when repotting. Occasionally a tiger snake can be found sheltering amongst the pots.

Remember Sydney Common mentioned in the first paragraph and the non-multipetal Mitre 10 plant and 'Trop S/S' (actually Tropical Sunset) when talking about David Bearlin. Well, these three clivias plus a couple other golden oldies, namely Twins and 'Flowerdale'/'Aurea' have formed the basis of my breeding exploits. I love the anticipation of waiting for those first flowers from a seedling and the surprise diversity between siblings. I even find pleasure in failure because it teaches me something more about the genetic make-up of the parents.



Figure 4 Another Sydney Common F3 with improved flower size and number but the same old colour

Speaking of failure, for a variety of reasons - vigour, disease resistance, sun tolerance and sentiment - I decided that the Sydney Common clivia had to be included in my breeding program. I'm at F3 and still the flower colour and shape remain unchanged and it loses some of its vigour and sun tolerance.

Chee and I thoroughly enjoy our involvement with the Clivia Group and the wonderful diversity of interest and friendliness of the membership. By necessity we will be reducing the number of clivias we keep ... it's true! ... I swear! We want to have time for our many retirement plans while our health allows.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AND RAFFLES

Brenda Girdlestone

I would like to thank the many members who donated plants for the raffles. It was the intention of the CLIVIA EXPO sub-committee that we have an hourly draw, with first and second prizes. With donations exceeding my expectations, we were, in fact, able to offer first, second and third prizes on a couple of occasions. I think that this strategy proved to have been a great success, as ticket sales were constant throughout the day. The prizes on offer were mainly flowering plants.

The 'People's Choice' appears to have gained a much bigger participation from the public, although that may have been due to a larger number of visitors than in previous years. At this stage I have not been able to go through the People's Choice forms in detail, but of the 152 plants on display, 60 plants received nominations as peoples' favorites.

The winners of the 'People's Choice' were:

- First prize:** Chubb Pretty Pink, exhibitor Laurens Rijke
- Second prize:** Miniata Deep Red, exhibitor Terry Edwards
- Third prize:** 'Tino's Dream' x 'Red Green Girl', exhibitor Peter Haeusler.

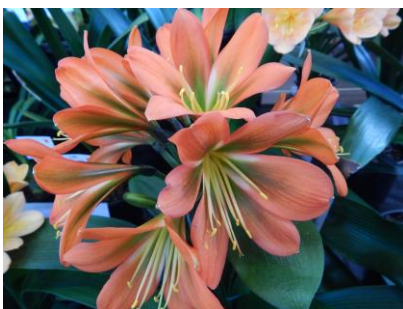
The voting slips went into a draw for a prize, the winner being Mrs Angelina Sim who is now the proud owner of 'Grow Clivias' by Graham Duncan, which was donated by Peter and Georgina Haeusler.



1st prize - Chubb Pretty Pink
exhibited by Laurens Rijke



2nd prize Miniata Deep Red
exhibited by Terry Edwards



3rd prize Tino's Dream x Red Green
Girl exhibited by Peter Haeusler

- [View more photos from the MCG EXPO 2013 on our website gallery](#)

THE POTTING WORKSHOP

Demonstrations of potting/repotting were given at the July meeting by four members – Rae Begg, Ray Perks and Gary Reale whilst Yvonne Hargreaves gave us ideas and tips on restriking damaged seedlings or plants. We thank them for bringing along all the gear that they regularly use when undertaking these tasks as the visual aids made it easier for us to follow what was described. Since Ray and Yvonne provided full notes of their demonstrations, the notes to follow include their contributions plus a summary of what took place at the workshop. Interestingly, some practices described or demonstrated by the presenters were not unanimously endorsed by others present and sometimes quite different practices were clearly preferred. These kinds of disagreements are not an unhealthy sign within a club such as ours but indicate that there may be different ways of undertaking similar tasks, while still recognizing that some growers hold very firm views of their own.

Planting seedlings or small clivias (1-2 years): Ray Perks

Growing your own seedlings is not hard and it's great fun. You need a seed growing mix - the commercial ones are OK - or use equal parts of coarse sand and peat moss or sand and coir block. The growing mix should be "just damp", that is, if you tightly squeeze a hand full, no moisture should emerge. Place the mix into a small pot, lightly depress the cleaned seed on top and place the whole lot into a suitably sized freezer bag. Seal and place in a warm spot (preferably indoors, if you are allowed!). Some growers utilize heat mats instead while others don't use any of these extra aids.

