Germinating clivia seeds

There are so many different methods of germinating Clivia seeds and I have probably tried most of them over the years. Everything from putting the seeds in a Chinese take-away container with sphagnum moss, placing them in a plastic bag with sphagnum moss to adding a dome or cover on top of the seed tray to create a mini-greenhouse effect. I have even tried leaving the seeds in a glass of water to see if they would germinate at some expert’s suggestion.

There is no right or wrong way of germinating seeds. Some methods work well for some people and the best thing is to stick to what works for you.

What I will outline here is a very simple method that works well and is easily achievable for the layman.
Do I need to wash or soak the seeds when I receive them?

Growers generally wash the seeds when they are peeling them from the berries. In most cases this is with a dish washing liquid that does have some anti-bacterial properties. The seeds should be clean and free of any membrane material or dirt when you receive them. I do wash any seeds I receive from other growers in water with dish washing liquid added. This ensures that I am starting with clean seed as often international seed has been rolled in Sulphur Powder which tends to sting the eyes and taste revolting if it get on your hands and eventually your mouth.

Years ago I used to soak seed for 24 hours in either diluted bleach, Super Thrive or HB101 but at the end of the day, I don’t believe it made any difference to the germination of the seed. As long as the seed is fresh and clean, it does not need to be soaked. I have at times received shrivelled up seed and have soaked it in water to see if it improved the outcome but I think that was wishful thinking.

What is an easy way of germinating Clivia seeds?

Fill a small pot with seed raising mix which is easily available at Bunnings or possibly your supermarket. You can also use potting mix or a number of other types of medium, but I have found seedlings do well in seed raising mix.

Wet the mix thoroughly and place the seeds on the top of the mix. Do not bury the seeds. They are happy sitting on the top. You will notice on each seed there is a small raised bump. This is where the radicle will grow out and hopefully downward. Sometimes it is necessary to gently turn the seed over once germination has happened so the root grows down into the mix.

Place the pot in a warm position but not in direct sunlight. Keep a water spray bottle handy and each day give the seeds a little spray. They like to be a little damp but not too wet as this will encourage rot. Germination should happen within a few weeks.

This method allows air flow around the seeds and lessens the chances of fungus, mould and rot.

If you see small flying insects hanging around the pot, spray with Pyrethrum.