



CAPE NEWS

KAAPSE NUUS

AGM EDITION

April, 2006. Number 11

P O Box 53219, Kenilworth 7745, South Africa.

Telephone/Fax +27 21 671 7384.

E-mail capeclivia@ibox.co.za

Editorial Team: Coen Calitz with Mick Dower and Johan Schoombee

(The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Cape Clivia Club)

Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting was held at Durbanville on Saturday, 1 April 2006. It was attended by fewer members than usual, probably because it was in the Easter School Holidays. Hopefully the election of younger members to the Committee will make it more sensitive to such clashes in future!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

John Winter presented his report as follows:

Late one afternoon in October 1996 seven members of the Clivia Club, based in Pretoria, met at Kirstenbosch to discuss the possible forming of a club in Cape Town. Ian Brown proposed that each one put their hand in their pocket then and there to start the Club. That was the beginning of the Cape Clivia Club and that is how Ian Brown got the job of Treasurer. All these years he has looked after the financial affairs of the Club, keeping a secure hold of monies coming in and monies to be paid, keeping track of everything as the Club has grown and expanded its activities, earning interest and keeping the Club in good shape to such an extent that we have been able to make substantial donations for research. Ian has been tireless in his efforts

giving of his expertise and time with dedication. Ten years is a long time - Ian needs a well deserved rest and is not available for re-election. Ian has made a huge contribution to our Club and we are very grateful to him.

Once again the Show was a highlight of the year. The Indigenous Bulb Growers Association contributed additional interest with their display of indigenous spring flowering bulbs. My thanks to all members who participate - without their support we just would not be able to have a Show.

In addition to the show we held two Clivia displays at Kirstenbosch Gardens which were well received by the public.

The East London Interest Group continues under the leadership of Stella van Gass. Although small in number, they continue to meet regularly. Felicity Weeden has started an interest group in Hermanus. We wish her well in developing this group.

Workshops were held again this year proving that members appreciate the hands on advice. These will continue to be held in the northern suburbs and the southern suburbs.. My thanks to Mick Dower, Ian Brown and Gerrit van Wyk for running these workshops.

Yearbook Seven once again proved to be a great publication, thanks largely to John van der Linde, Claude Felbert and Roger Dixon.

This year has been a busy time for the Committee. Mick Dower continues bringing Cape News to members via the e-mail. It is informative, interesting and colourful. Mick also administers the annual seed and seedling sales and is presently working on a second colour chart with Claude Felbert.

Claude Felbert also works hard arranging posters each year for the show and taking photographs of Show winners. Claude also initiated the purchase of a digital projector. For the first time the Club owns a digital projector which will be used at our meetings and will also provide digital images at the Show.

John van der Linde continues to arrange the quarterly meetings which alternate between Kirstenbosch and Durbanville. He also acts as Vice-Chairman of the Clivia Society and Editor of the Yearbook.

Coen Calitz has been busy this year liaising with the Clivia Society about the 4th International Clivia Conference which will be held in September.

Johan Schoombee as Show Chairman introduced some innovative ideas and rallied enthusiasm and participation in the Show by members.

My thanks to the Committee for their hard work and support throughout the year. We look forward to another busy and happy year enjoying Clivia.

JOHN WINTER

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ian Brown presented the Annual Financial Statements. These reflected a surplus for the year of over R30 000, compared with the surplus of over R41 000 earned in the previous year.

Income had decreased because of higher Show expenses and a substantial reduction in the income from the sale of pots and products which the late Gert Wiese had managed. Income had been increased by one-off remuneration for providing Kirstenbosch with the logistic support which it lacked to service the mirabilis seedling orders and to clean, pack and post the seedlings worldwide. The Balance Sheet shows accumulated cash reserves of virtually R100 000.

The Chairman proposed a special vote of thanks to Ian for his dedication as treasurer since the inception of the Club. Marlene Bilas will act as bookkeeper and a new Treasurer is yet to be appointed.

NEW COMMITTEE

Jim Holmes, Roy Danford, Coen and Diné Calitz and Ian Brown were not available for re-election and Mickey Hooctor, Eugene Malherbe and Liesl Brand were elected in their stead. The full committee is now: John Winter, Marleen Bilas, Liesl Brand, Mick Dower, Claude Felbert, Mickie Hooctor, Toy Jennings, Eugene Malherbe, Caroline Phipps, Johann Schoombee, John van der Linde, Gerrit van Wyk and Felicity Weeden.

