

Clivia miniata

Bush Lily

Ever since the English botanist, William Burchell, discovered *Clivia nobilis* in 1815 at the mouth of the Great Fish River in Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, *Clivia*

species and hybrids have been favourites of gardeners around the world. *Clivia* was named after Lady Charlotte Florentine Clive, granddaughter of Major-General Robert Clive, better known as 'Clive of India' who first cultivated and flowered the *type* specimen of *Clivia*, *C. nobilis* in her garden in England.

The orange-red flowered *Clivia miniata*, without doubt the most popular *Clivia* grown in Australia, was discovered in KwaZulu-Natal in the 1850s. 'Miniata' means 'the colour of red lead' or 'cinnabar'. The yellow form was not discovered until about 1888.

In its natural environment in southern Africa, *Clivia miniata* grows in a range of habitats from subtropical coastal forest to forested gullies at high altitudes. Surprisingly, it can also be found growing as an epiphyte in forks of trees.



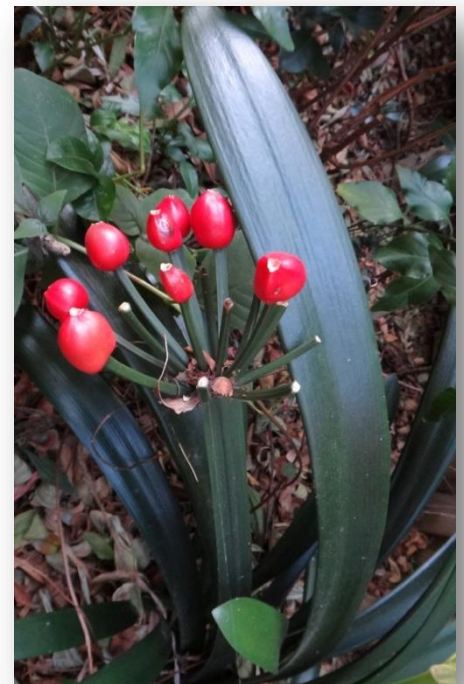
The large, relatively simple flowers of *Clivia* are ideal for teaching. In the early 1970s before gardens had been established at Macquarie, *Clivia* flowers were difficult to source in sufficient numbers for classes. Macquarie was fortunate to have a good friend in botanist Surrey Jacobs who would collect *Clivia* flowers in the very early hours of the morning from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. He would be



at the main gate to Mrs Macquaries Road before 7.30 am to hand over the glorious garden treasures to Sam McKay, then Laboratory Manger in the School of Biological Sciences, and Sam would have them back at Macquarie in time for 9 am practical classes.



Although they are referred to as 'Bush Lilies', *Clivia* are only distantly related to 'true lilies'. So they don't belong to the lily family (Liliaceae), rather to the *Amaryllis* (Amaryllidaceae) family, a family believed to have its origins in southern Africa. The petals and stamens of *Clivia* emerge from the top of the ovary whereas those of true lilies are produced from below the ovary.



References:

South African National Biodiversity Institute, South Africa:

<http://www.plantzafrika.com/plantcd/cliviaminiata.htm>

Meerow AW, Fay MF, Guy CL, Li QB, Zaman FQ, Chase MW (1999) Systematics of Amaryllidaceae based on cladistic analysis of plastid sequence data. *American Journal of Botany*, 86(9):1325-1345.

Map modified from *Encyclopedia of Life*:

<http://eol.org/pages/1086961/maps>

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