Salvia*N*ews

Victorian Salvia Study Group
A Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria

Number 22

SPRING SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2005

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After 21 issues of Salvia News my printer screeched to a halt. I felt the same way myself. However The Salvia Study Group decided to buy a printer for Salvia News .This is a Xerox Laser Printer which cost $172.70. I bought myself a HP PSC, all in one, colour printer /scanner/ copier, more RAM and PCI to USB card and had the PC ' tidied up' for a further $226.80. The best thing though is that I bought a WIRELESS MOUSE FOR $35. I realize now just what a pain the old one was.
The technologically improved Trudi

EVENTS

September Saturday 10th (1pm – 5pm) & Sunday 11th (10am – 5pm)
Ferny Creek Spring Show

Thursday 15th September. OPCAA will be having their AGM as well as a Plant Auction with Stephen Ryan as our Auctioneer. At Mueller Hall in Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra.
Starting off with a light evening meal at 6pm. Cost: $10. Everyone welcome. This year we have a trading table. The Salvia Study Group have their Salvia Collection registered with the OPCAA. Contact Kathrin 9650 5639 or Meg 5964 9372.

September 17/18. Rare Plant Fair at Mt Macedon District Horticultural Society Hall, Mt Macedon Rd, Mt Macedon. Time: 10.00 - 4.00. This will be a great opportunity to select from a good variety of rare and unusual salvias.

September Tuesday 27th. Bannockburn & District Garden Club Inc. Trudi and Jillian will speak at the Bannockburn Public Hall at 1.30 pm. Salvia plants and books available for sale. Mel. 527 C6

Saturday 22nd October. **Upwey District Garden Club Horticultural Show**
At the 'Blue Hills' Senior Citizens. (off the Main Rd.) **9am – 4pm**
Setting up on Friday 21st Oct. afternoon, 4pm. Contact Ph: 97544889
Trading table – Sales, Salvia Study Group, Indigenous Plants and 'Beez Neez' Herbs

October 23 Trudi's garden is open from 11.30 am.
39 Temple Rd Selby Melway 84 J2 Phone 9754 4041.
This is a very interesting garden and there will be plants for sale.
Ample parking. Food / drink to be provided by the Salvia Group.

Sat. 12th & Sun. 13th November 2005. **9am – 4pm.**
Road Trauma Support Team
10th Annual Open Rose Garden Weekend held at John Nieuwesteeg's Rose Nursery
at 4 Tarrawarra Road, Coldstream. (Melway 276 B6)
View and buy hundreds of roses including the Alister Clark Rose Collection registered with the OPCAA and David Austin roses.
The Salvia Study Group will have a stand with plants for sale.
Admission: $5 adults, $2 children, $3.50 pensioners.
For further details Phone 9819 9922

EVENTS continued

November Tuesday 15th Earimill Garden at 33a Koornalla Crs, Mt Eliza 11.00 a.m. This is a magnificent garden, one which has raised some $500 000 for children's cancer charities. There is a charge ($12.00 which includes admission, tea/coffee etc), we need a minimum of 20 people so put this in your diary now! Books, cards and plants on sale. Bookings should be made through Lyndi and if transport is needed contact Lyndi or Jillian. Bring lunch.

December 4. Christmas Breakup at 'Lemon tree Cottage', Elly and Leon's home
11.00 a.m. BYO Food to share. Come and see this garden - it seems to change every year.
59 Ferguson St, Upwey Melway **74 K9** Phone 9752 6712

News from Otway Herbs

The first Salvia I grew, some 30 years ago, was from seed and turned out to be Salvia officinalis rosea, so hardy that I still have one of my original plants, growing on a low rock wall, and kept healthy by regular removal of dead wood, flowering tops, and cutting bunches for the local cafe. It gets no feeding, only rain. The various forms of *Salvia officinalis* remain my favourites as I am basically a 'herbie'. The normal blue flowered *S.officinalis*. was less reliable here, I grew many, but sudden changes from wet to dry proved fatal, until I grew a particularly aromatic, tough leaved form from seed collected at the experimental herb farm above Sion in the Swiss Valais. Great for cooking and cleaning teeth. A narrow leafed form, willow sage, from Honeysuckle cottage in the blue mountains has also been hardy but not prolific growth. *S.officinalis albiflora*, the white flowered sage, is as Bill says, touchy. I have grown large plants but always collected seed or cuttings and now have only three small tubes for the future. Of the coloured leaf forms *S.officinalis purpurescens* is hardy given perfect drainage [the sand pit] and full sun, but hates heavy wet beds. The little green and gold *Salvia officinalis* ' Icterina' does well but has a strange habit of leaving the high ground on which it is planted and sprawling across the path below. It occasionally produces pretty pure gold sports which are shortlived, but my sister has produced some of classic sage green with Icterinas compact growth, so far also non flowering. I have unofficially dubbed it 'Bluey'. S. officinalis 'Tricolor' is pretty, but only happy in my glasshouse, and of little flavour. I have grown both the dwarf *S.officinalis nana* and *S.officinalis albiflora nana*, which were cute but not for long. Probably the best grower of all has been S. officinalis 'Berggarten' with its wide fleshy leaves and sprawling almost prostrate growth, paler blue flowers, and mild flavour. Its name means mountain garden in German so it must feel at home here.
Judi Forrester

HEALESVILLE NEWS

Hi everyone. A short intro just so those I haven't met yet can get an idea of me. My name is Cait and I live in Healesville, Vic. Five years ago I moved out here from Queens, New York City where I was the (not so) proud owner of the worst garden on my street. My tiny 13x10 foot plot was often the gravesite to once healthy and happy nursery plants. Every spring when I set out to purchase new flowers and shrubs I did so with great trepidation, often apologizing to each potted plant because I feared the outcome. I tried not to let my apprehensions pass on to the newcomers and spoke encouraging words to each one I dug in, but alas, it was of little use. It took me nearly ten years of trial and error - ten years indicate it was mostly error - to get the planting right and have an actual garden. My neighbors seemed happier than me!

Then I moved here and had, what I thought at the time, was a huge garden - 41 x 34 feet, or 21.5 x 10.3 meters now that I've had to learn the metric system.
I stood on my verandah one day, thought, "I *will* garden here," and sent out an apology to every plant I might ever buy.

A strange thing happened. Plants didn't die and they actually grew! When I started reporting my garden progress to family & friends 'back home' the response I was most often met with was, 'You? Gardening?' and that was usually followed by a muffled laugh.

So although I do garden, I consider it more luck than any kind of skill. A year ago June, salvias became my passion. I had a few salvias in the garden already, then, searching the web and reading more and more about them, I became totally hooked.
But having a small garden whipped by an often vicious wind, clay soil, and occasional frosts has meant that I've had to be a bit choosy when it comes to selection, but only a bit.

