The increase in interest in interspecific *Clivia* has surprised me. A few years ago, there was very little interest and no demand for interspecific *Clivia*.

Why breed interspecific *Clivia*? The interesting colours found in the pendulous species and the versicolour present in most pendulous species are desirable features to try and include in *C. miniata* flowers. With these in mind, what has developed, is that the interspecific plants have extended the flowering season and more importantly have developed to such an extent, that today they are appreciated by and appeal to growers as a, separate groups, of outstanding plants. They are neither narrow tubular flowers nor inferior *C. miniata*, but instead are appreciated for their unique beauty.

As breeders, we are spoilt for choice, as there are six species of *Clivia* to use for our breeding programmes. There is no correct or incorrect way to breed interspecific *Clivia*. All six species may be used successfully. Five of these six species are pendulous and one is an upright species.

Desirable features of the parents:

If we want to breed a desirable interspecific plant, what should we consider the most important factors in choosing suitable parents.

a) Flowers. This is the most important factor here. Chose specimens with at least thirty flowers in the umbel. The greater the number the better. *C. nobilis* umbels are known for the large numbers of flowers present. Flowers should be chosen for their size, the bigger the better.

b) Leaves. The leaves play an important role in the overall appearance and balance of the plant. Leaf quality is often neglected in the breeding of interspecific plants. When you start a breeding line, please include the leaf appearance as an important factor in selecting the parents.

c) Peduncle. The height of the peduncle is important. The height should allow the display of the umbel above the surrounding leaves. Preferably choose a tall peduncle. A cross with the short peduncle of a Chinese plant, however does work well.

d) Colour. Most pendulous species are versicolour. Choose flowers for their interesting colours or combination of colours.

e) Flower shape. When you are choosing a *C. miniata* parent, if possible, select a bloom that is large and recurved. These desirable qualities may not appear in the first generation but will be evident by the second generation.

f) Pod or pollen parent. Claims have been made previously that the choice of which parent is to be used as pollen and pod parent is important, however this is not so in the breeding of interspecific plants.

‘Compatibility’

When using the word ‘compatible’, I am referring to the production of green-stemmed seedlings. There is a varying compatibility of the pendulous species with group 1 and group 2 yellow *Clivia*.

- Yellow *Clivia caulescens*, when crossed with a group 1 yellow, produce yellow seedlings.
- Cream Midlands *C. gardenii*, when crossed with a group 1 yellow, produce green-stemmed seedlings. Use the Midlands *C. gardenii* as the pod parent and this will result in faster growth and maturity of the seedlings.
- *C. robusta* displays no obvious compatibility with group 1 yellows. The close relationship of *C. robusta* to *C. gardenii* would lead one to expect green-stemmed seedlings with group 1 yellow flowers.
- *C. nobilis* yellow is compatible with group 1 and 2 yellows and green-stemmed seedlings will result.
- *C. mirabilis* yellow is compatible with group 1 yellows.
- *C. Ngome* complex. When crossed with
5 Star Versicolor’ Breeder and photo Carrie Kruger.

Q08 Interspecific – photo and owner Carrie Kruger.
both group 1 and 2, they produce green-stemmed seedlings. The flowers are yellow, but blush with age.

When the Ngome C. gardenii are crossed with ‘777’ and ‘Andrew Gibson’, green-stemmed seedlings are produced.

The importance of the ‘Generations’ in breeding

1) When crossing C. caulescens with C. miniata, good results are achieved in the first generation. These results are improved in the second generation of plants.

2) When crossing Ngome C. gardenii with C. miniata, good results are achieved in the first generation.

3) C. nobilis crossed with C. miniata results in some good first generation plants, but the F2 generation is even better.

4) C. mirabilis crossed with C. miniata produces good results in the first generation.

The importance of ‘refuelling’ your interspecific crosses

If and when your interspecific crosses start resembling ‘inferior quality C. miniata’ flowers, consider ‘refuelling’ your plants. This is done by crossing your ‘miniata-like’ interspecific with a good quality pendulous plant. Good results will ensue!

Interspecifics may be crossed with pendulous species or with C. miniata plants and neither is necessarily incorrect.

Inter-pendulous species crosses

Crossing pendulous species with each other is a consideration when looking for hybrid vigour or the development of interesting colour combinations. Hybrid vigour is not evident if species are closely related. The results of crossing the pendulous species with each other, depends on which species are used.

a) C. nobilis crossed with C. mirabilis results in no hybrid vigour, however the F1 results
are very pleasing. These seedlings are slow growing. The slow growth of these plants may obscure the hybrid vigour.

b) Crossing Midlands C. gardenii with a Ngome C. gardenii, provides hybrid vigour.

c) A C. mirabilis crossed with a C. caulescens provides varying results, but excellent growth and flower count are evident from the hybrid vigour.

d) Midlands C. gardenii crossed with C. robusta provided no evidence of hybrid vigour, indicating their close relationship to one another.

Previously, interspecific breeding was based on crossing a C. miniata with a pendulous species. The F1 generation was then crossed with a C. miniata, as was the resultant F2 generation. This eventually resulted in poor quality C. miniata blooms.

What advice would I give to anyone interested in breeding interspecific hybrids?

Firstly, don’t be afraid to experiment. Secondly, select good quality plants as parents and persist with the breeding into the second generation to appreciate the improved results.