



The Clivia Quarterly

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www.northamericancliviasociety.org

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From the President's Desk

Jim Shields

Our very first auction was a great success. Successful bids totaled over \$2000 for the donated plants and seeds. Thanks to everyone who participated. We are enthusiastic about distributing our newsletter The Clivia Quarterly in print format. So look forward to receiving it in full color.

Our membership has grown to over 95, which is a great accomplishment, since we have been in existence for less than a year. We appreciate you, our members, and we thank you for your support.

So where do we go from here?

We were incorporated in the State of Indiana as a not-for-profit organization on 16 December, 2003, as North American Clivia Society, Inc.

Our first annual meeting will take place on March 20, 2004 in Southern California at the Fullerton Arboretum. We will have blooming clivias in many

colors on display. Vendors have been invited to sell seeds and plants. (Fullerton will receive a share of the sales.)

There will be lectures by clivia growers and you will have a chance to ask questions and talk with well-known experts. We hope you can all come. See you there.

Our next step administratively will be to apply for recognition of non-profit status and to apply to the I.R.S. for classification as a 501(c)(3) public charity as an educational and scientific organization. That will make gifts to NACS deductible from donors' taxable income in the U.S.A.

Editor's Message

The auction has been a great success thanks to our generous donors, enthusiastic bidders, and Marc Hamel who ran the auction smoothly and efficiently. Tom Wells efforts in collecting donations was vital. We could not have had an auction without him.

Plan on attending the upcoming Clivia Exhibit at the Fullerton Arboretum on March 20th. See the President's message. There will be over 150 clivias in bloom in an assortment of colors. There will also be plants and seeds for sale. You can attend free lectures and demonstrations. Dr Harold Koopowitz will be there for book-signing. This is your opportunity to meet the author of that great book, Clivias.

Highlights

- Letter from the president
- Editor's Message
- Sir Peter Smithers and Vico Yellow
- Seed Germination
- Seasonal Clivia Chores
- 2003 Auction
- Color Charts
- Membership and Dues

Watch for a new feature column in the next issue of the Clivia Quarterly. I think you will enjoy it.

Don't forget that this is your Newsletter. Send in comments, feedback, and suggestions for future articles. Please be an active member of your society.

Happy Clivia Growing,

Agnes Bardossy
Editor

Board of Director Notes

We are pleased to announce that Kathy Andersen has taken on the position of Secretary for the North American Clivia Society and Marc Hamel is now the Director of Membership.

Sir Peter Smithers and 'Vico Yellow' The Clivia Under the Bench

Jim Shields



Vico Yellow – Photo by Yoshi Nakamura via courtesy of Sir Peter Smithers

Clivia 'Vico Morcote' of Sir Peter Smithers is a classic yellow cultivar of *Clivia miniata citrina*.

The flowers are up to 4 inches across, opening in a wide funnel shape with the petal and sepal tips

flared back. It is a very sturdy plant, but perhaps somewhat slow growing. Sir Peter sent a division of it to Japan, where it was micropropagated in tissue cultured by Myoshi & Co. in Tokyo. I obtained small explants of 'Vico Yellow' in vitro in 1998 from Japan by way of Steve Vinisky in Oregon. Of my five original plants, two have bloomed as of 2003.



Sir Peter Smithers

courtesy of Jim Shields

In 1996, I had the great pleasure of visiting Sir Peter Smithers at his mountainside home in Vico Morcote, in the canton of Ticino, Switzerland.

Sir Peter was born and grew up in the United Kingdom. He had a life long interest in flowers of all sorts. During the Second World War, he was a lieutenant in Naval Intelligence in the Royal Navy. Stationed in Mexico and Central America to keep an eye on the German activities there for the UK, he managed to explore a great deal of the botany of the area at the same time. After stints in Parliament and various government jobs, he finished up his political and diplomatic career in Strasbourg, France, as the first Secretary General of the European Coal and Steel Union, the original progenitor of the European Economic Community and today's European Union.



Vico Morcote, Switzerland

courtesy of Jim Shields

Sir Peter retired in 1972 to southern Switzerland, where he built a beautiful home high on a mountainside overlooking Lake Lugano, in the village of Vico Morcote. Here he created his hybrid 'Vico Yellow' which he named after the mountain village where he retired. He has continued his interest in both politics and plants since then.