Regarding the *potting mix for seedlings*, if you speak to 10 different growers you will get 8-10 different

suggestions for a clivia potting mix. I use a product known as MINI Orchid Nuggets produced by a company called Van Schaik's BIO GRO (located at 80-82 Ordish Rd, Dandenong 3175 Ph 8788 1700). This product is 5-8mm composted pine bark in 50 litre bags. Many orchid clubs sell a range of Bio Gro products at their shows, and, in fact, the orchid club which shares our meeting venue usually has a show one or two weeks either side of our CLIVIA EXPO where they sell this product to their members and visitors. Be early though as it usually sells out by lunch time.



Some *optional extras* can be added to the potting mix. If available, I add approximately 10%-20% (by volume) of recycled potting mix to promote biological growth in the new mix. Those of you who attended the meeting learned that the use of recycled potting mix proved to be a controversial action, with some members concerned mainly about the possibility of contaminating the new mix with disease. Make up your own mind. I also add slow release fertilizer and fine to medium shell grit.

Pot sizes: The basic rule that I try to follow is to choose a pot that the plant should outgrow within a year. If your pot is too large for the plant,



then much of the potting mix in that pot is likely to go sour before the plant roots can utilise that part of the mix. I know it's a pain but it is better to re-pot often rather than hope to do it every 2-3 years, especially while the clivia is young. For example, a one-year old seedling should fit into a 3"(75mm) tube or 4"(100mm) pot, while some with more vigorous roots may require a 5"(125mm) pot. I'm fortunate to have a ready supply of recycled pots in this size range, which I rarely wash before use - blokes are like that.

Potting technique: I usually place my potting mix in a large container, such as a wheel barrow, and after ensuring that I'm comfortably seated, I proceed as follows. I place a pot on top of the mix and then hold the plant with one hand and add the mix to the pot with the other, filling the pot in stages (approximately 1/3 each time) before vibrating the pot by rocking it left to right to settle the mix before continuing to add mix. I do not push the mix down with my fingers, as this may damage the roots, except possibly at the end of the potting process where some GENTLE finger pressure may be necessary to align the plant in the pot. You should not get potting mix in the growing leaves (at the top or crown) of your plant. If you do, then there is a greatly increased chance of crown rot which will ruin your plant. Thus, when adding potting mix, I gently squeeze the growing leaves together with one hand to prevent any mix entering the crown of the plant. If some mix does get into the crown you might use a small kid's paint brush to brush it out or try to blow it out. Don't forget to add plant labels as you go. I use a soft lead pencil (5B or 6B) on a white label.

To soak or water in? Some people like to soak their clivia plants in a solution of Plant Starter or Seasol before they re-pot them in the belief that this helps the plant quickly recover from the trauma of re-potting

and develop strong roots. I'm never organised enough to do that but I do usually water in my plants after re-potting with a solution of Plant Starter or Seasol or similar.

A CRITICAL ISSUE: You must exercise caution when opening any bag of potting mix as the hot, moist conditions within the bag can breed and store all sorts of very dangerous spores and bacteria, the most notable being Legionella. It is best to cut the bag completely open (top to bottom) in an open outdoor position and then allow the contents to breath for 10-15 minutes before you use it. Also, when handling potting mix, a facial mask is recommended. Gloves, possibly latex ones for improved tactile sensing, should be worn. If you find it hard to sensitively grip things when wearing gloves, then use a Barrier Cream.

Re-striking "flopped" or rotted-off plants: Yvonne Hargreaves

Most growers will have a "Critical Care" or "Hospital" area as from time to time we all have plants that choose to rot off at the base or just flop over sideways. There are many different methods for re-rooting these plants.

Firstly, cleanliness is essential. Take the plant and give its base a rinse off to establish if it still has a viable amount of "basal plate" left in a healthy condition. If so, give it a good scrub to remove all remnants of rot and make a clean surface. You can use a small amount of dishwashing detergent in the water when you do this, as this has some anti-bacterial qualities. Alternatively, you can wash the plant base with the likes of Fongarid or Phosphoric Acid, where 2 mls per litre of water is an appropriate strength to use. A crucial point is to then let the plant base dry for a day or two, even up to a week, depending on the weather conditions, to allow the basal plate area to callous up slightly.

Prepare your equipment (eg pots, stakes, sand, sphagnum moss etc.) in advance for the method which you will use and, when organised, dip the base of the plant into honey. Honey seals wounds and helps to promote root growth. Next, put the plant into its new situation. This can follow one of many different methods.



Ken Russell recommends using a mixture of equal parts of chopped sphagnum moss and perlite (both obtainable from Bunnings). Place the mix in a small pot and nestle the plant into it. Secure all inside a larger plastic bag, seal the top and place in a warm area. You can also make up a honey water solution (1 teaspoon of honey per litre of water) to use in a spray bottle to lightly dampen the plant leaves as well as the mix, holding the plant upright.

