Bush Lily Plant, Orange Clivia Miniata – Factsheet & How to Care

Between the slim, lush green leaves of the natal lily, the ample florescence, at which numerous little blossoms in bright orange colour seem to explode, protrudes. Thanks to its flowerage, the decorative, but challenging plant Clivia miniata is a popular indoor plant in these parts. How the exotic plant is cared for properly and how you achieve its blooming, you get to know in this cultivation instruction.

Plant Profile

- Plant family: amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae)
- Genus: Clivia
- Order: Asparagales
- Species: bush lily (Clivia miniata)
- Origin: Southern Africa
- herbaceous, persistent plant
- Growth height: 40 to 90 cm
- 10 to 20 blossoms at each florescence
- Blooming period from February to May
- elderly plants can bloom at second time in summer or autumn
- possible blossom colours: bright yellow to orange coloured, red, pink, crème
dark green, basic, shiny leaves without stipes

During the early spring, the natal lily arises for its great entrance when the magnificent, intensely coloured blossoms open up. They are funnel shaped whereby the bush lily is evocative of the hippeastrum. After all, both indoor plants belong to the family of the amaryllis plants.

Below the big florescence of the bush lily, the sword-shaped leaves protrude. A cultivation appropriate to the species activates the formation of blossoms intensively and makes sure that you will be happy with the attractive indoor plant for a long time. The cultivation instruction explains to which aspects you have to pay attention.

By the mid of the 19th century, for the first time, the Clivia miniata came to Europe from its African homeland. Since then it is very common in this part and can be found in many rooms and offices.

Care

The growth cycle of the bush lily is marked by three phases, during which the decorative plant makes different demands on the cultivation. Moreover, it only develops its attractive blossoms with a thorough cultivation. Thus, the popular indoor plant is challenging.

Location

To find a fitting location for the Clivia miniata, is a challenge: The demands change together with the different phases. However, the plant might react sensitively to a change of location. In regard to the choice of location, consider that all parts of the plant are slightly poisonous. Hence, the pot should never be placed within reach of small children and pets.

During the Bloom (February to May)

The bush lily grows optimally at a light and averagely temperature location with the following characteristics.

- the room temperature should be between 16°C and 22°C
- the decorative plants need much light and is happy about several hours of sunlight each day, in particular in the morning and late evening
- it does not agree with direct light of the midday sun, if the leaves turn yellow, the Clivia miniata is exposed to too much sunlight
- the plants need to be resettled and the burned leaves need to be removed because they cannot regenerate
- locations too shady constrain or prevent the formation of blossoms
- a place at the window facing East or West is ideal
After the Bloom (late May or early June to September)

The bush lily can spend the summer outdoors on the balcony or the terrace. The location should be protected from rain and heavy wind. Here, it is important to avoid long time and direct sunlight, in particular during midday, because otherwise the leaves burn and die. Only change the location after the bloom in May because the Clivia miniata might throw off its florescence. In the office or in the flat without balcony you can keep the exotic plant at its bloom location.

Recovery (October to January)

During the recovery, the pot should be located at a cold place because the bush lily will not bloom in the next year otherwise.

The location has to fulfill these criteria:

- a location with a temperature between 8 °C and 12°C is ideal
- the Clivia miniata does not agree with dry, warm air in a heated room
- however, it needs a light location also in winter

Due to the fact that the blossom might react very sensitively in regard to a change of location, already in the winter the bush lily should be placed at the location, at which it will stand during the blooming period.

Because of the heating, it is often not possible to find a place that is cold during winter and warmer in spring. Is this the case, the decorative plant needs to be resettles into a cold, light winter accommodation, for example in the stairway or the unheated winter garden.

Substrate

A porous, nutrient-rich substrate creates the best conditions for an intense growth of the Clivia miniata. For example, use customary potting soil if necessary enriched with humus.
Repotting

Few space in the rooting area supports the formation of blossoms. Only when several of the succulent roots emerge from the pot, the Clivia miniata needs a new tub. Usually, it must be repotted only every three to four years.

Proceed as follows:

- bush lilies are repotted directly after the bloom
- choose a pot which is only a few centimetres bigger than the predecessor
- at first, cover the bottom with a layer of drainage, for this lava split or clay fragments can be used for example
- afterwards, fill the pot with a fitting substrate but leave enough space for the big root ball
- Now, you take out the bush lily carefully from its old tub and remove the old substrate, the roots may not be harmed
- in the following, place the decorative plant into the new pot and water it thoroughly

Watering

With lime-free water, for example stale rain water, the bush lily agrees at best.

You should pay attention to the following rules:

- water amply so that the entire substrate is saturated, the decorative African plants needs much water
- the next watering is necessary as soon as the substrate is almost dry, usually, this happens twice or three times a week
- absolutely avoid stagnant moisture, excessive water should be able to drain off of the pot and to be removed

The recovery phase is an exception: Between October and January, the plant only needs to be watered moderately. When the bush lily begins to form new peduncles, you can raise the amount of water. Constantly keep the substrate slightly moist so that the buds cannot dry out. With the beginning of the blooming period water the plant as described above.