After reading Pat Anderson's stunning article on salvias and hybridisation I went straight to the garden and began really studying Salvias' 'Blue Bird' and 'Winter Red'.

When I first saw S. 'Blue Bird' in bud I couldn't help but notice how much it's formation looked like *S. polystachya*. The leaves are also alike; both have similar veination pattern, hairs, the same soft feel, and even fragrance. I counted 9 veins on both calyces but on *S. polystachya* the bottom lip is widely two toothed whereas S. 'Blue Bird's are tight together. The corollas both measure ± 1.2cm with S. 'Blue Bird' being a darker blue-purple. From these observations I'd say *S. polystachya* is in there somewhere.

Salvia 'Winter Red' is still in bud right now and I'm impatiently awaiting their opening. I've always thought of *S. dorisiana* as the main parent of S. 'Winter Red' because both their leaves have that strong, fruity fragrance. If my memory is correct, S.'Winter Red' has that beautiful pouty lower lip and that for me rules it out as a S. karwinskii/involucrata cross. I suggest it is a cross between *S.dorisiana* & *S.karwinskii*.

That being said, *S. involucrata* 'Joan' may then be a cross between *S. involucrata* & *S. dorisiana.* Again, the pouty lower lip factors in. And I actually found a seed on my S. 'Costa Rica Blue', just the one, though. I will sow it one of these days. I'm looking forward to reading what other people may suggest.

Cait Hoogenbosch

Salvia News from Hobart- Spring 2000

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart

The cold minimum temperatures of the first seven weeks of winter gave us 16 nights of 3°C or lower while the predominantly mild, westerly weather since mid July has given us only another five nights of such cold, a reversal of last year's pattern. During the entire winter, we have had only eight rainfall recordings of more than 5mm.

Having flowered for seven weeks, the *Salvia madrensis* cultivar at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens brightened the last month of autumn with its yellow calyces and corollas until a day of 2°C minimum and 7°C maximum in early June. This reduced these inflorescences to a sad sight of brown, frosted buds that have since only infrequently emerged yellow. Last year, however, they failed to emerge at all due to the cold. The last of the flowers of *S.* 'Black Night' were also finished by this frost but the hardier *Salvia iodantha* continued to bloom, with dense 10cm long spikes of short cerise corollas up to 3cm in length.

During winter, both *S. gesneraeflora* 'Tequila' and *S. involucrata* x *karwinskii* have become the focus of attention with the intensity and abundance of their floral colour and large long tubular flowers. The former, a cultivar with 'black' calyces, has flower stems up to 45 cm long, displaying widely spaced orange/red flowers up to 7 cm in length including a 2 cm upper 'hood' and a 2 cm broad lower lip which drops and recurves as the flower ages. *S.involucrata* x *karwinskii* has denser, more drooping, sticky aromatic inflorescences up to 35 cm long, with as many as one hundred cerise flowers, 4 cm in length, on each spike. It started to flower in early June and has just about finished the main flush and is

due for a tip prune. Interestingly, these tubular flowers with blunt upper 'hood' and a recurved, folded lower lip are focus for the amusing acrobatics of Wattlebirds accessing the nectar of these large flowers.

One of the parents of the above hybrid, *S. karwinskii*, donated from Geelong Botanical Gardens is sturdier with softer, greyer leaves, and upright stems to 1.5 m. These give rise to pleasantly aromatic sticky spikes 30 cm long, with dark pink narrow corollas, 4 cm in length, and a reflexed, folded lower lip with a short 1cm upper 'hood', a similar flower shape to the hybrid. Having been planted only at the beginning of the year, they are compact with as many as 12 stems per plant.

One of the two year old shrubs of *S. dorisiana*, from Honduras, with deliciously fruit scented leaves, is a metre high by a metre across. It has 4cm long, light pink corollas on sticky, aromatic open flower stems 25 cm in length. With thirteen stems flowering and as many as fifteen corollas per stem already open, there are an equal number of stems in bud. This specimen, in shade and wind protection, has come superbly through the blustery spells in contrast to those in the more exposed site, although they are both at the same stage of flowering.

S. africana-lutea has had only the odd flower until now, but after two years has reached 80cm high and 1 metre across. It is bearing a profusion of developing spikes from which yellow flower buds within the calyx change, on emergence, to a golden tan. The corolla is contained within the 1cm long green calyx. As the flower ages, it is the paler 2.5 cm narrow, 'folded' upper 'hood' which rises and becomes prominent as the darker brown lower lip reflexes and shrivels beneath the calyx. A sturdy, yet pliable shrub with small 2.5 cm rounded aromatic leaves, it is extremely hardy since it grows in the sands of coastal South Africa[1].

I have employed the pruning technique[2] recommended by Meg Bentley for *S. leucantha* and its cultivar, that is, removing alternate stems and tip pruning the remainder. I hope that this will lead to earlier flowering than my usual perennial pruning technique of removal of all old growth.

The memorable images over the winter have been:

- Seeing up to three Eastern Spinebills 'hovering' and feeding on the nectar of the 2cm white flowers, with extremely narrow access, of *S. leucantha* and the similarly small *S.* Indigo Spires.
- A solitary sparrow pecking for the seed of *S.* Indigo Spires
- Silvereye flocks regularly sweeping through the collection at sunrise. I have also observed a Silvereye scraping the underside of the leaves of *S. involucrata* x *karwinskii*, presumably, for the ever present whitefly as well as feeding from the nectar of the flowers.
- A Crescent Honeyeater feeding on *S. iodantha*.

John Daniels

[1]As related by Des Lawrence at Geelong Botanic Gardens

[1] Meg Bentley in 'A Manual for Salvia Growers', a comprehensive scholarly work of art!

NAMING SALVIAS

Most growers wish to know the names of their salvias. As they are imports to Australia, and with some confusion overseas, this has not been easy. Until recently, only a few were available, and these only known by their common names, e.g. pineapple sage, bog sage, common sage and its cultivars, etc. But today, those more available to us, are known mainly by their botanical names.

Botanical Name Structure

The basic unit of classification, where the plant has been correctly identified, is given by its binomial botanical name.
Genus this is where it has been grouped with other similar plants, to form a family. In our case it is 'Salvia', from its Latin meaning to heal or save. It referred to common sage, with its known healing properties, in ancient times.
Species this is the epithet which directly identifies the plant to its genus. When referring to common sage, its species name is '*officinalis'*, meaning it was officially known for its healing properties.

Lower Ranks Below Species
Because plants vary a great deal in cultivation, both naturally occurring in the wild, and also by deliberate breeding, lower ranks of naming plants are further used. I am greatly indebted to Pat Anderson, for supplying me with the relevant pages from the journal, 'Plant Names', 'A Guide to Botanical Nomenclature', by Peter Lumley & Roger Spenser, issued by the Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens. From this journal on page 11 I noted, " the following three categories are below the level of species (infra-specific), and given a name in order of rank". (infra is Latin meaning below). " These given categories are: subspecies, variety and form". I now wish to discuss the second category "variety" however will choose as paragraph heading, "cultivar".