I have had success over the years using coarse river sand in a 500 grams or 1 litre plastic yoghurt pot. Prepare the plant base and then place the sand into the pot about a third full, dampened well, but not wet. Place the plant into the pot and push lightly into the sand to secure. The sides of the yoghurt pot will help hold the plant steady and upright. The bigger the plant, the bigger the yoghurt pot one uses. Put in a sheltered spot and keep an eye on the moisture levels over the weeks it may take before you start to see roots showing through the opaque yoghurt pot sides.

Another method is to clean your plants, using honey on the base if you wish, and wrap about a handful of



dampened sphagnum moss around the base. Next, place inside a zip lock bag and firmly tie to seal it. This can then be placed inside a large pot to hold it steady and upright, or else hung from the roof of the shade house. Spray the leaves from time to time and eventually you will see the new roots showing through the plastic bag.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to re-pot the freshly re-struck plant and when you do decide to pot it up, use the SMALLEST possible pot which the roots system will fit into for its first new home. Naturally, you will pot it on further once that pot feels firm to squeeze and you know it needs more room. **TOO MUCH DAMP MIX AROUND NEW ROOTS COULD EASILY CAUSE THE PLANT TO ROT ONCE MORE.**

Another different method I was shown at Christmas time last year by Vu, and about which I was initially very sceptical, is as follows. Clean your plant and insert it into a pot with peat moss/coco peat mix. Next, place the pot into a container that has water about ½" deep in it. Since the plant sits in water, I feared that in my hot conditions it would just rot away but it didn't and a few weeks later I felt the plants and they were very firm in the pots and, sure enough, when examined, there were fresh white roots coming along nicely. (They were also quite okay in the colder frosty weather when I was concerned the roots might freeze in the minus temperatures here in winter.)

A northern clivia growing friend uses a method which I have utilised in the past when growing the pups of hundreds of Bromeliads but as yet I have not personally used it for clivias. It involves a lidded polystyrene box, cleaned and disinfected and some stones and water. Put about an inch of water into the bottom of the polystyrene box and add the stones which are for just

for stability. Then, use a sharp knife or scissors and cut holes in the box lid to hold the clivias which are to be re-struck. Push the clivia bases down through the holes and put the lid onto the box so the plants are just poking through the lid, above the water and stones. Once again, place the box in a warm sheltered position and in time roots will appear, drawn down to the moisture below. Keep water in the box base at all times.

Yet another method used by some other members is to very firmly secure a rootless seedling or plant in a small, narrow pot (such as the 6.5 square cm pot used by Diggers) which is filled either with seedling mix or a fine potting mix. The plant is kept quite dry, watering only occasionally. An easy way to stake such rootless plants is to secure 2 or 3 chopsticks or stakes around the plant before it is inserted into the pot.

All of the above methods work on the theory of stability of the plant to allow new tiny roots to grow without being broken off by movement of the plant and warm moist conditions to precipitate the new roots to grow. One final note: you might avoid or reduce the incidence of rotted off plants if you maintain a good anti-rot regime.

Potting mature plants: Rae Begg and Gary Reale

Rae and Gary demonstrated how they repot mature (but not very old) plants. Rae says that she tackles root-bound plants using the same technique. First, the plants are removed from their current pot and prepared for the new pot. She places sugar cane mulch on the top of her pots to keep the base of the plant dry and the potting mix moist to save on watering. After lifting the plant from the old pot, she removed some of the older outer leaves and then proceeded to carefully use an implement (half of a broken pair of secateurs) to loosen up the roots so as

to avoid damaging the fine hair-like feeder roots by rubbing roots with hands (though some members worried about damaging the roots using this technique and prefer to use their hands or else tap some of the old mix away). If Rae needed to cut off any roots, she would dip the ends in Mancozeb (a fungicide). She herself uses a specially ordered Debco potting mix. The plant was then placed into a 12" pot, two sizes larger, to accommodate the expanded root system and allow for growth. Some members agreed with this decision whereas others of us would have only gone to the next pot size. Rae then shook the mix through the roots. On top of the potting mix she spread out 3-4 teaspoons of slow-release HIGH K Osmocote fertilizer, about a teaspoon of Dolomite lime and some fresh coffee to act as a repellent for mealy bug and other insects. More potting mix was added to cover this topping. Having had a mealy bug infestation, Rae then squirted undiluted Methylated Spirits into the centre of the rhizome in case of mealy bug in the centre, another action which some members considered unnecessary. Rae suggests that if using Methylated Spirits, test on sample plants first to make sure that your plants are not adversely affected. In the case of any cut root surfaces, she would not water for a day or two.



