

## Clivia in China

The first clivias reached Japan from Europe in 1854. Early in the 20th Century Clivia had been brought to China (Qing Dao province) by a German missionary. Some reports state that this took place in the late 19th century. A second group of Clivia was taken to China by a Japanese by the name of Tamura after the invasion of China by Japan in 1931. After the 2nd World War these clivias remained at the Emperor's palace. In 1942 the Emperor's second concubine died and a clivia plant was displayed at her funeral. This plant did not return to the palace and remained at the temple. A monk at the temple then continued to cultivate this plant, which was named "Monk".



*broadleaf monk X daruma*

From the plants at the palace two plants were given as gifts: one to the Chanchun Tung Hsing Dyeing Factory, which became known as "Dyeing Factory", and the second to the Chanchun Sheng Li Park after the liberation, and which was fittingly called "Victory". Until the 1950's plants only became available as offsets (suckers). In the early 1960's some growers started to pollinate plants and a cross-breeding union was established. In 1963 some plants (Monk) from the temple became available to the public and trade. During the 1976 Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards tried to destroy all remnants of the old society, including Clivia plants.

However, in 1980 it was estimated that about 150 000 families in Changchun still grew some clivias. The official flower of Changchun on 11th October 1984 the Clivia was named the flower of Changchun. After this some nationalised companies, private groups, and individuals came together and formed a large-scale society to research and enhance Clivia cultivation. This organisation soon had 24000 members.

The cultivation objectives were:

- Aesthetics - To have a plant that could be appreciated all year round
- Leaf - Viewing the leaf is better than the flower
- Flower - Beautiful leaf with a captivating flower
- Shape - Graceful style of clivia "Light of Buddha"



*Light of Buddha Clivia*

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First found in China by Mr. Wo Bo many years ago, the “Light of Buddha” was initially a plant with narrow leaves. About 15 years ago Mr. Bo started with a breeding program using a broad-leaf Japanese Daruma as pollen parent. At first the Chinese public did not want to buy the LOB as they believed that the plants suffered from a disease similar to a skin disease affecting humans! However, large number of plants and seeds were purchased by Mr. Nakamura.

The characteristics of Light of Buddha plants are bright green shiny leaves with distinct cream / white bands. New leaves are always a bright yellow with very little green, turning green with age. The leaves have distinct veins. The Chinese concentrated their breeding of Light of Buddha plants on the leaf appearance. On some LOB plants the variegation appears to be the same as on Akebono. Considering its history this mutation could be from the same gene pool as the Japanese Akebono.

The Chinese refer to it as Akebono variegation using the Japanese word, but it still must be shown whether the two are physiologically the same or not. As with other forms of variegation, inheritance of the LOB variegation appears to be from the mother plant. LOB can produce up to 80% variegated seedlings, which show variegation at the 1-4 leaf stage. LOB variegation improves with age. About 8% seedlings can show normal variegation which could change to LOB as the plant grow older.

**“Henglan”** - Henglan was developed around 1992 by crossing Chinese Round Tip with Japanese Daruma. The leaf length should not to exceed 150mm, and the leaf width to length ratio should be 1-1.5:1, with round leaf tips. Henglan is used as a pollen parent only, as it has very strong dwarf genes, and will reduce leaf length by approximately 1/3. At present when using Henglan pollen on variegated Daruma very few good quality variegated Henglan seedlings are obtained.



*Henglan Clivia*

**“Sparrow”** - Sparrow Clivia were produced from an offset mutation from Chinese Clivia, about 12 years ago.



*Sparrow Clivia*

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**“Broad Leaves”** - Broad leaves are mainly achieved by crossing short leaf Monk with Japanese Daruma, with leaves reported to reach up to 180 mm wide. Growers with extremely good plants, however, are very secretive and release little information about them. Visitors who are trusted may have the privilege of seeing some of these unique plants, but almost 7 without exception they refuse permission for their plants to be photographed. Such plants are so prized that no price can be attached to them or insurance cover arranged! They are not such attractive plants as the leaves become too heavy and pendulous. To grow broad leaves the pot temperature should be maintained at 15-24 degrees C. Plants should not be allowed to carry seeds as this deforms the leaf shape.

With all their excellent tunnels and growing houses the Chinese, Japanese, Belgians, Netherlands and Americans are light years ahead of South African growers, as they can control all aspects within these houses, while our clivias must “grin and bear it” with the elements in our shade houses.

In the controlled environments of Asian, European and American plant houses the plants build up little resistance to pests and plagues as these are not allowed in. Inside these plant houses humidity, temperature, feeding, irrigation, ventilation and light are controlled as in the intensive care unit of a heart hospital.

- **“Monk”** The width of the leaves is 90-110mm. The plants are classified into three groups, according to leaf length, with a ratio of length-width of 3:1 -5:1: **Long-leaf Monk** - More than 450mm **Medium-leaf Monk** - Leaves between 350mm-450 mm **Short-leaf Monk**- Leaves less than 350mm



*Monk Clivia*

- **“Daruma Monk”** When the leaves are longer, they are narrower. The leaves have much more shine and more defined veins than other forms. As the leaves become shorter and wider, so does their habit - they are more upright, in contrast to the more normal pendulous habit. The leaf width of **Daruma Monks** is 90mm-150mm, with a ratio length-width of 1.5:1- 2.5:1 **Long-leaf Daruma Monk** - More than 250 mm **Medium-leaf Daruma Monk** - Leaves between 200 mm-250 mm **Short-leaf Daruma Monk** - Leaves less than 200 mm.

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*Daruma Monk Clivia*

Daruma plants were brought into China from Japan about 18 years ago. "Round Tip" Chinese Round Tip plants have been developed from Monk plants.

©These notes were made by Sakkie Nel from Andre van Rhyn's presentation of "Clivia in China" to the members of the Northern Clivia Club in February 2004. Sakkie (I H J) Nel, Pretoria



*C. miniata daruma monk hybrid*