Cultivar Page 11 also states in part, " a variety differs in a minor way from the typical variety. Please note here the term "typical variety" means species. Again quoting from page 11, " the term variety has a definite botanical usage and should not be used as a general term for any plant differing from another: it is better to use the terms species and cultivar when this is meant". Page 22 states "Plants that have been bred or selected for ornamental purposes----------are referred to as cultivated varieties or cultivars for short". Thus all cultivated varieties of salvias, below the rank of species are called cultivars. The cultivars we have growing amongst our species are indeed numerous. Several of them are; *Salvia patens* 'Chilcombe', *Salvia mexicana* 'Limelight'and two of the common sage cultivars *Salvia officinalis* 'Icterina' and *Salvia officinalis* 'Berggarten'.

Hybrids
Page 13 states, "Hybrids result from the interbreeding of related species, almost always in the same genus. This may occur when in nature, the distribution of the two species overlap".
An excellent example of this was discovered in 1991, when English collectors found parent species, *greggii* & *microphylla* and their hybrid offspring, growing near a village in Mexico. According to Sutton, page 120, they found hybrids of almost 30 different colour forms. He also states, "One of the yellows has been chosen as the type of inter-specific hybrid and given the cultivar name of *Salvia* x jamensis 'La Luna'."
Some time ago, I gained great pleasure in growing this hybrid cultivar after purchasing it from Arjas' nursery when it was located at Hurstbridge. As Sutton discusses these hybrids as cultivars, I see no reason to disagree with him. Nor would this description disagree with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne journal that I have herewith quoted from and which was kindly supplied to me by Pat.
Thus in summary, all cultivated varieties of salvias, below the rank of species, including those derived from two species of parents, are called cultivars.
Bill Whitehead

SE Queensland Salvia News - 8/8/05

Winter is a wonderful time in the garden in SEQ. The weather this year has been warmer than usual and those that do get frosts have not had them – Wanda Hirth at Samsonvale has usually had at least a dozen bad frosts by this time and to her relief there have been none. Lovely sunny warm days have been ideal for gardening and I've been hard at it – mostly pruning roses. The roses this winter have looked superb and it has been most difficult to prune off all the lovely blooms! They do it tough in our climate though as they never get to rest as they do in the colder climates. My aim is to intersperse them with salvias and as our garden isn't opening in the next AOGS season I have a chance to move plants about and rearrange garden beds. Anything that is not performing must go to the rubbish pile or will be tucked discreetly at the back of the garden!

The winter flowering salvias have been great, however I have decided that those that don't flower for long periods are going to be transferred to grow amongst the fruit trees where they will look wonderful at this time of year amongst the nasturtiums.

Old favourites such as *S.*'Marine Blue', *S. Muirii*, S.'Christine Yeo', S. Cookie, *S. leucantha, S. chiapensis, S.coahuilensis, S.lycoides, S rubiginosa*, S. Navajo purple and all the microphyllas and greggiis complement roses and if not already growing amongst them they soon will be.

S. dorisiana is at its peak at the moment – how I wish this delightful plant would flower all year. Brushing against it releases the wonderful fragrance – aromatherapy in the garden!

It was great to read the articles in the last Salvia News of the intention to get some sort of plan for the introduction of new plants. It has spurred us on to get serious about trialing the range of seedlings floating around our region.

Plans are underway for our first Cottage Garden & Salvia Spectacular (idea stolen from Vic. Salvia Study Group) to be held the first weekend in June 2006. A long perennial border will be the highlight in the auditorium of the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens. Members will be growing plants to sell and there will be speakers throughout the two days. Of course there will be lovely home cooked food for sale so visitors can spend the day absorbing the knowledge offered.

It was great to catch up with Trudi when she visited her family on the Sunshine Coast. There is never enough time though to cover the topic of salvias!

Parts of SE Queensland are experiencing water restrictions - in Toowoomba they are restricted to watering by bucket only. Let's hope we get some unseasonal rain for these regions. On the Sunshine Coast we have had good July rains however the Brisbane area has not been so lucky and are heading toward more strict restrictions. Thank goodness salvias are not great consumers of water!

Barb Wickes Perennial Poppies Group

Why are hybrids often, but not always, sterile?

To understand this, it is necessary to understand a little about how plants are reproduced sexually (by pollination and fertilisation) and how plant cells divide.

Plants are made up of cells, each one with a nucleus where, among other things, the plant's genetic information is stored in chromosomes – thread-like structures – which occur in pairs, one set from each parent plant. When chromosomes occur in pairs like this, the cell is said to be **diploid** (two fold). A potato, for example, has 46 chromosomes in matching sets of 23 (n = 23, 2n = 46).

A plant grows by cell elongation and division whereby each cell splits to produce 2 identical, diploid daughter cells, each being an exact replica of the parent cell and carrying the genetic blueprint of the plant. This process, called **mitosis** can be observed under a powerful microscope. During the process, each chromosome actually thickens and duplicates itself before splitting.

During sexual reproduction, however, a different type of cell division comes into play. Instead of 2 identical, matching diploid daughter cells, the result of division is 4 **haploid** daughter cells, each with only 1 set of chromosomes – ie reduced by half. This process is called **meiosis**. In this way, haploid microspores with male characteristics are formed in the anthers and subsequently grow by mitosis to form male gametes (sperm) and female equivalents are formed in the ovule. When these gametes ultimately fuse during fertilisation, the diploid number of chromosomes is re-established.

These microspores not only differ from the parent cells by having only 1 set of chromosomes, they are also genetically different from each other because of the way in which the initially paired chromosomes thicken, duplicate themselves and cross over before they split in this process. This all leads to genetic diversity – the more so as each chromosome bears thousands of genes which represent different traits.

But back to the question about subsequent fertility or sterility.

In spite of the crossing over of chromosomes before splitting to form haploid gametes, so long as the splitting is normal and both parents are of the same species, the union of the 2 haploid cells during fertilisation will result in diploid cells with homologous pairs of chromosomes and the whole cycle can repeat itself in the next reproductive season.

If , however, the 2 haploid gametes originate from different, but closely related parent species, the diploid cell that results from fertilisation will be made of 1 of each kind of chromosome, and not matching pairs. When meiosis is attempted subsequently, these unmatched chromosomes cannot form homologous pairs and the plant will remain sterile – unless an accident of chromosome doubling occurs.

