

SalviaNews



The Victorian Salvia Study Group

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The Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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Can you identify the salvia pictured above? Solution next newsletter.

Welcome to the first of many bi-monthly newsletters. As it is our first we thought it a good idea to give you a little history lesson on how the Salvia Study Group came about.

In 1989 the HSOV was approached by the OPCA and invited to form a collection of plants. It had been realized that many plants were disappearing from cultivation worldwide and there was a need to collect, preserve and study species and that this could be done by ordinary gardeners helped and advised by Botanic Gardens. The HSOV agreed. Salvias were considered suitable for the Herb Society because as well as being ornamental they were of medicinal and culinary value. And so The Salvia Study Group was formed.

Meetings & Workshops

The March meeting was at the Ellis home and Lyndi, Velda, Jillian, Donna, Elly, Meg and Trudi discussed Part 2 of the Agenda from the previous meeting. It was decided meetings are to be mentioned in *Herbage* and *Salvia News*. A list of Salvia suppliers was requested and will be included in an upcoming newsletter. Income was discussed and further discussion will be on the next agenda

Our next meeting was held at Elly and Leon Roos' garden on Sunday 20 May where we shared a "BYO and Share" Lunch. Trudi presented a draft copy of this newsletter which was accepted by all present. We also discussed fundraising ideas and nursery releases and consequent naming and labelling. Lyndi is going to conduct research on the 'pratensis / sylvestris / nemorosa' groups and their differences and similarities. Elly did well to hold the meeting as she has recently undergone carpal tunnel operations on both hands, thank you Leon for your assistance (even if you did run off to dancing – we get the hint). Jillian suffered an unfortunate incident in her garden – a large gum tree had developed a large split and after a nerve-wracking few days, it had to come down. As a result, the garden is a mess and this has let in far more light than was there before. Salvias lost include a 9' *S. iodantha*, *S. mexicana* limelight, two *S. chiapensis*, some of the *S. corrugata* and who knows what else. What's left has been buried beneath heaps of sawdust and logs. Slowly working through it and this garden bed has now become the new project for Jillian.

The June meeting is a workshop at The Ellis Garden at 7 Byron St. Canterbury on propagation aftercare of cuttings and seedlings and starts at 11am. Please phone 9836 0415 to confirm your attendance. Again, this is a "BYO and Share" lunch.

The July meeting will be at Jillian's where we will be discussing and identifying salvias in her garden. Time permitting, we will also get along to Nobelius to have a look. Jillian's address is 6 Halcyon Street, The Patch, 9756 6361. "BYO and Share" lunch and starts at 11am.

Report on the Official Collections

Emerald – A very successful Open Day was held in March with many very interested visitors. Overall, given the short amount of time to prepare for this event, the garden looked quite good, assisted by new additions from Ray and just about half of Donna's stock plants inserted. A little watering, weeding and cutting back and all was ready. Elly, Jillian and Donna have volunteered to test the pH of the soil at Nobelius. Unfortunately, *S. madrensis* has been stolen!

Hampton – Part of the autumn maintenance was done by Ray and Graeme, further work needs to be done. *S. leucantha* is looking fabulous and *S. gesneraeflora* is beginning to flower. There has been some overshadowing due to overgrowth, which has now been corrected. Looking forward to another working bee.

Geelong – Bill's garden is a mass of flowers and has experienced heavy rain of late (lucky for some). He will go to the Botanic Gardens to closely monitor their salvias and will report to us fully next newsletter in July.

Reports on Member's Collections

Trudi – New additions from Sue Templeton:

S. africana caerulea 'Smoothie', *S. Blue Ribbons*, *S. cinnabarina*, *S. fulgens*, *S. greggii* Lara pink, *S. kathe*, *S. regla*, *S. roemeriana*, *S. rubiginosa*, *S. semi-atrata*, *S. Venezuelan Beauty*.

Donna – Additions to her collection:

S. brossonetti, *S. Costa Rica Blue*, *S. karvinskii*, *S. lyrata*, *S. ryparia* (*S. misella*), *S. rugosa*, *S. spathacea*, *S. urica*, *S. wagneriana* (from Lyndi)

S. microphylla 'Baby Sage', *S. sprucei*, *S. castanea* (from Otway)

S. chamaedryoides 'Indigo Blue', *S. lycoides* 'Blue Lightning', *S. guaranitica* 'Tequila Blue' (Larkman's – Garden Show)

S. pratensis Tenori Rosea (Pink Beard Sage – x *S. sylvestris* Rose Queen label), *S. greggii* dark purple (*S. purple majesty* label), *S. greggii* buttermilk (*S. Iced Lemon* label), *S. iodantha* Fuchsia Sage (*S. bethelli* label), *S. semi-atrata* (*S. chamaedryoides* 'Indigo Blue' label) (Country Farm Perennials – Garden Show)

S. x jamensis La Luna, *S. cyclamen* (*S. greggii* Pink Raspberry Royal), *S. greggii* Pink (Greg's Pink Sage), *S. pomifera*, *S. patens*, (all unknown origin)

S. greggii Sierra Pink (Apple Cottage – Garden Show)

S. van Houttii, *S. agnes*, (Rivendell)

S. verticillata 'Purple Rain' (Romantic Cottage)

S. pratensis 'Haematodes', *S. farinacea* blue (Wombats).

There are probably more, will catch up with the next newsletter.

