

SalviaNews

July/August 2001



THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

The Victorian Salvia Study Group

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Can you identify the salvias pictured above? Solution next newsletter. Did you recognize dear old *S. Grahamii* last newsletter? Of course we should say *S. neurepia* var. *Grahamii* these days.

The winter Salvia garden is a colourful place to be in; hot pinks and wonderful blues glowing against grey skies delighting the birds feeding enthusiastically. Too enthusiastically some times, breaking stems and flowers but forgiven because they too are beautiful. A list of Salvias flowering in members' gardens is included. We will include a 'What's flowering now' list each issue and articles on pruning, planting and planning.

Meetings and Workshops

The Ellis garden, in Byron St. Canterbury, on **Sunday June 18th** was brightened by splashes of brilliance given predominately by massed plantings of numerous winter flowering salvias.

Against the side fences *S. involucrata* *Bethellii*, 2.5m tall with masses of rose pink flower heads; and *S. iodantha* twinned with *S. purpurea*, both bearing huge canes exploding with lavender and magenta tufts crowded with florets, frame the garden area. These tall screening plants are highlights (in more ways than one!) of the Ellis landscaping.

But the super-brilliance of the blood red *Van Houttei* massed in many parts of the garden distracts us, and demands our attention. More delicate but absolutely striking amongst the reds are the lovely shiny leaved *S. miniata* and *S. coccinea*-the latter in several shades of red and pink.

But the 'blues' in winter are the most striking of all salvia colours. They seem to be much more powerful than in summer when they compete with brightness of blue Australian skies. Dreary, leaden winter skies tend to accentuate the brilliance of the huge florets of *S. Costa Rican Blue*, and the massed flower heads of *S. corrugata* - both of these plants demanded our attention today. Other more subdued but just as beautiful blues include *S. concolor*, *S. dentata* and *S. urica* (with the leaf fragrance smelling of burnt rubber).

Adding to the winter palette in this delightful garden are *S. madrensis* with tall spikes of soft yellow flowers, the black florets of *S. discolor* (dramatic contrast to the white velvet of the under side of its leaves), the lovely deep pink flowers and dark shining leaves of *S. chiapensis*, the black- purple of *S. Black Knight* and the blatant deep purple of the velvety flowers and bracts of *S. leucantha*.

But the piece de resistance today is in my opinion the most beautiful of all the winter bloomers, *S. semiatrata*. This is a small, tiny leafed shrub, but an amazing blaze of colour with its brilliant burgundy bracts and pinky mauve florets - absolutely stunning.

I was also impressed by the striking foliage of *S. plectranthoides* - (a new addition to Velda's collection). This is a special plant, introduced from China, with burgundy toned leaves in winter and looks spectacular!

The tropical lime green foliage of massive clumps of *S. dorisiana* gleamed with an almost fluorescent brilliance in the flashes of pale winter after noon sunshine as we left this quite charming garden.

Thank you Ray for this report. Velda told me today that *S. semiatrata* is still flowering. Never stops she says and now it is cold dreary July!!

Sunday 16th July involved a visit to Jillian's garden in The Patch. The weather was kind enough to allow us to wander through the garden and see salvias that would normally like the sun growing in shade under towering gums. As mentioned in the last *Salvia News*, Jillian has just lost a massive tree which gave a lot of protection and shade to the garden below. This garden is now in full sun and after having moved a massive amount of cut wood and buckets of sawdust, a new garden has emerged. Hopefully some of the plants that were buried under all this weight will have survived both the tree and the winter (some 70 gums and numerous tree ferns on $\frac{3}{4}$ acre).

Smaller leaved varieties such as *S. greggiis* and *S. microphyllas* do not do well in this shady garden, however due to the new garden receiving much more sunlight than any other part of the garden, Jillian is trialling these varieties in this area. Therefore the larger leaved varieties such as *S. gesneraeflora*, *S. gesneraeflora* Tequila, *S. iodantha*, *S. dorisiana*, *S. purpurea*, *S. karwinskii*, etc. do exceptionally well. Jillian mulches and fertilises her garden using horse manure, dynamic lifter and leaf and tree matter. Future trials of mulch include sugar cane.

The group had its bi-monthly meeting and included some identification amongst many other interesting items.

Thank you Jillian for your wonderful hospitality and showing us around your very interesting garden. Members agreed that this garden is well worthy of opening to those people with a keen interest in salvias next year.