Occasionally, chromosome reduction fails to occur during meiosis and diploid gametes result. If diploid gametes form and fuse, the resulting tetraploid (4 fold) will be fertile as its nucleus will contain pairs of homologous chromosomes. This condition is known as **polyploidy.** If this happens to both parents, both sets of chromosomes are doubled, providing themselves with identical mates for normal pairing. So, while different species are generally recognised by their inability to cross-breed, polyploids derived from 2 or more species (allopolyploids) do occur, with the resulting plant being completely fertile since it functions as a diploid with a large number of homologous chromosomes. This is one of the main ways in which genetic barriers between species are broken down, resulting in new gene combinations that may confer selective advantages to the offspring. Generally, however, the 2 species involved will need to be genetically close. Polyploidy can also occur when both parents are of the same species. If a resulting gamete stays diploid and fuses with a haploid, a triploid will result, which in turn may be sterile but which might in turn produce unreduced triploid gametes which may give rise to a fertile hexaploid….. and so on.

Pat Anderson 5 March 2019

News From Werri Beach

I've been busy cutting back the winter flowering salvias. Unfortunately, I planted a few of them together to screen off my neighbour and realise now that I should have interplanted with some other more permanent plants while they are in their new growth. I've had to move S.'Anthony Parker' to the back of a bed as it grew too wide for its position.I've replanted with a *S.microphylla* 'Iced Lemon' and an *Artemisia lactifolia* which I had difficulty placing. I hope they will be happy together. I also moved another S.'Anthony Parker' beside a trellis in a very difficult spot below a large New Zealand Christmas Bush. If it grows there it will definitely prove its toughness.

I've been a bit frustrated with my seed propagation efforts probably because it was the wrong time to attempt it. However, I did manage to produce six *S.repens* which are almost ready to plant out. I thought I might plant them in a row beside a small stone edge. With the warmer temperatures, there has

been some movement from the rest of the seed. I am trying to grow the following from seed*: Salvias disermas, verticillata, tingitana, barrelieri, desoleana, jurisicii and staminea.*

At the moment I have flowering *S.melissodora, S.karwinskii, S.*Van Houtii, *S.dorisiana* and what I think is *S.cyanescens*. Is it a grey with mauve and white flowers, large plant, tough? Both *S.africana lutea* and *S.lanceolata* are coming into bud.Since I moved *S.forskaohlei* it hasn't looked back so I'm hoping for better results this year. I've still got the odd flower on S.'Waverly' and the little S.'Marine Blue' is hardly ever without a few.

We are longing for some rain to freshen everything up after some drying westerly winds. The grass has yellowed again and we even had a slight frost this morning. The water tanks are nearing empty. Usually when that happens, we get a good downpour to refill them so here's hoping.

Maureen Cox

Roots and Stems and Latin

For people who want to do things properly, there is a right and wrong way to spell the botanical names of salvias. It helps if you know a bit of Latin, but even if you don't, there are a few basic principles that are incorporated into the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*. These are:

1. Declension and agreement of nouns and adjectives in Latin

Unlike English, Latin nouns have one of three different genders and a plethora of endings depending on the position in the sentence and other things called declensions. Thankfully we Salvia enthusiasts need not worry about such things. *Salvia* is a feminine noun of the first declension. All we need to remember is that a salvia species name (specific epithet) that is an adjective should also end in 'a' and not 'us', hence *Salvia sagittata* and not *Salvia sagittatus.* The only place where it helps to know anything about declensions is the use of the genitive case (denoting possession) when a species is named after a person. This is explained more fully below.

One thing that has puzzled me for years is why the genus *Eucalypt**us*** always has a specific epithet ending in 'a' like *ovat**a**, caesi**a**, obliqu**a***. It was only when consulting a book in order to write this, that I discovered that while most Latin words ending in **us** or **er** are masculine, classical names of trees, no matter the ending, are always feminine. Hence *Eucalyptus,* while sounding like a masculine noun, is in fact feminine, and thus requires agreement with adjectives with a feminine ending!

2. Geographical Names

Names of countries and localities used for specific epithets may be in the genitive case, e.g. *saharae* (**of** the Sahara). The *International Code of Botanical Nomencclature*, however, recommends that epithets taken from geographical names should be adjectives and end in *–iensis (-e), -anus(-a, -um)* or *–icus (-a, -um).* Hence we have *canariensis, somalensis, africana , mexicana, dolomitica.* All the species on our list that are named after localities conform to this recommendation, except for *aethiopis*, which looks like a fourth declension genitive ending.

Names commemorating people

The name of a person used as an epithet is either put in the genitive case, such as *Salvia muirii* ie Mr Muir's Salvia, or converted into an adjective agreeing in gender with the generic name, e.g. *Salvia wagneriana*. Attempts have been made, without success, to differentiate the application of these forms. John Lindley, writing in 1832, recommended that "…. if the individual is the discoverer of the plant, then the genitive singular should be used, but if the name is given merely in compliment, it should be given the adjectival form". Many plants were named, however, without sticking to this rule before the introduction of *The International code of Botanical Nomenclature*. There is a long list of detailed applications, depending on the letters in a name, which helps explain why we have *-i* or *-ii* at the end of different species names. Examples are as follows:

- When the name after whom a plant is named (generally masculine – see below for feminine) ends in a vowel, including the letter '*y'*, the letter '*i'* is added, except when the name ends in '*a',* in which case an '*e'* is added. Hence *S. dombeyi*. (Not aware of examples of salvias named after people whose names end in a)

- When the name ends in a consonant, the letters '*ii'* are added, except when the name ends in e*r* when a single '*i'* is added. Hence *S. buchananii, munzii* and *muirii*, but *muelleri* and *meyeri.*
- If the plant were named after a woman rather than a man, the genitive ending *'ae'* would be added instead of '*i'*. The above examples for Ms. Dombey, Buchanan, Munz, Muir, Mueller and Meyer would be: *S.dombeyae, buchananiae, munziae, muiriae, muellerae* and *meyerae.*

3. The linking letter –*i*-

This also causes confusion in some compound epithets. When such compounds are formed, the *Code* prescribes linking the **stem** of the first word to the second with an '*i'.* Hence a description of sage-leaved is written as *salvi* (the stem from *Salvia*) + *i* + *folia* = *salvifolia*. It follows that *S. cacaliifolia, gesneriiflora, glechomifolia* and *tiliifolia* are correct spellings because:

cacaliifolia means "foliage resembling that of the Genus Cacalia". So, we take the stem –cacali-, add an '*i',* then add *folia*

gesneriiflora was named to honour Conrad von Gesner. Following principle 2 above, this becomes *gesneri* to which an '*i'* is added before *flora. (*?Or, is the root *gesner* - I'm not 100% certain about this one. You see it spelt with both one and two 'i's)

glechomifolia means foliage resembling that of the genus *Glechoma.* The stem of this is *glechom-,* to which we add an '*i',* then add *folia.*

tiliifolia means foliage resembling that of *tilia* (Linden Tree). The stem of this is *tili-* to which we add an '*i',* then add *folia.*

4. Latinised Greek

Under the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature,* scientific names taken from any language other than Latin are treated as if they were Latin. Thus Greek words are transliterated into Roman characters and given Latin endings. In the same way, people's names can be given Latin endings.