Rae and Gary demonstrating

Gary demonstrated his "no-fuss" method of repotting, simply taking a plant out of one pot and putting it straight into a bigger pot without any disturbance of the old soil or root



ball. After the meeting, Gary supplied a couple of extra details about his repotting. Firstly, he generally only repots when the plant has outgrown its pot or if it has grown crookedly. He does not fertilize straight away but does so using liquid fertilizer a couple of weeks after the plant has settled in. He reports that in the hot weather his 6" pots need watering more frequently, adding that he loses most of his plants at the seedling stage when they dry out too fast or when mealy bugs attack. To combat this problem he plans to add more water-holding material to his mix in the future.

Tackling pot/root-bound plants

Following the meeting, Gary reported that when repotting a large plant in a 45 or 50 cm pot which is really tight (and too huge for most of us), he lays it on its side and applies foot pressure onto the side of the pot, rolling the pot around at the same time so that it comes out easily. Then, without disturbing the roots, he will replant it into a larger pot.

A different method used by some of us is to bang the sides of the pot with a mattock and if that method is unsuccessful, cut down the side of the pot very carefully with a sharp knife or cleaver to remove the pot itself from around the roots. Untangling these pot-bound roots for the purpose of division is another matter....

Ray Perks also submitted some additional notes on tackling pot/root bound plants, and these are reproduced here.

Some growers consider that clivias flower best when they are stressed by being pot bound. I'm not a follower of that belief system but nevertheless, through procrastination and various other forms of neglect, I regularly have plants that desperately need to be repotted or broken up, usually

plants in 20 cm pots. Do we repot or break up a pot-bound plant? Do you want to repot this plant so it grows on to be a wonderful specimen plant with multiple flower stems as early as the next flowering season or are you prepared to possibly delay future flowering by dividing the plant into smaller, more easily managed plants? The main practical consideration with repotting large plants is the health and safety issues involved. Can I continue to lift and carry this monstrous plant; will my house tilt if I put this plant on the front verandah? You get the picture. Most people would baulk at potting plants in pots bigger than 30cm or even 25 cm. Gary is a Titan with his 50cm pots.

Generally, when I'm repotting, I take a similar no-fuss approach to Gary, except that I reduce the root mass by cutting the bottom one-third off and then I set the plant aside for a day so the cut roots can dry off and "heal". In that time the roots usually shrink a little from dehydration allowing broken roots and old potting mix to fall away if I gently shake the plant before repotting.

If one makes the decision to divide the pot-bound plant, one then has to decide how many plants you might want to create. If one is really ambitious and tries to create a series of single-stemmed plants from your mother plant, it is likely that some plants will end up having no or very few roots and flowering for all the resultant plants will be set back by one, if not, two seasons.

When dividing very large plants I generally examine the plant carefully to identify any natural dividing lines. It may be the case that it is best only to halve the plant, but not necessarily exact-sized halves, if that makes sense. Often, once you have halves you can more readily see further natural divisions. I generally cut the plant in half before trying to untangle roots and removing the old potting

mix and before looking for additional divisions. Having divided the mother plant, I set the divisions aside for a day to allow cut roots and rhizomes to dry off before proceeding to pot the plants.

Late spring (Nov) and early summer (Dec /Jan) are generally considered to be best time to repot and divide plants but early autumn (March /April) is also favoured by some growers. Obviously, the earlier you divide (say, Nov/Dec) and the fewer divisions you make, then the greater your chances of flowers next season. Finally, consider your choice of, and care of your cutting tools. I favour an old bread knife but any long, serrated edge knife will suffice as you often have to use a sawing motion when dividing old plants. You should make arrangements to sterilise your knife after each cut or certainly after dividing each mother plant. Diluted solutions of bleach or full strength Methylated Spirits are two of the more favoured sterilisation liquids.

(Notes supplied by presenters or compiled by Helen Marriott)



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2014 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL OF THE MELBOURNE CLIVIA GROUP INC.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

- I wish to become a member of the Melbourne Clivia Group Inc. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to support the purposes of the MCG Inc. and to comply with the rules of the group.
- I wish to renew my membership.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership options:

- Single Membership 2014 (electronic newsletter) \$15
- OR**
- Single Membership 2014 (hard copy newsletter) \$25
- Each additional family member \$10

Payment options:

- Cash (at meetings)
- Cheque (*payable to Melbourne Clivia Group Inc.*)
- Direct Deposit (BSB 083657; Acc. 829745477)

Additional family members: (*please add all names & signatures)

Name	Signature

Membership CANNOT be accepted without the submission of this form. In the case of an electronic payment, please send a completed form to the above address or give in person to the secretary.