Our next meeting is 19th August and will be at Trudi's place (39 Temple Road, Selby – Melways 84J2). This meeting is open to anyone interested in salvias. We will be holding a plant sale (will include a small number of other plants – complimentary to salvias) and buyers are assured there will be a large variety of salvias (including some quite unusual and rare varieties) available at very reasonable prices. Members will be on hand to answer any questions and there will be ongoing garden tours around Trudi's extensive garden. We will be holding a workshop on 'Salvias in Winter'. The sale starts at 11.00am and finishes around 3.00pm ish. Telephone 9754 4041 if you have a problem finding Trudi's. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about and obtain salvias suitable for your particular garden, so don't miss it!

Report on the Official Collections

Emerald – Jillian and Donna visited Nobelius mid July to dig out many of the self-seeding varieties including *S. pratensis*. These have been potted up into a variety of sizes and will be made available at the plant sale at Trudi's in August.

Generally the whole garden needs attention – weeding, cutting back, replacing, replanting, feeding, more weeding and more importantly **mulching**. This working bee needs to happen as soon as possible (before Spring) to ensure large weeds are removed and others are smothered by mulch before these take off when the weather starts to get warmer. We therefore will be looking for volunteers who are interested in working in this interesting garden by giving us an hour or two of your time. Phone Donna on 59 688 567 to register your interest and she will keep you informed on when this will happen.

On a more positive note, the hot pink winter flowering salvias put on quite a show and added a brightness and cheerfulness to a grey day.

Hampton - To date there have been several short working efforts on the site this Autumn and Winter. Plants are generally in good condition. Weeding is needed as usual.

When we visited several species were in flower. These were *S. dorisiana*, *S. gesneraeflora*, *S. gesneraeflora* Tequila, *S. purpurea*, *S. iodantha*, *S. elegans* Purple, *S. karwinskii*, *S. karwinskii* x *involucrata*, *S. Bethellii* tall, *S. spathacea* and *S. wagneriana*.

Many were dormant and showing only a little bunch of leaves at the base such as *S. farinacea*, *S. forskalei*, *S. patens*, *S. puberula*, *S. pratensis*. Others were in quiet mode in small bushes eg. *S. officinalis* *S. spathacea*, *S. greggii*, *S. buchananii*, *S. microphylla*, *S. runcinata*, *S. disermis*.

On the whole whilst the Collection is looking better visually there seemed to be considerably less species at this time than in previous years, eg. April '98 showed on the stocktake 99 species and varieties in the front garden only, whereas this time I only counted 71.

Naturally plants have been trialled and lost here. It seems these have not been replaced. I would need more time to work out a list of what has been planted and lost over the years.

Jobs needing to be done soon

Prune after flowering - *S. dorisiana*, *S. elegans* Purple, *S. iodantha* *S. karwinskii* etc.

Prune in Spring - *S. madrensis*, *S. fallax*, *S. gesneraeflora* etc. Prune, reduce, replace and/or shift *Salvias officinalis*, *leucantha*, *iodantha* and remove larger of the two *gesneraeflora*.

We are looking forward to a Special Salvia Day in Mark's wonderful garden in January 2002.

By Velda Ellis on 27.7.01.

Reports on Members' Collections

Donna – At long last Donna's stock plants will soon be released from their pots which have contained them for the past three years and realise the freedom of growing in a garden. The garden beds are under preparation at the moment – stable manure, paper and cardboard, more stable manure and yet more paper, then a final layer of pea straw. Four garden beds in total are in preparation and will contain a mixture of her favourite roses (predominantly David Austins) and salvias. Some other perennials will be dotted throughout. These garden beds should thrive under so much goodness and are very fortunate to receive maximum sun throughout the day.

For those who might be looking for a salvia or two for their garden, Donna is now selling from home (by appointment, telephone 59 688 567), and has recently potted up some 1,500

salvias - approximately 50+ species. Donna will make her garden available for one of the meetings next year – look for next year’s agenda in a future edition of Salvia News.

Bill & Shirley’s report from Geelong. Happily Bill has now returned to being 100% fit and has over 100 Salvia Species and Cultivars. *S. sprucei* is in bud *S. dorisiana* is stunning *S. mellifera* is coming into flower and *S. discolor*, *S. africana caerulea*, *S. Waverly* have never stopped flowering. As well as these no doubt many more are in action too.

