



SalviaNews

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

Number 26

SPRING SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2006

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A LETTER FROM YOUR EDITOR

Editing our Salvia News is a rewarding challenge. I am amazed that I am able to do it, and it all happened because I was given an old computer and my 4 year old grandson taught me how to turn it on. I have 2 typing fingers and learning on the job is how it is all done. As for my knowledge of salvias, well, that too has been achieved by learning about them through growing them. We're told that exercising our brain is a good thing to do and even fighting with my computer is, I guess, teaching me to be assertive.

I wonder how many of you would like to be more closely associated with the Study Group. I would like to give all of you the opportunity to take part in propagating salvias for sale (we use all profits to benefit our OPCA and Display Gardens). We would teach you how to propagate and we make sure no one is out of pocket buying pots, propagating materials etc. Helping with plant sales at the various functions we attend through the year is a great way to meet people with similar interests. Please don't think you can't do things just because you know nothing about them. I am a perfect example of someone who knew nothing when I began, still know I need to know more, but have fun finding out.

The other opportunity on offer is help with editing SN. Someone with some computer skills, email, etc would be wonderful. We really welcome people and the help and friendship of all of us is generous and genuine.

We are very excited at the new opportunity our Display Garden at Nobelius offers. Try and come on September 17th. Please ring me Trudi on 9754 4041 or any of the numbers inside the cover of SN if you are interested in propagation or editing . I am happy to have just a few people at a time in my garden in Selby. There is ample cutting material.

Forum can't appear this issue. Pat is overseas and Meg has serious illness in the family. We will have lots of questions to answer next time. **Trudi Fry**

EVENTS

September Friday 8th 2006. OPCA afternoon seminar 'Digital Photography' & afternoon tea 3pm. AGM Dinner and Plant Auction with Trading Tables 6-30pm.

Cost: Seminar \$25. Dinner & AGM, Plant Auction evening \$10. Domain House, Dallas Brooks Drive (just opp. Herbarium) South Yarra. Contact OPCA Office, Marguerite Hancock Ph / Fax 96505639

September Saturday 16th, Sun. 17th Wed. 20th Cotswold Park 10am- 4.30 pm nursery & open garden \$5. 760 Little Yarra Rd. Gladysdale Mel 512 S3 Ph (03)5966 6076

September 17th Sunday 11am..Nobelius Mel 127 G4 Bring tools... Lunch to share... **Work on our new plot!!! Who will turn the first sod?** This will be a display garden opposite the museum. The OPCAA Collection Garden will have a new sibling. Nobelius Park off Creighton Rd Emerald.

September Tuesday 19th 10am San Remo Garden Club Wynne St, follow to car park and brick building to meeting. Trudi & Jillian will talk about salvias & have plants for sale.**Country Mel 303 S8**

Monday 25th September 8pm Taylors Lakes Garden Club Meeting , Tennis Club Pavillion. Entrance & carpark from Lionheart Drive **Mel. Map 13.J3**. Trudi & Jillian will talk about salvias and have plants for sale.

October 1st Sunday Gembrook open garden fest 5 gardens open from 10 am. Contact Gembrook CFA for bookings Ph 596 81011 **Mel 312 J 9**

October Saturday 7th Sunday 8th Growing Friends of Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens Plant Sale. 10 am to 4pm at gate E. Birdwood Av. Sth Yarra

October 14th –15th 9 am to 4pm annual Baw Baw Garden Expo Lardner Park via Warragul. A Lions Club special effort for a Cancer care Facility at Taralgon.Entry Adults \$5 children free

October Saturday 21st Upwey Horticultural Show at Blue Hills Senior Citizens Club, rear of shops, Upwey. Enter via Mahoneys St **Mel. 75 A** . We will be selling salvias.

November Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th Sanung Keban [Beefy Boyz]at Navigators near Ballarat.**Country Mel 76 G3** Ph / fax (03) 5334 7049 email: beefyboyz@bigpond.com. Collectable plant sale three nurseries with rare and unusual plants for sale.

November Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th : Nieuwesteeg Roses. Coldstream Road Trauma have again invited the Salvia Study Group to have a plant stall at John Nieuwesteeg's Open Garden Weekend. Tarrawarra Rd, Coldstream **Mel. 276 B8**

November 26th Sunday 11 am Maureen Scobie's garden. We have been invited to visit and enjoy seeing salvias and no doubt other lovely plants as well. Bring lunch. to share.
8 Riverview St. Avondale Heights Mel 27 F7

TUPELO GROVE NURSERY OPEN DAY

This will be held on **Sunday 26th November** from 10 a.m. To 4 p.m. at **Tupelo Grove Nursery** which is on Bradbury Road Mylor about a Kilometre on the right past the intersection with Leslie Creek Road. Tupelo Grove is a wholesale nursery specialising in perennials including salvias. Many of the plants are not commonly available in garden centers. In addition to the nursery the property has a large garden planted with many salvias. It is a chance to see how the plants grow in the garden.