If you are interested in more details, the following sources are helpful. The first one is just a little booklet and very easy to read.

- Lumley, P & Spencer, R: 1995, *Plant Names: A Guide to Botanical Nomenclature* (produced by the RBG, Melbourne)
- Stearn, William T: 1966, *Botanical Latin* (available in paperback 2004 edition)
- Clebsch, B: 2003, *The New Book of Salvias*

If you would like a list of the species names in our list of salvias, together with the meaning of the botanical name, ring the editor.

Pat Anderson 21/1/2005

The Nobelius OPCAA Salvia Collection
Report from the Curator Ray Boatman

The late autumn Working Bee at the salvia garden was gratefully appreciated. Much cutting back, weeding and mulching was necessary as I had not been able to attend to those tasks while I was recuperating from a knee operation. My thanks to all the willing workers who made a tremendous difference to the appearance of the garden.

During the winter, extremely cold weather and fierce winds have had an adverse effect on many plants. Several have unfortunately been lost. I have replacement plants ready to plant at the first sign of spring. The 'old faithful' salvias are determined to survive and include many of the original plantings, such as the border of *Salvia officinalis purpurescens* planted in 1994 and the South African salvias, S. *africana lutea* and *S. dolomitica* . The *Salvia involucrata/ karvinskii* group of plants are all doing well. *Salvia puberula* was magnificent in bloom this year, *Salvia involucrata* flowered profusely during autumn and winter.

I was able to collect about 20 blooms from various species to illustrate a talk I gave to a U3A Group in early August. We hope to be able to extend the plot and the collection during spring and summer.

Winter Notes from Gruyere. June - July - August 2005.

We all know it's been very cold so it must be winter, but where is the rain?
Fine misty drizzle doesn't count for rain and we have had to water many plants because they have been drying out so fast.

There has been much re-modelling, transplanting and changes going on throughout the gardens, old plants removed and replaced with salvias and other plants. Potting benches are gradually being sorted with the excess plants put aside ready for mass planting either in the bush or along the roadside. Rabbits have been a big problem and love to scratch in the fresh earth, but recently we had a much bigger problem.

Cows got in ... nine of them, huge with black fluffy hides and large shining black eyes that stared right back at you when you told them to move on!
Now I can cope with the rabbits scratching, the wombats digging, echidnas ploughing through the ground after ants, I can only just cope with possums eating anything fresh and green but cows trampling down the fence making what seemed like a bee-line for the salvias... eating them and even chewing the pots, now that's a bit too cheeky ... don't you think... and we don't even have any domesticated animals. Someone said to me if animals come onto your land you have the right to keep them!

The mind boggles... what on earth would I have done with one cow let alone nine! Perhaps we could have had a GIANT barbeque and invited you all for lunch... but how could I have prepared a cow, I mean, skinning and cleaning bunnies is one thing but a cow...
I must say I did collect a few buckets of cow manure out of it though which will do nicely for the roses... eventually.

Back to the salvias... this year I have been giving many of the older species a good hard prune. I am at the stage where these can really afford to go since they haven't had a heavy prune, so in some cases it will be an experiment to see just how they perform or whether they die.

We have stated in the past that it is best not to heavily prune some salvias and only prune down to where green shoots are emerging or re-shooting from the base or take out alternate stems. I will keep you informed as to their progress. The ones in question are *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy', *Salvia* karwinskii x involucrata 'Romantic Rose', *Salvia iodantha, Salvia wagneriana, Salvia gesneraeflora* and *S. gesneraeflora* 'Red Rambler' and *Salvia corrugata,* this latter species had been cut down to the base at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and re-shot with great vigour in the following spring, admittedly this can be achieved in an ideal position with good soil and plenty of moisture. Has anyone else tried a very hard prune on *S. corrugata?*

The beautiful Salvia 'Violet Eyes' has continued to flower all through winter and has given colour to a winter garden and been a good source of nectar for the birds. Other salvias flowering at present are S. *iodantha, S.purpurea, S. wagneriana* including the pale form, S. karwinskii, S. 'Anthony Parker', S. *corrugata, S. elegans* 'Pineapple' and 'Honeymelon', *S. pulchella, S. scutellarioides, S. involucrata, S. involucrata* 'Pink Icicles'. *Salvia involucrata x karwinskii* 'Timboon' is a rich treasure in any garden, as is S. 'Costa Rica Blue', others flowering are *S. semiatrata, S. sagittata,* S. 'Harmony', S. 'Indigo Spires', *S. leucantha* purple. There are flowers still on *S. discolor and S. microphylla* 'Huntington', S. *karwinskii x involucrata* 'Romantic Rose'. *Salvia rubiginosa* is just starting to flower as is *S. fallax and S. curtiflora* but my *Salvia dorisiana* is very slow with flowers just starting to open.
Meg Bentley

Terracotta Gardening News

The salvias in my terracotta pots have all thrived on neglect over winter. I vow to weed and tidy them up before Oct. 23rd. *Salvia concolor, S. semiatrata, S. discolor* and *S.africana lutea* are starring now with *S. madrensis* past its best and many others almost ready to flower. ***Trudi Fry***

Winter-Spring and the Division of Salvias

Now is a good time to divide those herbaceous salvias before they start shooting too much... it can happen so fast when you turn your back, the next minute you look they have emerged, growing fast and producing buds, so be quick!.
Quite a few are peeping above the ground now, these are:
Salvia glutinosa, S. miltiorrhiza, S. przewalskii, S. hians ? (hopefully), *S. dolichantha, S. japonica, S. nipponica* 'Fuji Snow', *S. pratensis, S. nemerosa* 'East Friesland' and other varieties, *S. patens* and *S. prunelloides.*

If you are at a loss how to go about it here are a few quick tips:

If the clump is about 4-6inches across and has as many as 6-8 shooting tips, it can be divided into half for good sized plants or split it up into three or four smaller plants so that you can spread the clumps around the garden. Larger clumps can be divided into bigger sections or as you see fit.

Naturally one doesn't cut through the crown of a plant but sometimes a plant can be tightly compacted with shoots, just make your cut as near as possible to the outer areas of the new growth. Always trim off any broken roots and cut the other roots by one third to a half in proportion to the size of the top growth. One doesn't have to be precise where the division takes place , just as long as there are good rooting sections of plant... this might mean two, three or four shooting crowns in each division.

Prepare the garden before you plant, a bit of compost and well rotted animal manure is always beneficial, and plant the clumps with enough soil to cover the base and root ball, firming it in well. Water in with diluted seaweed solution and mulch the area.

If you have *S. glutinosa* or *S. nubicola* showing a fair amount of new growth and you don't want to disturb the whole plant there is another way to extract material, which can also be done with any of the salvias mentioned above.