CLIVIA SOCIETY

The AGM of the Clivia Society will be held on Saturday, 20 May at George. The Club will be officially represented by Claude Felbert, Johan Schoombee and Gerrit van Wyk. Any Club member may attend the proceedings, but not vote. The Cape Club has been invited to host the 2007 AGM as well as the 5th International Conference in 2010.

The Committee will consider these proposals.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Ian and Margie Brown and Mick and Jill Dower were elected Honorary Life Members of the Cape Clivia Club. Coen Calitz read their citations as follows: as follows.

IAN BROWN

It is an honour to introduce Ian Brown to you:

If the growing of Clivia is the main activity of the Clivia Club as a body and the multitude of committees and channels the nerves, finances surely are the blood that feeds, sustains and enables everything. Since the inception of the Cape Clivia Club in 1996, Ian Brown has been the heart that circulated this blood carefully and vibrantly, thus sustaining all the activities. On his retirement we now need a heart transplant and we can only hope that this new heart will function as regularly, fluently, precisely and vibrantly as its predecessor.

As expected, Ian was an accountant by profess



John Winter congratulating Ian Brown

sion. But, as he commented, his Scottish ancestry made him naturally parsimonious and precise. If you came with an idea or proposal in this club, you had better have done your calculations carefully or you ran into his sharp financial

acumen. This gave rise to a completely self-sufficient club. Every cent of the subscriptions you pay is transferred to the Clivia Society for the Yearbook, Newsletters and central administration. The rest of the Club benefits, including the sumptuous eatables at the tea break, equipment, administration etc. are quite free! In the past two years we were able to spend more than R50 000 on research and special projects. Be assured that this very healthy systemic circulation is largely attributable to Ian's accurate, regular bookkeeping and his excellent financial management of our resources. Of course, this required vast blocks of his time and energy. For this we shall remain grateful to him.

Ian was the treasurer of the Clivia Society for several years, where he very effectively straightened out and managed the financial affairs. At shows he had the major task of daily keeping track of all the income and expenditures, to bank the proceeds, to supply change, to control supplies, etc. At the same time you would find him arranging the plants in the entrance lobby in neat, colour-matching contours and giving advice and aid in all the exhibits and activities.

But in his own right, Ian is also one of the foremost Clivia breeders and growers, winning many prizes at each Cape show. Often he comes up with the most exceptional plants, without fanfare, but creating a sensation. One example of this is his exceptional multipetal, with its unique colouring, featured on the cover of Clivia 3. Ian also grows exceptional Yellows and interspecific crosses. One of these, exhibited at the additional display in Kirstenbosch, is in my and other's astounded opinion, the most beautiful Clivia we have seen. The high half-bowl flower head is held proudly above the wide dark leaves, the densely packed florets a lustrous fusion of red, pink and silvery gray. Ian replied to the congratulations with characteristic modesty "Oh, at home there are even better ones that have flowered or are yet to bloom". And I fully believe

that, having seen some of his plants.

Ian has also become well known (and envied) for his very effective cultivation of young plants to flower in the second or third year. This shows attentive care and effective methods. And of course, love, enthusiasm and expertise – which Ian generously shares with growers attending the workshops at his home and elsewhere, or enjoying the hospitality of Ian and his wife Margie. These two make a formidable team: Ian, courteous, reasoned, sharp witted, always sporting a self-mocking smile and Margie, spontaneously cordial and friendly, always on the go with the refreshments, the book sales or the administration at meetings and shows.

Ian (John Lessey Pollard) Brown was born and educated in Johannesburg. His father was in the Insurance field and his mother from Canada. Soon after their marriage in Yokohama in Japan, his parents were in the midst of the 1923 Earthquake that killed more than 120 000 people. (Said he dryly: “So I nearly wasn’t here!”)

Ian qualified as a Chartered Accountant and worked as an Auditor for most of his professional life. He spent some 2 years in London at the beginning of his career and then settled in Cape Town, where his large garden soon became a focus point for Clivia in the Cape. (Showing that even accountants can be romantic, Ian one year carefully outlined a Valentine heart in fertilizer on his front lawn, showing a dark green heart, to the delight of Margie and his visitors.)