Bill has received *S. algeriensis*, *S. austriaca*, *S. barrelieri*, *S. confertiflora*, *S. fulgens*, *S. indica*, *S. nubicola*, *S. patens Chilcombe*, *S. patens white*, *S. Venezuelan Beauty*, and *S. moricana*, from Sue Templeton. Sue wants a report on *S. moricana*, but we want a report on all of them!

Trudi reports from Selby

The tank excavation and subsequent plumbing has left a large part of the garden looking like a quarry. When the man with the caterpillar treads and bucket returns in his own good time a transformation will happen, please! Part of the perennial border was excavated too, and remains a wreck with potential. However having an adequate amount of water storage at last is a relief. The recovery of the Salvias from the absolute absence of watering or rain over all those months is amazing.

Part of my garden riots in the tropical look with hot pinks, purples and blue Salvias, but my favourite thing at the moment-and for the next few months-is a massed planting of *S. africana lutea* (terracotta sage). Its unusual rusty, brownish colour is deadly with reds and pinks and just tolerable with blues and pale lilac. It should go with yellow but neither colour is enhanced by the other. However this garden bed is a success. The largish bushes of *S. africana lutea* are underplanted with *S. rugosa* (great leaves and almost white spikes of flowers), and *S. disermis*, a lovely white. *Euphorbia wulfenii* is part of the picture and *S. dolomitica* is pushing its way up through the lot ready to flower soon. The contrasting foliage is great too and, interestingly, they all come from Africa. Because my garden is a place where only the tough survive, dry, exposed to every wind and has granite outcrops, granite ‘floaters’, granitic non-soil, it is particularly suited to succulents too. *Aeonium* and various other treasures go well with the Salvias from arid places. *Aeonium schwarzkopf* just matches the calyces of *S. africana lutea*.

Information Exchange

Salvias in New Zealand

A report on a Salvia sightseeing trip to New Zealand which included both North and South Islands. Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens is home to the Salvia Collection in the North Island while the South Island Salvia Collection is held by Geoff and Adair Genge at ‘Marshwood’ in Invercargill, which is at the most southern tip of the Island.

The trip started at Christchurch and the first place to visit was the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. A lovely ‘quiet’ gardens with many very old trees – some dating back to 1863, when the gardens were established. Like many other Botanic Gardens throughout New Zealand, it had quite an English feel about it, especially with the river ‘Avon’ running through the central area and perimeter.

Arched bridges here and there looked lovely, black ducks and mallards were dipping and splashing in the late afternoon sunlight or was it just the autumn glow of tinted leaves? Golden poplars shone like beacons on either side of the Avon River, English oaks with orange-brown leaves and various other oaks in colours of red, burgundy, gold and orange

created a fiery backdrop to many other shrubs and perennials throughout the gardens. The green lawns too were a blaze of colour... where leaves had fallen like confetti.

The Herb Garden was well set out with assorted herbs, culinary, medicinal, scented and included a wonderful assortment of thymes and a few *Salvias*. Some plants were dying down for winter, others were showy with the last few remaining flowers. Large wide perennial borders looked really great and I'm sure would have looked extremely picturesque during spring and summer or even summer-autumn, (my visit was at the end of April and early May... the remnants of autumn and into winter for New Zealand.

Quite a number of *Salvias* were in flower and *S. involucrata* 'Bethellii' in full flush. *Salvia* 'Black Knight' (which was incorrectly named as *S. Purple Knight*) looked really good... a stocky, well-rounded shrub approximately 1.5m, in full bloom. Other *salvias* looked good with mixed perennials in the long wide borders, these include *S. microphylla* var *neurepia*, *S. verticillata*, *S. guaranitica*, *S. azurea*, *S. leucantha*, *S. rutilens*, *S. viridis*, *S. uliginosa*, *S. officinalis* and *variegata*, *S. Indigo Spires*, a few remaining *S. pratensis* 'Haemetodes' and a few *S. x sylvestris* 'Blue Hills'. Another species which was to be seen in quite a few gardens throughout New Zealand was one called *Salvia* 'Red Dragon'. Beautiful bright red, velvety flowers set against foliage of light, fresh green leaves. This *Salvia* looks like a very good species to grow here in Victoria. *Salvia glutinosa* was just on finished, so too was *Salvia buchananii*. The climate in Christchurch was mild at this time of year, perhaps their winters are very cold.

The remarkable Dunedin Botanic Gardens were established in the mid 1860s' and should be seen by all who visit the South Island. The Rose Garden, set in the lower part of the garden, led the way towards the Kiosk/Information Centre, past the pond, over the little creek and up through the Rock Gardens to the Arboretum and on up the steep winding pathway towards the Geographic Borders.