The story of 'Vico Yellow' and 'Vico Gold' has been told by Sir Peter in many places. You can see his own words in his autobiography, "Adventures of a Gardener" or on the web at <http://www.shieldsgardens.com/amaryllids/CliviaVicoYellow.html>

'Vico Yellow' is a light yellow flower, from a cross that had produced mainly orange flowered plants. Sitting among the discarded seedlings left under a greenhouse bench, when this one eventually flowered for the first time, it turned out to be an outstanding yellow. Sir Peter then kept it, and later sent a division to Japan. There, it eventually made its way to Yoshikazu Nakamura, who proclaimed it to be the world's finest yellow clivia.

Reference:

"Adventures of a Gardener" by Peter Smithers, pub. by The Harvill Press with the Royal Horticultural Society, London, 1995.

Seed Germination

Tom Wells

For months, I would watch and carefully mist seeds without very much success. At times it took 3-4 months for a group of difficult seedlings to germinate. Knowing that it was my fault, I started to ask other growers what I was doing wrong. Advice was supplied from a number of sources, all good and useful. There were some suggestions that were common to all growers.

* The seeds, if fresh from the berries, need to be air-dried for approximately 7 days or more.

*Seeds should be soaked in water for about 24 hours (less if the seeds have been just cleaned). I have always used tap water, but some people recommend bottled water.

*All seeds should be washed with an anti-bacterial agent before soaking. I use a plain anti-bacterial hand soap for mine. It has proven highly effective in stopping fungal growth on seeds.

Success for me has been to soak seeds in a zip-lock plastic bag. I drain the water after the allotted time, then with a slight amount of moisture still in the bag (any water I could not shake out the bottom with the seeds still in the bag) I reseal the plastic, place it in a small, sealed cardboard box, and place it on top of my refrigerator. Most people find that the temperature on top of the refrigerator is warm and remains constant. This aids germination. After several weeks, I have found most, but not all, the seeds to have radicles and to be ready to transfer to growing liners.



seeds germinating in plastic bag

courtesy of Tom Wells

For those “Hardheads” which still have not germinated, a 24 hour visit into the refrigerator is in order. After this cooling off period, I place the seeds between moist paper towels, tuck them back into the plastic bag and return them to the cardboard box nice and snug and warm on top of the refrigerator.

I no longer agonize for months over non-germinating seeds. Now, if I have forgotten to check the seeds on top of the refrigerator for a while, to my delight, I find inch long seedlings with leaves already appearing on the plantlets. This method of seed germination has been a very successful process.

My neighbor, on the other hand, uses a different approach from mine. But, more on that later in another issue.



MC² Interspecific grown by Lila Bishop now owned by Tom Wells

Seasonal Clivia Chores: Winter in the North

Jim Shields

Winter is the time to rest your Clivia plants and prepare them for the spring blooming season. They should be given little or no fertilizer after Labor Day. Gradually decrease the watering as the nights grow cooler. Move to a cool but frost-free location before the first light frosts strike your area.

Clivia *miniata* hybrids, for the most part, require three or four weeks of chilling at temperatures around 50°F (“vernalization”) to release the latent scapes already formed in the heart of the plants. Clivias will tolerate brief exposures to temperatures as low as 33° or 34°F, and these will count as time at or below 50°F. In a greenhouse, on sunny days the temperatures will rise well above 55°F, and this may lengthen the overall time required for vernalizing your plants.

When you feel your clivias have put in sufficient hours of chilling, you can bring them back to a temperature of 60° to 65°F. Don’t start to water them the first week you have them back at the warmer temperatures. Let them adjust first to their new environment. After that, you can begin to give them a little water at a time.



emerging scape

courtesy of Marc Hamel

When you see the first flower scape starting to appear in the heart of the plant, you can step up the watering a bit and start feeding at the same time. It has been stated somewhere that potassium deficiency can cause the stunting of the peduncle (the flowering stalk). Feed with a soluble plant food that is high in potassium (symbol K, sometimes called “potash”). I use Peters 20-20-20 (N-P-K) at about one-fourth label strength or even lower.

Excessively high or low temperatures can also cause the bloom stalk to stunt. Try to keep your flowering plants between 65°F and 75°F until the bloom stalk is full height and the flowers start to open. At that point, keeping the temperatures at the

low end of the scale will markedly extend the duration of the time when the blooms look their best.