On how his passion for Clivia originated, I can do no better than let him tell it himself:

“I’ve always been a keen gardener. Originally vegetables and fruit were my main interests. When we moved to our present house some 35 years ago, I decided we needed clivias to fill some shady areas. A friend in the horticultural world felt that there were no good plants available locally and got me three orange plants from

KZN.

I needed far more, but couldn’t afford them, so decided to grow them from seed. I planted whole berries in pots and after two years had a tangle of small plants which I planted out. After 7 or 8 years they flowered with a large variety of shapes and colours.

I was now hooked on breeding and crossed the lightest orange plants to produce yellows, hopefully! I kept doing this for many generations then read an article in “Farmers Weekly” by Nic Primich saying clivias should flower within 4 years. I corresponded with him and he put me right on my growing techniques. Needless to say, I produced no yellow flowers but gradually grew very nice light orange forms. My garden overflowed with clivias!

In the early 1990’s Jim Holmes let me have a yellow plant. In 1996 I eagerly attended the inaugural get-together of enthusiasts that John Winter organised. When our Club was formed I became Treasurer and have been an enthusiastic breeder ever since.

The highlight of the Club for me was our first Show at Kirstenbosch in 1997. I optimistically suggested a target of 100 new members and wasn’t disappointed with the 92 that signed up, and over 4000 visitors to the Show - the Club was firmly up and running.

In our early days we were fortunate in having such clivia stalwarts as Gert Wiese, Fred Gibello, Christo and Riël Lotter, Jim Holmes and of course John Winter in our midst. We had a wealth of practical experience to draw on”. (You will perceive the accuracy and parsimony of his own words)

When you hear the healthy financial state of our Club and you think of the enormous contribution by Ian and Margie to the Clivia Community, you will surely agree that Ian richly deserves the award of Honorary Life Member of the Cape Clivia Club.

MICK DOWER

It is indeed an honour to introduce John Michael Robert (Mick) Dower to you.:

Mick Dower has become synonymous with the Cape Clivia Club. Everyone at all involved with the Club or those who attend meetings or exhibitions, would be aware of the imposing figure contributing expertise and comments. When Mick speaks, the Clivia world listens attentively and with respect, be it at conferences, in the Clivia Yearbook, the Clivia Newsletter, the Internet discussion group or his personal "baby", the Cape Clivia News. Backing his forthright manner is strong enthusiasm and diligence for the Clivia cause in a sincere, generous and loving spirit. His contribution, and of course that of his wife Jill who supports him cordially and sincerely, to Clivia is enormous and it is quite fitting that we honour them today. This could only be a small return for all that they have given the Club and its members.



John Winter congratulating Mick Dower

Mick's ancestors were missionaries in the Eastern Cape, South Natal and Transkei. (No wonder his Clivia grow so well – they have the same origins and roots!) Mick was born and educated in Queenstown and in 1957 completed his studies in Law at UCT. Except for a short period away, he practised as an Attorney in Cape Town. For decades they have stayed in Bishopscourt, where the tall plane trees shelter Mick's Clivia, with Table Mountain guarding in the background. Here unique and much sought after Clivia grow in every corner and flat spot. One example is the unbelievably beautiful Emma Leslie, which appeared on the back cover of Clivia 5. Mick manages to surprise all at every show or exhibition with the exceptional plants he breeds and grows. He has of course won many prizes at every show (Mick also has one of the world's most unique plants up his sleeve, which he will present in his own good time. Mick, we look forward to that!)

Mick relates that his passion for Clivia was born from his admiration for a large, flourishing Orange clivia from the Eastern Cape in his grandfather's garden in Cape Town, handed down in the family after being collected by his great grandfather near Kokstad, progeny of which later graced his own garden. He obtained plant, seeds and suckers from several sources, but no yellows, though he was on Gordon McNeil's waiting list from and in the early 80's. In the early 90's one of his seedlings from an orange mother flowered yellow, his first Yellow was in full bloom. Thus he really catches the fever to breed Clivia and becomes a pioneer of Clivia in the Cape. He corresponds with Gordon McNeil's widow, Margot, and obtains some yellows and a pastel named "Gladys Blackbeard", which Gordon had named for the main source of his plants. And He also buys three yellow suckers from Cynthia Gidys and joins Nick Primich's Clivia Club which he integrates in his breeding programme. In 1994, with John Winter, he attends the inaugural International Conference and Show in Pretoria. He is also one of the few enthusiasts who in 1996 started the Cape Province Clivia Club.