Manuring

For optimal prosperity and so that many blossoms can be formed, the Clivia miniata needs many nutrients. With the ending of the recovery phase from late January or early February on, you can start the manuring. Give the bush lily until June a portion of liquid manure each week.

Between July and late August, it is sufficient to manure the bush lily once a month. During the recovery phase, is does not need additional nutrients which is why you stop manuring.
Cutting

Only remove the florescence when it is entirely dry. So the plant can pull comprised nutrients into the roots and store them. Those who do not want to reproduce their Clivia miniata by seeds, should cut off the fruits directly after the blooming period so that the plant does not put any energy into the formation of the seeds.

Blossom

The blossom of the Clivia miniata is very sensitive which is why an accurate cultivation is decisive.

Pay attention to these aspects in particular:

- too much shade and too much direct sunlight hamper the ability of blooming, a balanced location that fulfills all the requirements of the Clivia miniata is decisive for an amply bloom
- if possible, avoid a change of location between January and May
- if you cannot keep the plant at the same location in recovery and blooming period, it should be resettled from its winter accommodation to its blooming location in late December
- as soon as the florescence is formed, you may not move the pot until the end of the blooming period
- even smallest changes such as turning the plant can make it stop the formation of blossoms or throw off the blossoms
- the bush lily always wants to face light with the same side
- Stagnant moisture and drought hamper the formation of blossoms, regular, ample watering is important
- the recovery phase needs to be maintained so that the Clivia miniata can collect enough strength for the next blooming period
- while repotting, the succulent roots may not be harmed because otherwise the bush lily would not bloom the next year
- generally speaking, it should only be repotted directly after the blooming period because otherwise it does not have enough strength for the formation of new florescence

Reproduction

The bush lily can be reproduced in two ways: By root splitting or by seeds.

Root splitting

The repotting the ideal moment for root splitting. Before placing the plant into its new pot, you can cut off side shoots from the root ball with a knife. The shoot should have a length of at least 20 cm and should possess three pairs of leaves and several own roots. So, you can guarantee that it is strong enough to survive.

Place the shoot into a mixture of sand and turf and water moderately. At the beginning the pot should be placed at a light place without direct sunlight. As soon as bigger roots emerge from the substrate, the Clivia miniata can be repot into a pot with common potting soil.

Seeds

The reproduction by seeds takes longer than by root splitting. The young plant blooms for the first time at the earliest two years after the sowing. The hermaphroditic blossom of the bush lily forms round or oval fruits which hold the seeds. These berries of the Clivia miniata take up to one year to be ripe. During this time, they turn increasingly red while the seeds in the ripe berry start to germinate.

When the seed pod breaks open and the tip of root of the seedling breaks through, you can carefully seize the berry from the mother plant. Now it is opened and the germinating seed is extracted.

Sowing

Fill a tub with breeding soil. Place the seeds on top of it and carefully press them on.
Overwintering

The bush lily is not hardy and must overwinter in a protected place. (See section location / recovery)

Vermin

At insufficient cultivation, the Clivia miniata attracts vermin like spider mites or mealybugs that suck the plant sap from the leaves. An infestation often takes place in a winter accommodation that is too warm. For the pest control, bear in mind that the bush lily is very sensitive to oil.

It agglutinates the pores of the leaves so that they die. Hence, do not use any oily aids. Usually, spider mites and mealybugs can be successfully defeated with household remedies. If this does not help, you can use chemical, systemically functioning pesticides from the specialist shop.

Spider mites

The vermin spin fine nets and make the leaves change colour. When you discover such symptoms, it is important to act quickly to avoid heavy damages on the plant. Because of the fact that spider mites do not like a high air humidity, you can water the bush lily strongly and put a transparent plastic bag over it in the following.

Shut the bag properly, for example by attaching it to the pot with adhesive tape or strings. The Clivia miniata bears the moist climate for several days without problems. During this time all the spider mites die.

Mealybugs

If you discover small, white, woolly insects and sticky honeydew on your bush lily, it is infested by mealybugs. Also leaves that turn yellow and eventually shrivel and fall off, are signs for an infestation. The vermin need to be eliminated as fast as possible because otherwise the bush lily can die.
At first, isolate the plant so that the mealybugs cannot spread onto its neighbours. In the following, you cover the plant with a solution of soap and grain alcohol. After to two three days, you repeat the process. The treatment is continued until no mealybugs can be found anymore.

Diseases

Stagnant moisture makes the roots of the Clivia miniata rot quickly which becomes evident by a putrid smell. Remove the plant from the pot immediately, take off the wet substrate and cut off the rotten roots. If the root rot has not yet infested the complete root ball, the plant can recover again. Afterwards you put the bush lily into a pot with a layer of drainage and fresh substrate and cultivate it according to instruction.

Varieties

Around the world there are different breeds and shapes of the species Clivia miniata. In these parts, the most common breeds are those with blossom leaves that shine in intensive orange. At the entry is changes into a yellow colouring. Moreover, there are breeds with crème coloured, red, yellow and pink coloured blossom leaves.