The Victorian Salvia Study Group provides speakers. If your group is interested please contact Lyndi Ph.9803 4534

Happy Birthday, Bill.

Many of the seasoned members of the Salvia Study Group will know our dear friend Bill Whitehead, who has always been a member and played a part in its beginnings. You may have heard of his recent birthday of 90 years young, which was celebrated in Geelong. Here is the opening speech given by Ray Boatman; “ One spring afternoon, in 1981 (I think!) we were touring the Bellarine Peninsula on a Herb Society weekend trip to Herb Nurseries. As we approached a



beautiful property in Wallington we noticed a sprightly, interesting looking man awaiting our arrival. It was my first introduction to Bill Whitehead, and the beginning of a lasting friendship. Bill's friend, Don Francis, the curator of the Pelargonium and Geranium Collection at the Geelong Botanic Gardens and a charter member of the Herb Society, had warned Bill of the impending visit to Wallington, and Bill was determined to meet us and join the Herb Society of Vic. Fortunately, I had membership forms on board for the Society and within a few days, Bill was a paid – up member and has since, made a tremendous contribution to the Society. His membership has also led him to the OPCA, the formation of the Geelong Herb Society (with Don's assistance) and of course his involvement in the Salvia Study Group. Bill has been an avid reader of our wonderful 'Herb Age' and it was this monthly publication, which led him to the OPCA and the beginnings of his Salvia Collection. To augment this collection, he scouted all the local nurseries and took cuttings from old gardens. He traveled to Melbourne to take part in the Study Group's monthly workshops and enjoyed swapping plants, cuttings and seeds. In latter years, Bill found that traveling to Melbourne was arduous and Des Lawrence, the curator of the Salvia Collection in the Geelong Gardens, kindly drove him to Melbourne for most workshops and gatherings, (thank you Des!)

Bill's home collection grew rapidly and our visits to his garden have been enjoyable and educational occasions and Bill's wife Shirley has made us so welcome. I have always been much impressed by his luxurious specimens of *Salvia discolor* and *S. chiapensis*. He was first amongst the group to obtain a brilliant red *S. greggii*, (not named at the time) a *S. officinalis* 'alba' and *S. officinalis* 'rosea'. Having always been generous with his plants, most of us have in our collections, plants, which originally came from Bill, who has shown great skill in propagation from cuttings and seeds.

Perhaps his main contribution to the Study Group has been his interest in the collections in the Geelong Botanic Gardens during the early days where he assisted Velda and Graham Ellis with the original plantings in the gardens. Later, when the gardens were extended, Bill donated his extensive potted collection to the gardens – about 90 plants in all. John Arnott, Curator of the Gardens and several staff arrived with a truck to collect the pots, it was a day that Bill will never forget!

There are now five distinct salvia beds and this collection has recently been given full registration with the OPCA.

We are often the recipients of letters addressed in a distinct style of handwriting and we recognise Bill's presence immediately and think 'What's he up to now'? The ideas he expresses are always helpful, thoughtful and interesting. The latest of these have been responses to my suggestion that Bill should co-ordinate arrangement for the 2010 Australian Herb Conference to be held somewhere in Victoria, perhaps Geelong? He reminds me that he will be 94 by that time, but I'm sure he will still be as full of energy and enthusiasm as he was on that Spring afternoon back in 1981.

For your friendship, your ideas and contributions to the collections, your involvement with the Geelong Gardens, involvement at Spectaculars, workshops and 'Open Days' that we have all benefited from thank you Bill, from the bottom of our hearts! “

We now raise our glasses and drink a toast to Bill's health – 90 years young and still going strong... To Bill!”

Ray Boatman

(Note from Salvia News Editor. Bill has been a valued writer ever since the first edition of SN and his grammar is meticulous!)

Thank you to all the Salvia Study Group for choosing a painting of mine as a gift for Bill Whitehead's 90th Birthday. This was a delight and a great honour for me. Thank you, Velda Ellis

Differences in Paradise

I always enjoy reading about the salvias in other people's gardens and I think I heard a rumour once that some day there will be a map in *Salvia News* showing where the gardens that we read about can be found. In the meantime let me tell you that my salvias grow in Kiama, NSW, which is a little piece of Paradise on the Pacific coast about 110 kilometres south of Sydney. Barely six kilometres away, as the crow flies, there is another salvia garden that you read about regularly, Maureen Cox's in Werri Beach.