There, with a gift from John Winter to each attendee, started the generous custom of presenting each new member with a yellow seedling. Since then Mick and a few others have supplied these seedlings from their own stock. Mick has served continuously on the committee of the Club since its inception and also on the Clivia Society for several years. With a select few he organized the second Clivia Conference in Cape Town in 1998. On a visit to Europe in 1997 he had become aware of the excellent Yearbooks published by other floral societies (for example the Delphinium Society) and became a founder and one of the editors of the excellent Clivia Yearbook, from number 1 up to number 5.

From 1995 Mick, invited by John Winter, and later joined by John Rourke, annually ventured into the hidden corners of the Clivia Habitat in the Eastern Cape, Transkei, Natal and Swaziland. They collected the well-known Apple Blossom series, the Komga Red, the Floradale Mbashe and Umtamvuna Pastels and many other new variants, all of which were included in the SANBI collection. He attends other shows and is active in every Cape Show, exhibition, workshop, plant sale and Garden Fair, where he (often alone) utilizes every opportunity to advance Clivia. His affection, enthusiasm and expertise are usually so contagious to visitors, that many become new members of the Club. At Club meetings he is usually the donor of many of the raffle plants, almost always exceptional and valuable plants, gladly grabbed by the winners.

But that is not all by any means. Together with others Mick is the driving force for initiating, design and marketing of the very useful Colour Chart, which is to be supplemented. He organizes and runs the annual seed and seedling sales and the recent list of valuable suckers. He even helps with the mammoth task of the sale and packaging of the Mirabilis seedlings. He becomes a very proficient photographer and computer operator to compile, publish and even send out **Cape News** (now already No. 10)

He authors articles for all the Clivia publications, in which he makes the complicated principles of Genetics and cultivation accessible to us simple followers. He also serves on the Society's Research Committee and the standards and judging sub-committee.

It is quite clear that his is a major force in the whole Clivia community. I hope one day a robust plant with his beloved large flowers, but with delicate colour shades, is named after Mick Dower. He would richly deserve it.

We can relate a lot more about him, but I am sure you will agree that Mick, and with him Jill, deserves to be a Honorary Life Member of the Cape Clivia Club.

JOHAN SCHOOMBEE'S PRESENTATION OF CLIVIA FLOWER COLOUR VARIATION

The AGM ended with Johan Schoombee showing us the pictures he had collected of peach and pink coloured clivia flowers grown all over the world. It is unfortunately not practical to show more than his photos of the flowers grown by our own members as follows:



JOHAN BOTHA'S
ANSIE LE ROUX PINK



MICK DOWER'S
MOPI HIRT



Another of Johan Botha's
Split pinks from Riel Lotter
See also page 12



ROB DRAKE'S
PINK PRINCESS



JOHANN SCHOOMBEE'S
GREEN THROATED
PEACH BRED BY
LES BROWN



ELLA VAN ZIJL GHOSTING



SOME OF JOHAN BOTHA'S CLIVIA IN FLOWER
IN 2005

CLIVIA SHOOTS

Compiled by Coen Calitz

Retraction and Apology to authors and publishers of "Cultivation of Clivia"

We received the following from a reader in reaction to the 3rd paragraph on page 9 of CCN 10 in the article on the "Use of Confidor":

It is commendable that you in the Cape Clivia Club put your newsletters on the e-group for the enjoyment and education of all and all the members involved are congratulated for the many interesting and insightful contributions. And, as is generally the case, comments are made about the few corrections rather than about the many more positive articles.

Nevertheless:Your comments about the "Cultivation of Clivia" deficiencies are correct, yes - but I find this unnecessarily and repetitively harsh, and it is in no way leavened with any recognition that the booklet does have some merits. The first sentence on its own carries the message more than adequately. Very little in life is perfect, all vol-

untary groups have a minority of members prepared to work for the common good, and for those members there should be a balance between the stick and the carrot in recognition of their efforts.

Editors and Coen Calitz, compiler of these comments: *Thank you for your reprimand. Yes, in retrospect the comment about "Cultivation of Clivia" should not have been included, was indeed harsh and negatively one-sided and the terms used are unnecessarily insensitive and abrasive, no doubt insulting to the authors and publishers.*

We sincerely apologise to them and to our reader who brought this to our attention. This paragraph in no way advanced the cause of Clivia or the relationships between the people in the Clivia World. You have given us a very good example of balancing the positive and the negative.