These Rock Gardens were quite a feat, started in 1904 and now classed as one of the largest in New Zealand, covering nearly 2000 sq. metres, and if standing at the top, one could see marvellous views over many areas of the gardens and various areas of Dunedin itself, which is nestled into the hills. Towards the top of the hill, one ambles up into the lower areas of the Geographic Borders. The way in which these borders were set out was quite a masterful stroke in as much as the countries they represented and the vast assortment of plants, trees and shrubs. *Salvias* were plentiful and it was lovely to see "old friends" so to speak, used amongst these borders and throughout the rest of the Gardens; the selected *salvias* were a good representation for each particular country. These collections represented North Asia/China, Himalayas, North America, South America, Central America and Australia... South Africa did have one very sad looking *Salvia africana-lutea* but maybe the winters are too cold for them.

Other *Salvias* were *S. apiana*, *S. patens*, *S. rutilens* 'Honeymelon', *S. uliginosa* (not spreading madly) *S. farinacea*, *S. azurea*, *S. verticillata*, *S. muelleri*, *S. 'Red Dragon'*, this new *salvia* looks very much like a larger form of *S. fulgens* which I had obtained from Sue Templeton, just before I left to go to New Zealand and 'new' to everyone in the *Salvia* Study Group. The one we originally thought was *S. fulgens* turned out to be *Salvia gesneraeflora*...but this is what the Study group is all about... to find out! *Salvia mexicana* Limelight is simply called *mexicana* in most places throughout N.Z. *Salvia grahamii* (so called) had glossy dark green leaves with bright magenta-red flowers, this could have been a *greggii* cross (?) since the leaves also had the delightful *greggii* fragrance. *Salvia iodantha* was interesting to see, compact and shrubby to about 1.2m instead of the 3-4m heights at home.

To be continued... by **Meg Bentley**

Salvias Flowering in Members Gardens Now

africana caerulea	glechomifolia	mexicana minor
africana lutea	greggii Raspberry Royal	mexicana Lolly
africana lutea Namibia	greggii Fulhams Red	mexicana Snowflake
agnes	greggii Ever Red x micro	mexicana Limelight
Black Knight	guarantica	<u>microphylla</u> Baby sage Phyl Bear
cacaliaefolia	guarantica 'large form'	<u>microphylla</u> Huntingdon
chiapensis	harmony	microphylla Neurepia
chamaedryoides	hirtella	microphylla Sierra Pink
chiapas species	Indigo Spires	miniata
coccinea	involucrata tall	nilotica
coccinea coral	involucrata Bethelli	polystachys
coccinea pale	involucrata x karvinskii	pulchella
coccinea red	iodantha	purpurea
confertiflora	karvinskii	purpurea Lilac Pink
corrugata	karvinskii x involucrata Winter Red	purpurea Darker form
Costa Rica Blue	karvinskii x involucrata Winter Red slender form	Purple Majesty
discolor	karvinskii x involucrata	rugosa
disermis	karvinskii x involucrata Romantic Rose	runcinata
disjuncta	lanceolata	scutellarioides
dorisiana	lavanduloides	semi-atrata
elegans	leucantha white mauve magenta	splendens van Houttii
elegans Honey melon	longispicata	spathacea
elegans purple	mellisadora	urica
fallax	mexicana major	urica Blue Ribbons
farinacea	lyrata	wagneriana pale pink
gesneraeflora	madrensis	wagneriana deep pink
gesneraeflora var. Tequila	Marine Blue	Waverly

Nurseries

Listed below are a few names of nurseries who do supply Salvias with correct information.

Otway Herbs	Unlimited Perennials	Down to Earth
Judi Forrester	Sue Templeton	Donna Grundy
155 Biddles Road	369 Boomerang Dr	401 Tschampions Rd
Apollo Bay 3233	Lavington 2641	Macclesfield 3782
Ph/Fax 03 52 376 318	Ph 02 60 254 585	59 688567/0412 766 763
	Email templeton@albury.net.au	

Please advise us if you know of any nurseries you could recommend that sell salvias.

Graham advises that the Salvia Group subscribe to Diggers Seeds at Heronswood, which is a good source of Salvias. The new catalogue offers seeds of:

- S. farinacea 'Cottage Blue' 1m
- S. coccinea 'Pink Pearl' 75cm
- S. horminum (viridis) 'Marble Arch' 40cm

Phone Graham on 9836 0415 if you wish to order any seeds.