NACS Auction 2003

Marc Hamel

The North American Clivia Society held its first fundraising auction in December. The auction ran from November 29 until December 14 and was for all of us on the Board of Directors a resounding success. We raised over \$2000 for the Society. All of us would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all of the donors who gave so generously. We had 7 excellent plants, including a Sir John Thouron which took the top bid, as well as 18 varieties of seed, with one batch of 5 seeds going for as high as \$76.00 (a cross of 'Doris' x 'Sabrina Delphine'). We had some very generous bidders in our group as well, and to all of them we extend our warmest thanks.



Sir John Thouron

courtesy of Dave Conway

As this was our first attempt at running an auction, we had no idea how best to handle the bidding. We had to keep in mind that we had members who do not have access to the internet or email, and so we could not hold a purely "eBay" style of auction, and yet we hesitated to make this a phone in auction only as there was no reason not to let people bid electronically. In the end we decided to write a letter to all members announcing the auction and letting them know that they could either phone in

their bids to me at home, or email the bids. I on the other hand would try to answer each email as quickly as possible letting the bidder know if she or he was the current high bidder, or if the bid was on the phone letting the bidder know if she or he would win with their current bid. From November 29th until December 14th at 9:30 pm this worked just fine. At 9:30 the real fun began! People were now bidding in earnest for the plant or seeds that they truly wanted. Emails were arriving faster than I could post the bids and respond, and all the time the phone was ringing. It proved to be a more hectic time than I had anticipated, but no less fun than I was expecting. And I would like to extend my thanks to all the bidders for their patience, cooperation and good cheer.



Tessa

courtesy of Dave Conway

Finally 10:00 pm arrived and I went to work tallying the final bids and determining the winners. By 10:30 I had posted the result to the NACS website and had emailed all of those who had won. Luckily all of the winners had access to email and so I sent each a notice of his or her winnings. To my knowledge there were only 2 minor glitches in the whole proceeding. One winner, because of the way her provider had set up her email account, was not getting any of my responses to her bids and so had no way of knowing that she had won until seeing the result on the website! The other glitch had to do with the speed of email delivery. Two bidders had sent bids before the 10:00 pm deadline, which did not appear in my mailbox until after 8:00 am the following morning. One of these was not a winning bid, but one of them would have won if

received in time. I felt badly for the bidder. I mentioned the problem to our Vice President Tom Wells who contacted the donor and found out that there were still some seeds of that cross available, and so we were able to supply that bidder with seeds.



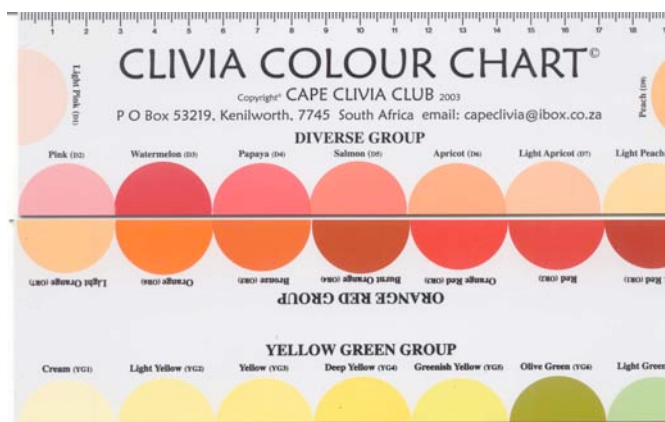
Victorian Peach

courtesy of Victor Murillo

All in all it turned out to be a lot of fun for all involved.

Color Charts

We still have a few of the newly created color cards from Mick Dower and the Cape Clivia Club of South Africa. The charts should be helpful in standardizing our discussions on flower color. The charts can be obtained from Tom Wells for \$10.00 for NACS members and \$14.00 for non members. You can contact Tom at his email address ernestwells@mindspring.com or at his home address of 4661 Jeanean Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92886



Membership and Dues

Marc Hamel, *Director of Membership*

As any fledgling organization, NACS has been struggling with the question of dues and terms of membership. A number of people have written to me asking for clarification on the renewal schedule for their memberships. This is a question that the board of directors has been discussing for some time now and finally come to an agreement. We will have a schedule of membership that runs on a calendar year with a cutoff date of September 1. So if you pay your dues between September 2, 2003 and September 1, of this year, you will have paid your 2004 dues. Dues paid after September 1, 2004 will be automatically applied as 2005 dues. If you paid your dues before September 1, 2003, then you now need to send in your renewal. If anyone has any questions about their payment dates, they can contact me directly at msh@hlstudio.com or at my home phone, 978-355-4933. I hope this does not further confuse you!