Furthermore, in follow-up correspondence, it was brought to our attention that mention was not made of Confidor in "Cultivation of Clivia", precisely because it has not been registered for use on Clivia or in home gardens (as was mentioned in the article).

(Let's hope we find a preventative treatment or cure for "Foot in Mouth Disease" in amateur editors. Eds.)

CHAIRMAN OF 2006 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

We were also informed with reference to page 16 in the notice about the Clivia Conference that Peter Lambert is the Chairman of the 2006 Conference Committee and that James Abel is responsible for the tours, itineraries and accommodation. *Thank you. Eds*

CAN WE USE PRODUCTS NOT REGISTERED FOR CLIVIA OR HOME GARDENS?

It was mentioned in Cape News 10 that the Bayer pamphlet accompanying Confidor mentions the pests and dosages for several different plants, such as fruit trees, vines, vegetables, tobacco and flowering plants. Does the fact that it does not specifically mention Clivia mean we are not supposed (or allowed) to use it on Clivia? Or does the fact that it is not marketed in smaller quantities than 1 litre or through garden shops mean we are not supposed to use it in home gardens? Are there laws, regulations or Codes of Good Practice for this?

One opinion from a Clivia grower with much experience in related fields is that you can use it, but have no recourse if it does not work or you suffer damage from its use. But what about small irregular use invalidating the effectiveness of chemicals for large-scale commercial users, such as farmers?

We await your comments, please.

FOLLOW-UP: USE OF CONFIDOR

In a welcome comment to our article in CCN 10, a very knowledgeable member informed us of the following:

1. There is no difference whatsoever between CONFIDOR and KOHINOR. The manufacturers are checked by international regulating bodies, thus the chemical composition is identical and the effect of the treatment should be the same. *(The criticism of Kohinor and the preference for the "real thing" should perhaps be attributed to brand loyalty or resistance to change. Eds)*
2. We received a quote for a litre of Kohinor that is substantially less than the already discounted price we have paid for the last round of Confidor.
3. The patent for Confidor has not lapsed completely. Once it lapses, because it is an expensive product, there may be a flood of new or pirate products with the same or ostensibly the same composition, possibly at much lower prices. We should all be very careful to check the % of the active ingredient as well as the accreditation of the manufacturer.
4. The shelf life of Confidor should be at least 1 year, but care should be taken to shake the container thoroughly and at length to have a homogenous suspension.
5. According to an expert in the field of pesticides, it is quite possible that the concentration of 1 ml/litre may be effective as a general preventative, but it may be too weak to cure a serious outbreak of Mealy bug infestation. Up to **1 ml per plant** may be needed. This is based on advice from the manufacturers themselves.
6. An overseas reader of CCN has warned against the repetitive scheduled treatment with the same substance. It may breed resistance in some insects, invalidating the use. Various other insecticides should be used at different times. *(This also goes for weaker solutions as mentioned in point 5 above. We shudder to think of super Mealy Bugs repeatedly inoculated against our insecticides. Eds)*
7. It is against the Law to decant, distribute and/or sell hazardous or harmful substances such as Confidor in different containers and without the necessary full warning pamphlets. We wanted to help members of the Club, but it may have serious consequences if an accident happens or a user is irresponsible. PLEASE be careful, destroy the bottle after use and do not supply the stuff to anyone else. Our excuse may be that we are all part of one entity (the Cape Clivia Club) and that the Confidor was bought for and invoiced to the Club, but that may quite possibly not be accepted in court. *(So please keep us out of jail. Eds)*
8. Following from the above, no prices and quantities will be published in future. We will also have to seriously rethink the process of supply to you. *(Can the legal boffins please comment? Eds.)*

9. Although Confidor is a so-called Yellow flag substance, users should still take careful precautions while mixing and using. (For example, gloves should be worn.) Carefully follow the list of precautions on the Bayer pamphlet, which we distributed at the December meeting.

[Angela in Western Australia has responded that Confidor is available in packets of 5x 5g powder there at about AUD \$12.00 = R50. One sachet is mixed with 5 litres of water. John van der Linde says that his sister in Australia sent him some but it has to be applied several times a year, unlike the strength we are using, where once a year is usually enough. This rather emphasizes how much weaker the strength allowed for domestic garden purposes is and how careful we must be using anything stronger.

Angela goes on to say that you can also use the Bayer flea treatment for big dogs - "It's the same stuff you just have to work out the right dilution."