Nomenclature

The correct naming of plants has been quite an issue and will continue to be an issue while decorative plant labels are utilized where only a fancy name or common name is used. This in itself is not a problem but a great way of promoting the plant in question, where the problem lies is in lack of thought or detail put into using the correct name of the plant; it does have a Botanical name; it does have a Species name and it can have a variety or cultivar name!

To put it another way... we have a classroom of 40 students, seven of those students are called William. Three go under the name of Bill...one is Wilhelm, another is Willy, two are called Will and the one remaining is using the correct name, William.

But...who do they belong to? One needs a Surname to identify the boy with his correct family name...this is the same as a Botanical name. A common name alone does not link the family nor does asking for a so called Blue Sage or a Purple Salvia. We have all run the gauntlet of buying 'new' salvias, let's look at "Indigo Spires" for example; it has been sold as *Salvia regia*, *Salvia regal*, the Regal Sage, Purple Sage, and *Salvia farinacea*. This *Salvia* is a hybrid and its parents are recognized as *S. farinacea* and *S. longispicata* and this offspring hybrid is called *Salvia* 'Indigo Spires'.

There are others that have started out with fancy names and with great difficulty we have all tried to find out exactly what species it is to enable the grower to give it the best position within the garden and check out its requirements. Correct nomenclature would simplify our task and put more pleasure into gardening with these rewarding plants. In the order of plants we go by Family, Genus, Species and their Cultivars or Varieties. See the table below for a clearer definition regarding Salvias.

FAMILY	refers to Lamiaceae
GENUS	refers to <i>Salvia</i> , (relating to your surname)
SPECIES	refers to <i>S. officinalis</i> , <i>patens</i> , <i>microphylla</i> , or <i>greggii</i> etc (relating to your Christian Name)
VARIETY	refers to for example, <i>Salvia officinalis</i> 'Purpurescens'(which is a variety of <i>S. officinalis</i>)

A more detailed account of Plant Names can be found in *Ornamental Plants 2*, entitled *Plant Names - A Guide to Botanical Nomenclature* By Peter Lumley and Roger Spencer RBG Melbourne.

By *Meg Bentley*

The Victorian Salvia Study Group

The Herb Society of Victoria Inc is officially affiliated with the Ornamental Plant Conservation Association of Australia (OPCAA), and has a research arm – 'The Victorian *Salvia* Study Group'.

All interested members of the Herb Society (and future members) are invited to become involved with the activities of the Study Group.

The objective of the Study Group is to set up and maintain a collection of *Salvias* for the purpose of study and research. This collection in two separate sections, at Emerald and Hampton, has already been registered by the OPCAA.

The aims of the Study Group are:

- to inspire interested people to grow and study Salvias in their own gardens,
- to assist with the planting, care and maintenance of the registered collections,
- to search for seed and plants in order to add to registered and private collections,
- to inform nurseries and plant growers of Salvias which are attractive and useful in gardens,
- to exchange seeds and cuttings with other people and similar groups,
- to determine correct nomenclature within the genus, especially of new plants as they are introduced.

A steering committee has been established to assist with the organisation of the above aims and objectives and to arrange visits to gardens, workshops, maintenance of the collection etc. As the Salvia Study Group is part of the Herb Society, members of the steering committee are encouraged to join the Herb Society.

Study Group functions are open to all interested salvia collectors. Visitors to the Study Group are also encouraged to become members of the Herb Society.

A newsletter 'Salvia News' is published to inform subscribers on the current state of the collections; new and recently introduced plants, information on propagation and growing, and to discuss queries concerning nomenclature.

Subscriptions of \$10.00 payable to The Herb Society of Victoria Inc., covering the production and distribution costs, entitle subscribers to 6 issues of 'Salvia News' per annum.

2001 Program:

19 August 2001	Trudi Fry	Workshop – Salvias in winter Plant Sale – 11am – 3pm
16 September 2001	Lyndi Garnett	Discussion & ID*
20 October 2001	Judi Forrester	Excursion to Otway Herbs, Apollo Bay
18 November 2001	Meg Bentley	Discussion & ID*
9 December 2001	Nobelius Salvia Garden	Salvia Xmas Picnic

* *denotes* committee members only

Those interested in attending our Workshops, please note they commence at 11.00am and usually last for approximately 3 hours. BYO lunch to share. Please feel free to contact any of the abovementioned members should you have any queries.

Contact Details:

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