Where the outside shoot emerges from the clump, run your finger down the side to the root area, following the stem down into the soil. The shoot will be on the inside of your finger, facing the palm.
Gently slide the finger with the plant shoot away from the rest of the plant, hopefully with a root or two attached to the base.
If it comes away without a root but has a strong small stem, it can be still used as an off-shoot cutting.
Remove any lower leaves and pot up as for a cutting. Water it well using the seaweed solution, this always helps with root disturbance and after-shock to the plant.

This method also applies to other salvias such as *S. przewalskii, S. hians, S. dolichantha, S. pratensis, S. miltiorrhiza, S. nemerosa* and varieties,
S. puberula, S. superba 'Blue Queen' and *S. viscosa*.
You will proberbly find they are all emerging from their winter slumbers now that the ground is starting to warm up.

The salvias that multiply by underground runners can be divided or have the off-shoots dug up and placed in pots, this can be done with *S. arizonica,*
S. azurea, S. prunelloides, S. sinaloensis and *S. involucrata* with all its cultivars eg. *S. involucrata* 'Pink Icicles' and *S. involucrata* 'Joan' etc.
Other divisions of course apply to *S. guaranitica, S. guaranitica* 'Argentine Skies' and *S. uliginosa.*
Now is a good time to dig up any rooted sections of
S. scutellarioides that might be growing beyond the area it was originally planted.

There will be others perhaps that I have missed here but this is only to give the readers a general idea of what to do in the garden right now.
One big factor whether or not you will be dividing your plants... watch out for snails and slugs, these can be the reason one thinks the plants have not emerged, slugs have got there long before we thought of looking! ***Meg Bentley***

An Interesting Idea

I wonder if anyone has ' tested' a recent viewer's idea as promoted on 'Gardening Australia'.
The idea was to add wet disposable nappies to potting mix as a means of retaining moisture for use with potted plants.
Now although I'm sure the urea could well be beneficial (especially babies wee), I simply soaked three new nappies in a bucket of water for a very few hours, discarded the outer lining covers and was amazed at how much gel was available. I added this to 24 litres (what a strange measurement) of potting mix and took cuttings of previously reluctant strikers.
Nine weeks later, still unwatered except for the rain, there appears to be an almost 100% strike rate. It is of course far too early to be sure of success as it is winter but a friend tried it with the benefit of a small glass house and she is already potting up!!
Anyway, if nothing else it makes the potting mix go a little further, definitely reduces the need to water and possibly reduces the weight of pots a little.
Laurelle Willis

A Lovely Salvia on the South Coast of NSW
Salvia madrensis

I first met *Salvia madrensis* in July 2003 when Trudi Fry was speaking at the Illawarra Garden School, a once-a-year event that I help organise. Trudi had scoured our garden for salvia flowers that she could take to show her listeners and had gathered a fair amount, considering that we were in the middle of what passes for winter in our mild climate. On the day, Maureen Cox, who has become a regular contributor to *Salvia News* since then, arrived with a bucketful of lovely flowers and asked shyly if Trudi would be interested. The answer was, of course, that Trudi was thrilled.

Salvia madrensis was among Maureen's collection and mine were not the only eyes that were caught by that lovely spike of yellow. Maureen very kindly gave away rooted pieces and cuttings and now *S. madrensis* is growing in various spots throughout the Illawarra. I planted mine facing north east, between a paling fence and the trunk of a tall gum tree with quite a high leaf canopy. This location provides adequate sunshine and a bit of a prop for when either the north or the south winds blow and cause *S. madrensis* to flop about.

My plant had got quite tall by its first summer and showed some of its butter yellow colour. In this summer of 2004/2005, though, it has it has been quite spectacular. It started flowering in January and, as I write this in mid-August, it still has some flowers. It was probably at its best from February to late April when it had truly huge spikes of flowers. I told Trudi that they were almost three feet long but I think now I exaggerated; they were probably only about two and a half feet long and thick with flowers. I had been asked to give a talk on salvias to a local garden club in the second week of May and I had hoped that *S. madrensis* would hold out until then. Unfortunately the long, thick flower spikes had lost most of their individual flowers by then but there was still enough left to show what the plant could be like at its best.

After that talk, I cut off the spent flower stems and was rewarded by fresh flower spikes that were not as huge but still lovely. Very soon now I will be quite ruthless and cut last summer's stems back to the ground. There is fresh new growth from the bottom and I think my *Salvia madrensis* deserves a bit of a rest before it really gets going for the summer of 2005/2006.
Sheila Fox

Seeds

To purchase salvia seeds contact Lyndi Garnett 844 Highbury Rd. Glen Waverly 3150
Ph 9803 4534

SAGE TEAS

Common sage, *Salvia officinalis* has a mellow, slightly bitter flavour (you either like or you don't) but most people appreciate it if used with other herbs, with or without honey. Traditionally sage tea was used as a woman's tonic, for head colds and a gargle for sore throats. Sage tea is also used as a blood cleansing tonic.

These days sage tea can be used either alone as a pick - me – up tea, a digestive after dinner or a calmative tea after a stressfull day. It is also used in liver cleansing tonics as one of the bitter herbs.

Sage tea is usually steeped in boiling water (in the cup, not boiled in a saucepan) for about 5 – 10 minutes, depending on the strength you want. If you don't have any kind of infuser, you can simply pour boiling water over the leaves in the cup and drag them out when you are ready to drink. Of course, when over seas, all I could get was chopped sage leaves, all these floaties in my cup was not a good look.

Sage tea traditionally uses *Salvia officinalis* as it's main ingredient but many other salvias can be used. e.g. the yellow and purple forms of *S. officinalis*, even *S.'Berggarten'* can be used. Many people like pineapple sage tea *(S. elegans*) and even fruity sage tea (*S. dorisiana*) for a sweeter flavoured tea, S. 'Honeymelon' can also be used. These teas need to have fresh leaves to extract the flavour, but ordinary sage tea can be made from dried leaves.

The best type of sage to use for ordinary tea is the 'Greek sage' Salvia fruticosa. The best time to pick it is in the winter time when the ordinary *S. officinalis* is "going off ".'Greek sage' is still producing plenty of good healthy looking leaves in winter and just waiting to be picked.

I like having a cup any time of the day as a calmative / pick-me-up or in my mix of bitter herbs first thing in the morning.

Lyndi Garnett

Update on Salvias in our Garden- August 2005

About 12 to 18 months ago we planted two small *Salvia corrugata* plants in our garden one at the front of the house and one at the rear, the former into a loam topsoil in a sunny position with the latter into a clay soil (to which was added some compost material) in a largely shaded position but receiving some morning sun. Since such time each plant has grown considerably (to a height of approx. 8 feet) however until about 6 to 8 weeks ago neither had produced a single flower. Then all of a sudden it began to happen and flowers started to form on each plant, with the front S. corrugata putting on a magnificant show which still remains, whilst the rear one although having produced a significant number of flowers has not been quite as prolific as the one at the front.