The active ingredient in Confidor is midacloprid (chloro-nicotinyl) 350gm/L. The Bayer product referred to is marketed here as "Secta" and its active ingredient is cypermethrin 750mg/L with peperonyl butoxide 3280mg/L. The equivalent Lopis product is the same. It is available from any vet. for about R50.] *Mick Dower*

(Our thanks to our respondents. Your most welcome comments enrich our publication and our collective knowledge. Eds)

MOTHBALLS FOR YOUR CLIVIA?

One of our members recently bought a succulent from a reputable and very knowledgeable source and was advised to pop a mothball into the pot under the roots when repotting. According to my Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary, Naphthalene is an aromatic hydrocarbon obtained from coal-tar, used in the manufacture of dyes and chemicals **and for soil fumigation!** Mothballs are cheap and long-lasting. Has anyone tried this on Clivia or are you willing to do an experiment?

LARGE FLOWERS

One of Clivia's attractions is the large flower on a large umbel. What is the biggest Clivia flower you have or have seen? Generally 9 cm is considered large, but I have measured flowers of diameter 14.2 cms. Aart van Voorst tells us that changing the chromosomes in Clivia (breeding or manufacturing polyploids) could double the size of Clivia flowers. As a point of reference, I recently came across an article in the National Geographic of April 1992 (referring also to NG of July 1985) that shows a picture of the world's largest flower, 3½ feet wide (just more than a metre!!) It is an orange *Rafflesia arnoldii*, a parasitic plant from the jungles of Borneo. Now that is something to aim for in our breeding programs!!

Or is it? Does size really matter all that much? In my experience, judges at shows will almost always rate a large flower higher than a smaller. I also know several breeders and growers who value large flowers much more than any colouring or shape and will select them continuously as parents. Is that the future of Clivia?

Judges from New Zealand have warned about "balls on sticks" as the main criterion value in our shows. At a show or two ago, a beautiful compact little plant with a small but full round umbel of unusual bright bronze and green colouring and shapely multipetal tepals, was judged first in its class by far, but when it came to "best on show" it lost out completely. I am sure the judges deliberated carefully, but the comments of "we can't have such a small plant as the best on show - we would have to explain why to all the visitors", bothered me. Should size be almost everything?

YELLOWING OF CLIVIA LEAVES

.Dickie Gunston has written as follows in response to the note in Cape News December, 2005, No 10 on yellowing of clivia leaves:
" Here are a few photographs depicting the method I apply to ensure that the leaf heals and the plant is not disfigured in any way.



A template is cut from the lid of a 1 litre ice-cream container to match the contour of the leaf tip. Another is cut to be used as a base to do the cutting on.



The effected leaf is placed on the cutting base and the template on the top of the leaf, half a centimeter from the encroaching yellow discolouring



A Sterilized blade or surgical knife is used to cut the leaf according to the template.

The cut area is immediately treated with "Flowers of Sulphur".

This hygienic, surgical and cosmetic method ensures that the plant is not disfigured and the healing process is initiated properly.

FEEDING CLIVIA - SUPERTHRIVE

There have been several wonder-feeding formulae in the short history of formal growing of Clivia in South Africa. In the wider world of Clivia and in the competitive growing and breeding of other plants, many other magical potions have also been touted. Several of these are actively marketed as we write and read. Superthrive has been discussed intensively on the internet enthusiast discussion groups.

It seems all of these wonder cures have been a well-kept secret regarding the contents, but the results (well, the positive experiences) have

been shouted from the rooftops, or from the Green House entrances and at shows and meetings. Another trait they have in common has been the relative expense ("but considering how little you use and the improved growth you get, it is really cheap!")

How much research has been done about this stuff, before it is praised and sold? Is it that much better than common, mass produced fertilizers? *Would members of the Cape Clivia community please share their experiences?* Just maybe, there is alchemy available which can change lead to gold, or donkeys to race horses, or garden Clivia to Show Winners.....

Having rather unsubtly stated my opinion and no doubt stepped on some toes, let me take Superthrive as an example. After the praises, a hopeful Eric Heine in Stellenbosch decided to try this wonder treatment. As a careful ex veterinary scientist should, he assigned roughly 1000 young plants to the control group which had the same environment and was treated exactly the same as the 1000 in the experimental group. All the plants had been lightly fed with 3:1:5 SR when transplanted about 6 months previously. He treated the experimental plants in the prescribed way with Superthrive at age 1 year, 18 months and 2 years.

