

Plant Cultivation Notes

Clivia miniata

Introduction:

Clivia are fantastic plants for the house, conservatory and even a shaded spot on a patio, during the summer. They are grown for their bold strap-shaped, dark-green leaves and trumpet-shaped red, yellow, orange or cream flowers borne in groups on stout stems. Clivia are evergreen perennials with a swollen bulb-like base. They originate from low-altitude woodlands in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces of South Africa.

Cultivation:

Clivia are frost tender and will show damage at temperatures below 5°C. Prolonged exposure to sub 0°C will kill your Clivia. So Clivia in the UK should be grown as a houseplant, in a conservatory or warm greenhouse, however they do benefit, after flowering, from a spell outside in a shaded spot, but only while night time temperatures remain warm (10°C +). Clivia do best in bright, filtered or indirect light. Avoid direct sun in summer, which may scorch the leaves, and place pots away from radiators or other sources of heat when in the house, particularly in winter.

Potting up and soil mix:

Potting up is only needed every 3 to 4 years and should only be done in late spring. Plants bought from us do not need potting up for at least 2 years. When needed, pot up in well-drained, loam-based John Innes No 2 compost mixed with multi-purpose compost or additional leaf mould and add lots of grit or better still Hydroleca. Do not plant too deeply, the neck of the bulb should be above soil level. Do not over pot, meaning only pot up into a pot just bigger than the existing one.

Yearly cycle:

Clivia perform best when the natural temperature shifts of their wild habitat are mimicked. To regularly produce flowers Clivia need a cool period of 10°C, from November to February. After this, water sparingly, applying a balanced fertiliser weekly until the flower buds form, then move to a well-lit position with a temperature of around 16°C. After flowering (usually late spring or early summer), remove spent flower stems near the base, unless you want seeds, and reduce watering slightly. Water very sparingly through winter, but do not allow the containers to dry out. We stand our Clivia on trays or saucers filled with Hydroleca Clay Granules, this ensures that roots are not waterlogged but kept just moist.

Pests and Cultivation Problems:

Clivia are generally trouble-free, suffering few pests and diseases. However, conspicuous tufts of white, waxy wool appearing on the leaves indicates an infestation of mealybug, which may be troublesome. Mealybug should be washed off and removed with a cloth, brush or similar. Slugs and snails can also cause damage to flowers and leaves, particularly when outside in summer, so keep an eye out!

Non-flowering can be due to plants being over-potted (too large a container too soon) or plants kept at too high a temperature during winter. Insufficient water when in active growth may also lead to the flower buds failing to develop and dieback of foliage tips.

Yellowing of foliage may be due to inadequate feeding or overwatering that leads to water logging of the soil and root rot. To check, knock the plant out of its container. Any dead or rotten roots should be cut away and sour, waterlogged compost should be replaced with a free draining mix as described earlier. Yellowing can also be caused by under watering.

Brown patches on leaves can be due to scorching due to over exposure to strong sunlight. Where Clivia flower on a short stalk and the blooms are hidden by the foliage, the cause is likely to be an insufficient cool period over the winter. Remember, from November to February keep Clivia at a temperature of around 10°C.