The *Salvia semi-atrata* which we planted into an earthenware pot in August 2004 received a setback in autumn of this year due to a lack of water, but after some hand watering and rainfall fully recovered and has now produced a mass of flowers for the past several months. Without any doubt this is one of our favourite salvias.

We planted a *Salvia madrensis* in our garden in March 2005 with the plant attaining a height of approx. 4 feet before it was unfortunately either knocked or blown over by the wind and snapped off near the base a few weeks ago. The plant may not survive however we will wait until spring to see if new growth appears

A salvia cutting acquired earlier this year and thought to be *S. involucrata* x *karwinskii* 'Timboon', was planted out into our garden a month or two ago and has since become well established.

Recently we removed some flowers and leaves from the plant and showed them to Meg, who was able to positively identify the salvia in question to be *S. involucrata* x *karwinskii* 'Timboon'. At the same time and in the near vicinity thereof, we also planted a Lepechinia which apparently is a close relative of the salvia. In the Heronswood Digger's club magazine (Spring Garden 2005), which we recently received, is a feature article on salvias titled "Why your garden needs salvias!" The article is quite interesting and addresses such questions as "What is a salvia" and suggests possible reasons as to why these plants (given that they are so good) are under- utilised in Australian gardens, as well as providing descriptive material and illustrations (photos) of selected salvia varieties. **Geoff and Jennifer Ellis**

News from Stratford----East Gippsland

I'm holidaying in QLD so will be escaping the cold icy days. Melbourne,on the day we left, had a maximum of 12 degrees and on arrival in QLD it was 24 degrees. No wonder people head north for winter.

Some of my salvias have gone to sleep for winter and though I have not sprayed Stressguard for Jack Frost yet, I have been lucky as we have had only a few frosts so far.

On 18th June, Trudi and Jillian came up to Sale and did a Salvia Workshop for our garden club. They brought with them a lot of salvia cutting material for the propagating part of the workshop displayed beautifully in brass vases. About 50 attended and some of our keen salvia enthusiasts quickly decided they were going to take these cuttings home, and helped themselves, not realizing that they were for the workshop propagation demonstration.

When it was time for Trudi to demonstrate--- no cuttings!! After a 10 minute delay—cuttings were returned and we proceeded to the propagation part of the workshop. *(note from Trudi. Never has so much disappeared so quickly. Obviously I was a failure. Confronted by a mob of unruly salvia enthusiasts I couldn't control, all thought of an orderly demonstration of tools, techniques and propagation mixes was impossible, so instead we had fun. I heard later that "Trudi gave an entertaining propagation workshop"!! Well, Jillian and I enjoyed it, and I hope everyone else did too).*

As I looked on I just laughed as it was very funny to watch. Luckily Trudi and Jillian had brought plants to sell and people rushed to buy.

After being away from the garden for10 days, I will see big differences in growth in my garden and those salvias.

Happy salvia gardening. ***Jane Lee***

Jackie Frost wreaks havoc in Warrandyte

For several years I have been promoting the beauty of growing salvias to my various gardening friends because of the many roles they can play in our gardens. Winter colour, in particular, has to be one of their great attributes, and as a collector of the genus, I now have quite a few of these planted in our garden in Warrandyte.

For several years I have also been out of the country in August, and on my return I have noticed frost damage. With so many Spring jobs to get on with and with Spring flowering plants coming in to bud, my attention has been drawn away from the frost damage other than making a brief note on my flowering record sheet.

This year, however, I have been here for the whole of winter, and oh my goodness, what a lot of frosts we have had. Being located in the valley bottom, we are subject to lower temperatures than on the hills and slopes, due to the way cold air pools in the low places, especially on cold, clear nights. In fact when we listen to the weather forecast which predicts say 5° for Melbourne and 1° for Coldstream, we know that the latter temperature is the more likely in our Warrandyte garden. Well we have had some cold spells this winter, but I recorded the worst damage on the 20th and 21st of July. Only a few days before I had marvelled at how many different species were in flower. Then after this cold snap, I recorded frost damage on *Salvias* 'Anthony Parker', *atrocyanea,* 'Black and Blue', 'Blue Bird' , *chamaedryoides, chiapas sp, coccinea* 'Lady in Red', 'Costa Rican Blue', *curtiflora, discolor, dorisiana, elegans, elegans*'Purple', *fallax, farinacea , involucrata* x *karwinskii, leucantha, madrensis,* all the *mexicanas, miltiorrhiza, miniata, pulchella, purpurea, sagittata, sinaloensis, splendens sp, sprucei* and a *wagneriana* in a pot! Quite a list. What I found most amazing was frost damage on *S. chamaedryoides*, which is normally such a tough nut. Thankfully, the plants will all survive, but what

a mess they look. What is particularly disappointing is the fact that many of these are large plants with large leaves that take up a lot of space in summer without any colour and when they should be adorning

the garden, they look a mess. I'm tempted to cull them, but how can a collector of salvias do this? I guess I will end up trying to move a few things around. Certainly the ones under the trees have had more protection, but then these don't seem to get enough sunshine to flower much either.

To cap it all, the rabbits have nibbled my *S. penstemenoides* and *S. interrupta* and I have had to install tree guards round them. And now, my one and only plant of *S. indica* is about to burst into flower, only to have its buds turn a little black on the tips. At least this one is small enough to cover!
Pat Anderson

Salvias and The Herb Society

Bill Whitehead in his article entitled " Are all Salvias Herbs" in Autumn 2005 Salvia News, (reprinted in the Herbage July 2005) defines a herb as 'a plant, shrub or tree with a useful purpose'. Amongst the useful purposes he mentions are medicinal, culinary, clothing, dyes and insect repellents'. Perhaps he could have added 'garden decoration'. He goes on to describe specific salvia which have been given botanical names because of a likeness to a herb such as lavender, skullcap, dandelion etc.

The article could have gone on to state the many uses of salvia, for example, the medicinal uses of S. officinalis, S. sclarea, S. lyrata, and several others. Salvia dorisiana, S. elegans, S. officinalis, S.fruticosa, S. pomifera, etc have been enjoyed for food and flavouring purposes throughout the ages. The highly scented leaves of almost all salvia serve as excellent insect repellents, and when dried, valuable additions to pot pourri. It is easy to understand why the pungent odour of S. urica can be used as an efficient pest repellent.

Other salvia have been utilized by various cultures and religions for incense production, antiseptics, relaxants and disinfectants. Many are also an excellent source of cut flowers, herbal teas and essential oils and provide outstanding color , texture and shape in the garden.