During and at the end of the treatment period, he and Harry Muller could see no significant difference at all. Growth had been normal. They investigated the root mass, fully intending to weigh and determine % gains. But after they had removed some 100 plants from the pots in the process of repotting, it was clear that the root mass seemed even smaller in the treated plants. Finally they treated the last plants to double the advised strength and waited another few months. No difference. Eventually he used some of the rest of the solution on some neglected adult plants and they too, remained the same. Just to make sure, he treated a patch of lawn grass, which again, did not appreciably improve. The last he poured down the drain in disgust "and even that did not improve..." Now it would be possible to criticise the experi-

ment, or suggest mediating factors such as acidity or trace elements, but Eric is very sure: "It just does not work!" What do you think?

RIPENING AND PROCESSING CLIVIA SEEDS

Alick McLeman emigrated to New Zealand with his wife and they have established a substantial clivia business there. He was asked by the Interest Group to share his method of processing clivia seeds and it transpired that he followed the advice of our very own Christo Lotter as follows:

"There isn't really any easy way, and I don't make it any easier for myself by processing when the berries are still fairly green and firm. The literature tells us that the seed is viable 6 months after pollination, so I pick my umbels early in May (pollination was in October). I then soak the umbels in vases of sugar water for a few days, a few table spoons of sugar per litre/quart, but it's not an exact science.

In the mid-1990's I bought my first collection of yellow clivia from Christo Lotter in Hermanus in the Cape, a very knowledgeable breeder. Great plants. He recommended this sugar treatment which seems to hasten the ripening process of the berries through the absorption of the sugar, and it has worked well for me over the years. I then leave the umbels to dry out for 3 or 4 weeks, during which time some berries colour, but some don't. It doesn't really matter. *(We strongly recommend that you add a few drops of Spore-kill to the water to keep it clean. Eds.)*

Then I learned a little trick from Keith Hammett here in Auckland, that is to crack or pop the berries between thumb and forefinger, using the other hand to control the pressure. I then allow the popped berries to dry out for 2 or 3 days, or longer, before extracting the

seeds. The pulp dries out a little and it makes the peeling much easier. Perhaps that's why my nails aren't benefiting this year."

Cathy Grimes from California subsequently reported that she had obtained many seeds from Alick and that she had had the most incredible success rate with almost all of these seeds - "the growth rate seems to be almost twice as fast as my standard rate! So, either his method actually 'enhances' the growth of seeds/seedlings, or he has incredibly robust hybrid seeds to begin with. I think there must be some 'inherent' robustness in seeds as I, as well as several other Clivia Enthusiasts I know, have had entire groups of the same seeds from several different growers not only germinate poorly, but succumb to weakness and problems very early on in the seedling stage. Since so many of us have had the same poor rate, I would have to conclude that the problem is with those seeds - and not our growing methods since all of our standard 'success' rates are very high overall."

Mick Dower

WE CAN LEARN FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCE!

Milk as a Pesticide

Denise Wilshire has reported that she had found that a spray of a 50% milk and water solution combated fungi and mealy bugs. David Lewis-Hughs in Australia responded that they had been researching a yoghurt and water spray to counter anthraxnose fungi. Apparently it changes the pH on the leaf surface making it unsuitable for a lot of fungi.

Maximising Variegation

Ian Coates has found that you must keep a variegated plant more shaded than usual to maximize the variegation.

Optimal Growth

In Holland clivia are flowered within 2½ years of sowing by selected breeding and temperature control. Peter Varekamp of Dynaplants says he feeds with a normal balanced fertilizer "with enough iron".

COLOUR INHERITANCE

Our next meeting will be at the Gold Fields Centre at Kirstenbosch on Saturday 6 May, 2006 when we will be privileged to hear Johan Spies explain how colour is inherited in clivia breeding, Johan is the head of plant genetics at the Free State University and this, together with his own passion for breeding clivia, makes him a powerhouse of knowledge on a subject all who breed clivia dearly want to know more about. What greater joy can there be, especially for us oldies, to be able to predict what the colour the seedlings of chosen parents will be, rather than having to wait 4 or 5 years to find out how "hit and miss" crosses flower!

STEM COLOUR

Here is a small foretaste of how exciting Johan's talk will be for all who want to breed new Clivia colours.