Information Exchange

Meg has just returned from a trip to NZ. Rain all the way, the lucky thing. She found it very interesting to compare salvias in the south and north islands of NZ to ours here. We've only just recently had the true *S. fulgens* (Cardinal Sage) here and now Meg has seen it in flower in NZ. Very floriferous, bright red and furry with smallish leaves and flowers. A version called 'Red Dragon' was everywhere and looks like a larger form.

Geoff Genge in Invercargill holds the NZ collection for the south island and the north island is held by the Auckland Botanical Gardens. Meg attended the Salvia Society meeting held in Friends of the Auckland Botanical Gardens' rooms where most of the 42 members of the study group attended. Very keen growers. The meeting was a show and tell and Meg helped identify some salvias and member's bought copies of Meg's Booklet of Salvia Leaves, so handy for us all for ID purposes. They also have a bi-monthly newsletter of 4 pages for \$10.

The south and central American species perform much better in the north island, whereas the European and Chinese salvias prefer the south island. *Salvia patens* Guanajuato is outstanding, twice the size of the species. We look forward to the photos comparing the two. Meg also saw the real *S. amplexicaulis* – no leaf petioles. This is just the beginning of Meg's report, more to come.....

Did you know you can propagate *S. madrensis* from the whole stem and not just tip cuttings? Well Donna has done so successfully. Look out in spring as she is about to pot up roughly 1500 cuttings (approx. 50+ varieties). Stock plants will receive a reprieve when they're planted out of their pots and into the manure-prepared garden beds at her new place.

Information on large leafed salvias: *S. karvinskii*, *S. gesneraeflora* and *S. gesneraeflora* var. 'Tequila'. *S. karvinskii* needs sun to grow properly. *S. gesneraeflora* can tolerate semi-shade and *S. gesneraeflora* var. 'Tequila' takes more shade (deciduous). *S. karvinskii* flowers only winter/spring as does *S. gesneraeflora* whereas *S. gesneraeflora* var. 'Tequila' flowers on and off all year. *S. karvinskii* grows straight upright as does *S. gesneraeflora* whereas *S. gesneraeflora* var. 'Tequila' branches. Thanks Lyndi for that info.

Some discussions have been held on *S. guaranitica*. These will continue and be reported on shortly.

Net News from Trudi

Hiroshi from Japan has two *S. lyrata* "Purple Knockout". One of them has actually flowered whilst the other has a flowering stem and calyces but no flowers inside the calyces (which is still green) and wonders if they are seeds inside. He received a reply from Karen in Nth Carolina who experienced the same in her *S. lyrata* and *S. roemeriana*, usually after the summer heat sets in. She has found out that this phenomenon is called cleistogamy where closed flowers are produced that self fertilise. Richard Dufresne, also from the US, confirmed this finding and reports that *S. verbenaca*, especially the form known as *S. cleistogamy*, is a prolific seed producer. Some can grow this under control, though he considers it to be a weed and won't grow it. *S. roemariana* has dimorphic flowers – in the cooler parts of the year, it generates lots of blooms. When it gets hot, cleistogamy sets in, and seed is produced without visible flowers.

Underground Definitions:

Stolon – an underground running stem, not thickened for food storage. True stolons are rare. (ie. *S. uliginosa* and *S. blepharophylla*)

Nodes – a lot of salvias form clumps by branching out thickly from an underground node. (ie. *S. glechomaefolia*, *S. sinaloensis*, *S. buchananii*, *S. chiapensis* and *S. madrensis*).

Stems – halfway between forming typical stolons and layering itself in a normal fashion. (ie. *S. darcy*)

Caudex – base of the trunk and underground part of a tree in mass and geometry, usually with a lot of shoots coming out. (ie. *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla*)

Tubers – these are not rhizomes as they do not produce roots and do not have nodes from which shoots can emerge. These can be divided when the plant is mature, remembering to take some of the root with it as well. (ie. *S. guaranitica* and *S. patens*).

General

Donna has moved address on May 6. Her new address is 401 Tschampions Road, Macclesfield, 3782. Phone numbers (59 688 567 / 0412 766 763).

Jillian has discovered a new fertiliser called Nutriverm (from Nutrigro) which is a combination of humic, seaweed extract, worm castings and juice. She will select a part of her garden for a trial of this product and will also trial another of their products which contains humic (a product which is between humus and coal). Unfortunately, the humic is imported from USA as we do not have a coal which is of a high enough standard. We'll expect a report from Jillian in the not too distant future. Jillian is also going to start using sugar cane mulch (after Elly's high recommendation) on parts of her garden.

This month we have included an updated list of the Salvia Study Group committee members details. Please see attached.

We have also enclosed a copy of this year's events, which is by no means set in concrete. Interested parties are welcome to attend our workshops and garden visits.

Every 2nd month's meeting is for committee members only. We use this forum to discuss Group news, etc. New members are always welcome to join the Study Group.

Subscriptions

If you would like to continue receiving this newsletter (this copy is FREE!), please complete the attached subscription form and forward to the address on the form.