So that with all these herbal attributes it was inevitable that when the OPCAA suggested that the Herb Society of Victoria should develop a collection salvia was an obvious genus for our Society to collect and study. (Mints were also considered but, fortunately, decided against!). Our members commenced potted collections with plants purchased from nurseries, although there very few available 15 years ago , cuttings taken from old gardens, and seeds brought in from New Zealand. The collection could not be registered unless a site (or sites) could be found for the collection to be housed. Fortunately, our member Mark Dymiotis, and the committee of management at Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald, provided us with a garden and a small plot of land for the initial plantings to be made. These two sites for our trial gardens provided us with contrasting soil types, climate and temperature.

When the opportunity was offered to grow and study salvia, I felt it was a great opportunity for our society to be involved in some serious study. (I was President at the time). The Society, as well as the OPCAA has benefited greatly as a result of the ongoing research as the 'Salvia News' attests.

So the Victorian Salvia Study Group was formed to assist with the planning and organization of our activities. We are an autonomous body, and most members of our group are members of the Society.

One of the advantages of membership of the Herb Society is our monthly magazine 'The Herbage', a wonderful source of information on all herbs (including, of course, salvias), listing of coming 'herbal' events and gardening hints. Other benefits may include reduced prices for tours, trading table purchases etc.

If you are not already a HSOV member, please consider joining the Society, we would welcome your input and knowledge just as much as you will enjoy 'The Herbage', our very interesting speakers and our seminars and demonstrations.

R. Boatman
Salvia Branch Secretary and Immediate Past President of the HSOV

Product News

HEATED PROPAGATION UNITS a Heat'n' Grow product. Often found at Hydroponic shops and retailing for $195.00.

You may want a basic propagation unit to fit which includes; a base tray, a seed tray and a clear plastic cover, it should cost approx $20.00. Also available at Bunnings and Hydroponic shops. Ring Holland & Forge, on 97641372 to find a place near you that sells HEATED PROPAGATION UNITS

In the eastern suburbs I have found 2 places;

(1) GREENLITE 14 Burwood Hwy, Burwood, (just before Warrigal Rd)

(2) URBANHIGH 1/ 1182 Burwood Hwy FTG (near Maxifoods)

REGEN 2000 SMOKE MASTER
from TREEMAX Ph 95748600
10 Enterprise Crt
Mulgrave (off Wellington Rd)
2 litres cost $25.30 As only a small amount is needed, perhaps share with others interested in using this product in propagation. (This would make an interesting article for Salvia News).
They sell all sorts of other interesting products.

Lyndi Garnett

Leongatha Horticulture Club

Leongatha Horticulture Club thank Trudi Fry and Jillian Barkell for coming to our July meeting and giving us a most informative and interesting talk on Salvias.

Trudi entertained us all with her vast knowledge of the different varieties, growing conditions and plant sizes. And we all loved that she pruned only when she couldn't get past the salvia. Jillian however gave us pruning instructions. We loved the flower samples they bought along to show us and the multitude of different colours and sizes of flowers.

We were able to purchase some plants and ask questions. Trudi also gave us a demonstration on taking cuttings.

We are really looking forward to our upcoming coach trip on October 15, when we will be visiting Arja's garden Finngrove at Panton Hill, to see a large selection of Salvias growing in her garden.

Heather Sullivan.

SALVIA FORUM

A place for Salvia discussion, questions, answers, informal or formal just like the Salvia Group pictured.

Notes re. Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens.

Salvia 'Black Knight' has been known to set seed, this happened up in N.S.W. when a seedling was found growing under the parent bush which did result in a different coloured flower. Personally I haven't come across this salvia setting seed.

We will all be awaiting the results of John Daniels wee baby from S. 'Indigo Spires' which he calls S. 'Purple Spires'.

There can occasionally be exceptions to the rule.

So many salvia crosses can automatically take place under our very noses and only if we plant all our seeds, from every species and cultivar, would we come across something quite new and interesting as has happened in Tasmania.

Salvia gesneraeflora 'Tequila' has set seed here, this is how we came across *S. gesneraeflora* 'Red Rambler', which has light brown calyces.

Salvia guaranitica is a species and sets seed, the results can be quite interesting, see Betsy Clebsh's book re information on *S. guaranitica* and what she calls the cultivar with dark violet flowers… 'Costa Rica Blue'

A chance seedling came up in my garden amongst the *S. guaranitica*, a clumping plant with corollas of bright violet with a touch of white at the throat, calyces are bright green … this is now named as *Salvia* 'Violet Eyes'

With great interest we will be following the results of John Daniels in Hobart.

Re possums… Oh Dear, how sad… I thought I was the only one who had to suffer the depredation of POSSUMS , especially on one of my S. 'Costa Rican Blue' shrubs.

Yes, they do get a liking for this and a few other salvias, eg. *S. wagneriana* which was growing beautifully up through the S. 'Costa Rican Blue'.

Apparently, through the dry period last year, these pests (the large brushtail possums) swung from the overhanging branches of the Liquidambar tree (having stripped it bare I might add) and chewed the salvias from the tips down as far as they could reach.

Rabbits have also taken a liking to scratching away at the side roots of some herbaceous salvias and eating roots and new shoots. Pieces of wire netting or bracken fern have eliminated this problem.

Salvia corrugata grows best in morning sun or light sun but is bothered by hot afternoon sun. Water well through the first summer. Place a rock or large potted plant by its base (on the hottest side) to help keep the roots cool over summer; this will give the plant greater protection.

Salvia 'Southern Belle'.This salvia is a cross between *S. recognita* and *S. officinalis* in the garden of Geoff Genge in Invercargill, N.Z. Geoff and Adair run a nursery 'Marshwood' and hold the Salvia Collection for the South Island of New Zealand where they have some wonderful cultivars from many different salvias, especially *S. officinalis.*

S. officinalis x recognita is very similar to *S. recognita* but with smaller stems and the corolla colour is a more intense pink-rose with sage green foliage. Information obtained from Geoff, in 2001.

It is great to see salvia enthusiasts checking on plants that are growing in their gardens and 'looking into the plants' and not just at them!

Salvia polystachya and S. 'Blue Bird' have quite noticeable differences, while the flowers and calyces can look similar in their sizes, the type of growth, height of the plant and leaf formation differ.

Salvia involucrata 'Joan' is a cultivar of *S.involucrata*, with leanings towards a smaller form of 'Bethellii'. It has the similar type of suckering, smaller leaves and flowers and deeper colouring , it grows taller but without the same central knot of unopened flower buds.

So far, there has been no recorded mixed cultivars of *Salvia dorisiana* but that is not to say this can't happen.

Salvia involucrata x karwinskii 'Winter Red' (seed grown from Sue Templeton) was given the name 'Winter Red' to distinguish it from others cultivars and crosses at that time. Every thing about the plant shows its close relationship with the two parents, one way or another and not with *S. dorisiana*.

While fragrance is an important factor in trying to help identify plants it doesn't always mean that it comes from a particular species that has fragrant leaves.

Fragrant leaves may only be an indication of where they came from or the type of pollinators required.

I hope I have answered your questions.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or members of the Victorian Study Group.