As late as 10 years ago you had to pay hundreds of Rand for a yellow clivia because few knew how to breed them. Now you can buy a top class yellow seedling for as little as R50 because most clivia enthusiasts know that if you cross pollinate most yellows they produce seedlings which you know will flower yellow because they are green stemmed.

But how many know that you can get green stemmed seedlings that will flower peach or that all pigmented seedlings do not flower orange - some can flower beautiful pastel colours.

It is important to know what the parents are when guessing whether you can predict the potential flower colour of a seedling from its stem colour, without having to grow it on for years before it flowers.

So don't reject pigmented seedlings whose parents have the potential to produce new colours. Riel Lotter selected only the green stemmed seedlings from a cross he had made between a

good yellow he had obtained from Brian Upsdale in Oudtshoorn with a Giddy Natal Yellow. Johan Botha took over the pigmented seedlings, all of which produced stunning pastel flowers. The best one he magnanimously gave back to Riel and this is its photo.

The Upsdale plant was unfortunately destroyed because it appeared to have virus - which is not easily identified in Clivia - so take very expert advice before taking any such drastic steps.



CHRISMARIE

Colour inheritance potential is also illustrated by "Katie D.", a pastel mother, pollinated with yellow and with red as shown below.



KATIE D..



EMMA LESLIE, 2005



Emma Leslie sibling



KATIE D. GHOSTING



KATIE D. x IMPERIAL

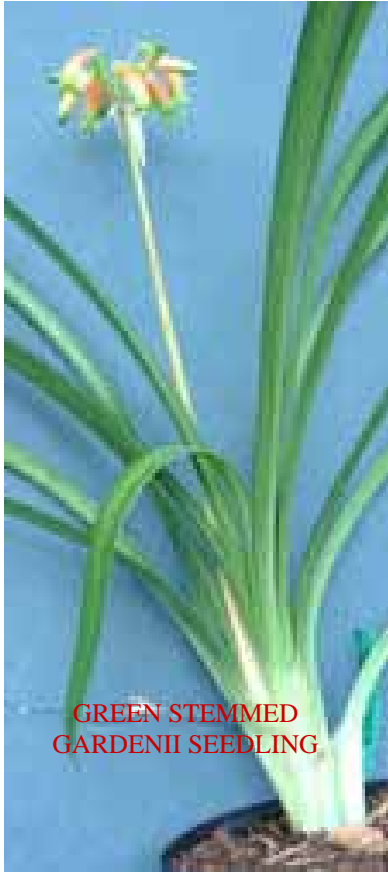


Ella van Zijl x de Villiers
Variegated Peach

But

C. GARDENII

behave quite differently. Four seedlings were bought from SANBI at the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair last year because their stems had no pigment. One is now in flower - see its photo! Brian Tarr, who curates the KZN Garden at Pietermaritzburg, has always maintained that you can not predict the flower colour of a gardenii seedling from its stem colour, and he is clearly right.



I hope that this will excite enough interest to bring you all to Johan's talk and hopefully learn how to take some of the guesswork out of breeding for colour.

Mick Dower

PLANT AUCTION

Kirstenbosch has a surplus of Appleblossom complex suckers and it has been proposed that these should be the focus of an auction of offsets of top quality plants to be held in conjunction with our September Show. Our members have many such plants and every one is invited to submit entries to any member of the Committee.

OVERBERG INTEREST GROUP

Felicity Weeden reports that this Interest Group had its first meeting of the year on Saturday 8th April. 8 members attended and a very lively and interesting morning followed.

Andre van Rhijn once again enthralled them with his superb Chinese cultivars, and guided them with detailed information on various facets of clivia growing.

In keeping with the culture of sharing in the Mother Club, Andre donated a tray of mixed seedlings, including yellows and possible peaches and pastels, which were bought by the members to provide funds.

Although tea and cake is always donated, it was decided that each would contribute R5 for these to supplement the funds.

It was decided to have four meetings a year, but space these between the Cape meetings.

The dates decided on for the rest of this year are:

3rd June - Hoping John van der Linde will show his N.Z. slides.

19th August - How to prepare plants for showing and dealing with seed and seed germination.

11th November - Social of some sort - decision to be made later.

The venue is usually 25 Guinea Fowl Lane, Glen Fruin Meadows, Hermanus.

Any of the Cape members who would like to join any of these meetings, would be most welcome.