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clivia



Photo courtesy of The John Henry Company

Clivia miniata—Kaffir lily, Fire lily

BOTANICAL NAME

Clivia spp. (KLI-vee-uh or KLEE-vee-ah)

COMMON NAMES

Kaffir lily, Fire lily

DESCRIPTION

Clivias are rhizomes and have long, bright green, straplike leaves and clusters of stunning trumpet-shaped flowers that resemble small amaryllises.

COLORS

These plants flower in vibrant hues of red, yellow, orange and cream. The flowers are followed by showy berries, extending the ornamental season of the plants.

AVAILABILITY

Clivias bloom naturally in the spring and summer, but they are increasingly available year-round.

notable species

There are only six known species of *Clivia* plants:

- *Clivia miniata* - The most commonly sold species, it has clusters of 10 to 20 trumpet-shaped flowers on top of a tall stalk. The flowers are available in hues of orange, red, yellow and cream.
- *C. caulescens* - This species has orange to cream-colored pendulous flowers.
- *C. gardenii* - It has curved flowers that aren't as pendulous as *C. caulescens*. The colors range from yellow to brownish red. The leaves have long, tapering points.
- *C. nobilis* - It has pendulous flowers and blunt or dimpled leaves with rough edges. Colors include pinkish yellow, orange and dark red.
- *C. mirabilis* - This newly discovered species has rigid, erect leaves and orange-red, tubular flowers.
- *C. robusta* - The biggest of the *Clivias*, it grows nearly 6 feet tall. It has pendulous, orange-red flowers.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Bright, indirect light is best for plants displayed indoors.

WATER Keep the soil moist during growing and flowering periods, but avoid standing water. Water should be practically withheld during resting periods (following blooming). Over- and underwatering can cause root rot.



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C. miniata—Kaffir lily, Fire lily

TEMPERATURE These plants do best in average, constant temperatures. Do not refrigerate them, or leaf blackening may result.

HUMIDITY The plants' moderate humidity needs can be satisfied by misting or sponging the leaves occasionally.

FERTILIZER Healthy, fertilized plants are more tolerant of insect attacks. Be sure the plants are well-watered before applying a half-strength solution of fertilizer about once a month.

SOIL *Clivias* do best in a well-drained, organic soil mix.

REBLOOMING These plants need winter rest to keep their flowers coming back year after year. Leave *Clivias* in unheated rooms, do not fertilize and water only enough to prevent wilting. Do not move or disturb the pots when the flowers are in bud or bloom.

fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME The *Clivia* genus, introduced in 1828, was named for Lady Charlotte Clive, Duchess of Northumberland County in England (1787-1866).

FAMILY *Clivias* are members of the *Amaryllidaceae* (amaryllis) family. Relatives include *Agapanthus* (lily-of-the-nile), *Hippeastrum* (amaryllis) and *Narcissus* (daffodil).

HOME SWEET HOME The plants are native to southern Africa.

challenges

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Clivias* do not show sensitivity to ethylene gas.

PESTS Check the plants frequently for aphids, scale and whiteflies. Control them with insecticidal soap. **sfr**



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Some information provided by:

The *Clivia* Society, www.cliviasociety.org

The House Plant Expert, by Dr. D.G. Hessayon

The North American *Clivia* Society

www.northamericancliviasociety.org

Shields Gardens Ltd., www.shieldsgardens.com

Reach "Blooming Plant of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.