

Feeding Clivia Plants: Best Practices for Healthy Growth

Clivias are flowering plants native to South Africa, known for their vibrant blooms and ability to thrive in low-light conditions. With proper care, these plants can be a stunning addition to any home or garden. In this guide, we will explore the essential aspects of feeding clivia plants to promote their health and vibrant flowers. From fertiliser types and frequency to the importance of light exposure and watering techniques, we will provide you with the knowledge to help your clivia plants flourish. Whether you're a beginner gardener or an experienced horticulturist, understanding how to feed clivia plants is key to their success, so let's dive in!

What You'll Learn



What fertiliser to use

Clivia plants require fertiliser to boost growth and flowering. There are a few different types of fertilisers that can be used, depending on the time of year and the specific needs of your plant.

In early spring and autumn, it is recommended to use a controlled-release organic fertiliser for flowering plants. This will provide the clivia with the nutrients it needs to produce vibrant blooms. It is important to avoid using high-nitrogen fertilisers, as these can be detrimental to the plant's health.

During the summer to early autumn, specialist growers suggest using a high potash fertiliser to promote increased flowering. A liquid fertiliser

with a high potash content is ideal for this purpose and can be applied regularly.

Monthly liquid feeding with a fertiliser like Aquaticus Garden Booster is also recommended from spring through to the end of autumn. This encourages root growth and increases microbial activity in the soil, which is beneficial for the overall health of the plant.

Additionally, for clivia plants grown indoors, a general house plant fertiliser can be applied weekly once the flower spike becomes visible. This should be continued until the end of summer to ensure the plant receives the necessary nutrients for healthy growth and flowering.

How often to feed

Clivia plants should be fed with fertiliser once a month from spring through to the end of autumn. This encourages root growth and increases microbial activity in the soil.

In early spring and autumn, a controlled-release organic fertiliser for flowering plants should be used. In summer to early autumn, a high potash fertiliser can be beneficial.

From April to August, a 1/4 strength, water-soluble 20:20:20 fertiliser can be used. Stop fertilising in early fall.

Weekly feeding with a general liquid houseplant fertiliser throughout spring can boost growth and flowering.

When to feed

Clivia plants should be fed at different times of the year depending on the climate and conditions they are kept in.

Clivia plants are native to South Africa and prefer to mimic the climate and conditions of their natural habitat. In South Africa, clivias receive all their rainfall in the summer, and go through the winters with very little water. Therefore, if you are growing clivia in a temperate climate, it is recommended to feed the plant regularly during the summer and autumn months and then reduce feeding and water in the winter months.

For example, one source recommends feeding the plant every month with a 1/4 strength, water-soluble 20:20:20 fertiliser, from April until early fall. Another source recommends a controlled-release organic fertiliser for flowering plants in early spring and autumn, and regular liquid fertilising in summer to early autumn with a high potash fertiliser.

If you are growing clivia as a houseplant, the plant will benefit from a period of cool, dry conditions in the winter to initiate flowering. From November to February, the plant should be kept in a cool but bright spot, at a temperature of around 10°C (50°F), and watered sparingly. In March, the plant should be moved back to a warmer location of around 16°C (60°F), and the feeding should be resumed with a weekly balanced liquid houseplant feed until flower buds' form.

If you are growing clivia in a conservatory or greenhouse, the plant will benefit from being moved outdoors for the summer months, after hardening off, into a warm, sheltered spot. The plant should be kept out of direct sunlight and brought back indoors before night temperatures fall too low.

How to water

Clivia plants require regular watering, but it is crucial not to over-water them. They prefer to be kept on the dry side. Watering once or twice a week in spring and summer will keep the soil moist. However, it is essential to reduce watering during the winter months, as Clivia plants are prone to root rot in soggy compost.

When growing Clivia plants, it is important to adjust the watering according to the season. During the summer, water regularly but moderately, ensuring the compost stays damp without becoming wet. From November to March, create a resting period for the plant by keeping it in a cool place with a maximum temperature of 10°C (50°F) and watering sparingly.

In spring, as the flower buds develop, gradually increase watering. During summer and autumn, maintain regular watering to keep the compost moist. In winter, water sparingly to prevent the compost from drying out completely but be cautious not to overwater. A dry spell during winter stimulates flowering.

When your Clivia plant has finished flowering (usually between April and August), resume regular watering and relocate the plant to a warmer location. The plant should begin to bloom again within 6-12 weeks.

How to prune

Pruning your clivia is a simple task that involves the following steps:

Deadheading: Once your clivia has finished flowering, it is important to deadhead the plant. Cut off the faded flower heads and stalks at the base to prevent seed formation. This will encourage the plant to put its energy into producing more flowers instead of seeds.

Removing Fading Leaves: Remove any yellowing or damaged leaves by cutting or stripping them downwards. This will help to tidy up the appearance of the plant and promote healthy growth.

Dividing the Plant: After flowering, you can also divide a thriving clump of clivia to create new plants. Gently remove the plant from its pot and carefully separate the offsets (young plants) from the parent plant.

Ensure that each offset has enough roots before replanting them in well-drained soil and keeping them in a shaded area.

Pruning for Propagation: If you wish to propagate your clivia by seed, you will need to prune the plant to collect the seeds. Allow the berries to ripen and turn red, then remove the seeds. You can then sow the seeds in individual small pots of moist seed compost. Place the pots in a warm spot, as germination can take up to 2 months.

Overall, pruning your clivia is a straightforward process that involves deadheading, removing fading leaves, and dividing the plant if desired. By following these steps, you can encourage healthy growth and promote more flowering in your clivia plant.