

Clivia nobilis (Lindley)

Lindley, J. (1828). *Clivia nobilis*. *Edwards's Botanical Register* 14: t.1182.

The genus was named in the honour of the Duchess of Northumberland whose family name was Clive, and whose garden at Syon House just across the river from Kew was famous at that time.

When the botanist J. Lindley described *Clivia* in 1828, he based the species on *Clivia nobilis* which makes this the “type species” of the genus. In other words, the original description of the genus would have been identical to the description for the species. As more species were discovered, the generic description expanded to accommodate them so the description of *Clivia nobilis* remains the first and most essential concept of the genus.

Distribution

C. nobilis is only found in the Eastern Cape Province, concentrated towards the coast, from just north of the Sundays River Mouth, extending up along the coast to the Mbashe River area, with colonies occurring as far inland as the vicinity of Grahamstown.

Habitat



The distribution range of *C. nobilis* is located in the Albany Centre and the southern part of the Maputaland-Pondoland Region of endemism, with the Albany Centre representing a southwards extension of the Maputaland-Pondoland Region of endemism, but with the presence of Cape floristic and Karroid elements giving the centre its own distinct character. Both also contain enclaves of Afromontane forests.

The coastal areas have a mild climate (9-25°C) and receive 600-900 mm rainfall annually. Inland areas have frost and snow in the winter rising to 45°C maximum summer temperatures and ~250 mm mean annual precipitation.

C. nobilis is found under evergreen forest, low bush (thicket) and amongst dune vegetation. Inland populations are found in wooded kloofs where they grow on riverbanks, rocky outcrops and along forest margins. Populations are usually more exposed on primary coastal dunes with their low canopy cover (2-5 m). In dunes the plants grow in sea sand with lots of humus/decomposing leaves originating from the canopy overhead. Some plants on the top of dunes grow in full sunlight.

Plant size

In dunes away from the sea, *C. nobilis* plants are long-leaved and large with long extended root systems, growing under high, closed canopy. Mid-way up the dunes, short-leaved plants with smaller rooting systems are found under a low 2-3 m canopy.

Leaves

The leaves are stiff, slightly rough to smooth with a rough edge, strap-shaped, 300-800 mm long, 25-50 mm broad, with a moderate to weak median stripe. The leaf tip is indented to very obtuse.

Flowers

The inflorescence consists of an umbel of 20-60 flowers borne on a peduncle about 300 mm long the flowers are dark orange with green tips but vary from pinkish yellow to dark red. They are pendulous tubular, about 11 mm wide and 25 – 40 mm long. The stamens are inserted at the throat of the tube, as long as the segments and the style is a little longer than the stamens, exerted about 6 mm.

Berries

Round to teardrop shaped and usually containing 1 to 2 seeds covered in a distinctive purplish-red membrane, the mature red berries take about 9 months to ripen. The radicle produced by the germinating seed is very thin, about 1.5 mm thick.