

Clivia Market Blog

Information and news from Clivia Market



Why won't my Clivia flower?

This is a question I have heard many times over. It can be frustrating when you have waited and are excited about the flowering season only to find your plant doesn't flower.

There are so many reasons why a plant does not flower.

Age of the plant

My first question is 'How old is the plant?' Often people buy a *Clivia* seedling at a market or nursery not realising that it can take around five years to reach flowering size. This comes as a shock to those that thought the plant would be fast growing and flower within two years. Some buyers are told that the plant will flower when it reaches 4 years of age, or when it has 11

leaves. This is only a guide and not necessarily accurate. All plants are different and reach maturity at different times. I have had plants flower at 3 – 4 years of age and yet I have other plants that are now 10 years old and I am still waiting. The species, *C. nobilis*, is notoriously slow to flower often taking more than 10 years.

Health of the plant

With *C. miniata*, the flower embryo develops around January/February time-frame and the plant flowers in September. If the plant was stressed or was in bad condition around this time, the flower embryo may not develop. Even if the health of the plant improves after this and looks great in September, it may have missed flowering due to its health at that critical time of development.

Clivia love a good fertilisation regularly. Although *Clivia* in the garden may flower for many years without being fertilised, the flowers do tend to become more scarce and smaller. A good regular fertilisation will keep the plant healthy and producing flowers each year.

Environmental conditions

Clivia are subject to weather conditions like other plants. They need at least 6 weeks of cold weather to flower. After this cold spell, the warming temperatures prompt the plant to commence flowering. Plants that are kept in pots inside a warm house may miss this cold spell and not flower. Best to put an inside plant out on an outside verandah or cold room for a while. In some countries where it gets to freezing point over winter, growers keep their plants in a basement or garage where it is cool but not freezing.

Clivia can flower at slightly different times each year depending on if we have had a cold winter or a warmish winter. Although most *C. miniata* flower in September, some are a little slower and may flower in October or November.

The amount of light seems to also be a factor. I have seen a huge array of lovely healthy plants planted in the ground under a forest of tall trees. They rarely flower and I believe it is because it is too dark for them. 'Bright shade' is the best.

Often a first time flowering plant will not flower the second year. Perhaps the energy involved in producing the flower and usually berries as well, exhausts the plant. Some growers will not pollinate a first time flower. Every now and again it seems that even a plant that flowers regularly will take a break.

Potash

Many people swear by using Potash to promote flowering. I have tried Potash for the last few years, just a small amount sprinkled around the plant and then watered in. Knowing the flower embryo develops around January/February, I use the Potash in November/December. I cannot say whether it has worked or not. Some plants have flowered when I didn't think they would but others that I felt should have flowered, did not. I will keep using the Potash as it can't do any harm and anything that may help flowers to develop sounds like a good idea to me.

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