As you can probably imagine, Maureen's and my garden situations are fairly similar, with pretty much the same exposure to coastal winds and similar amounts of sunshine. On the other hand, our soils differ greatly. Maureen has sand and I have rock and it is rather hard to say which is worse.

Our little piece of Paradise has some other defects, too. Where my salvias are concerned these are mainly the humidity of late summer, that seems to be fatal to every form of *Salvia officinalis* and the bullying winds from the south and the west that can bash some salvias about quite ruthlessly.

Given the similarities of our salvia gardens, Maureen's "News from Werri Beach" in *Salvia News*, Winter 2006, had two surprises for me. The first was her describing *S. semi-atrata* as small. I have had mine for three years now, a present from Trudi Fry when she visited us in 2003. Once planted, it straight away shot up to almost 1.5 metres and that is what it has been ever since. I had to stake it up in the last year or so when I found that a blustery southerly had blown it half out of the ground. It seems reluctant to grow into a nice looking bush, always a bit woody, but almost always in flower including as I write this in the last month of winter.

The other surprise (to my chagrin) in Maureen's article was the description of her *S. 'Anthony Parker'*. Mine did well at first, growing quickly to about 1.2 by 1.2 metres and flowering beautifully. Now it is looking very pathetic with a very woody, 5cm central trunk, several side stems damaged by winds, and a few small spikes of flowers. I know it dried out considerably in our summer and subsequent very dry autumn but it does not seem to respond to any irrigation. Has its roots met an impervious rock? Possibly. Perhaps I should get a cutting from Maureen and start again. Probably one of the things that annoys me most about my *S. 'Anthony Parker'* is that it has been promoted as a wind-tolerant alternative to *S. 'Indigo Spires'*. But my *S. 'Indigo Spires'* looked superb all through the heat and aridity of summer and autumn and, with the old growth cut back, is ready to start again in next season.

We can but try, can't we?

Sheila Fox

NEWS FROM WERRI BEACH NSW

We've had too much rain here. I wish it could have rained where people really are desperate for some. Still it's been lovely rain and the garden's green and fresh. So far not too many westerlies to dry it out.

I am keen to get more salvias but am waiting for Spring. Lately I have been more concerned with tree planting for privacy as both next door and opposite have been sold. We have been spoiled over the years with mostly holiday houses all around and now fear that we are going to be 'overlooked' especially since most people these days build such monstrous houses. Ah well!

The winter salvias have been flowering well. I thought I had lost *S. involucrata* 'Bethellii' after our hot summer but it has survived. I was disappointed with my propagating this year with not much to show. The seeded plants are coming on but very slowly.

S. madrensis has been flowering for ages as has *S. 'Anthony Parker'*. Also out now are *S. melissadora*, *S. 'Van Houtii'*, *S. 'Waverly'*, *S. semi atrata* and two of the 'reds'. I have what I

think is *S.disjuncta* but it seldom has more than a couple of red flowers on it. I've tried it in two places now and I don't know why. It gets plenty of sun so I don't think it's that. I've ordered some *S.patens* from a local nursery in Spring. I am keen to get other varieties. We are having a 'Garden Lovers' Fair at Berry Showground in September, so I'm hoping there will be some salvias there also.

I know I should but I'm always reluctant to cut some plants right back in case they don't recover. I'm speaking at the moment of *S.'Hot Lips'* and *S.'Marine Blue'* for example and the microphyllas. They all have new growth coming up from the bottom and I know I should trim them right down.

I planted two *S.chamaedryoides* (I think) on a small rock wall and I'm really pleased because they are both hanging over nicely and without any extra attention in a fairly harsh spot. Another which is flowering well at the moment is *S.cyanescens* (grey leafed, mauve/white flowers?). It's very reliable and flowers for a long time without any attention. Even though we've still got a month of winter to go, days like today with the sun so warm, makes us think spring is not far off. There's stirring in the garden already with buds forming and plants coming to life again.

Maureen Cox

Living with a salvia fanatic

John Anderson (loving husband of Pat!)

This Newsletter invariably contains plenty of information from fanatics about identifying and growing salvias but it rarely contains any news about what we partners of salvia cranks and nut-cases have to endure. We have to live with books and papers about salvias on every bench, table and desk around the house, salvia juice and muck all over the surface of the scanner, computer memory congested with photographs of salvias, a glasshouse full of salvia seedlings, a nursery full of salvia cuttings and garden beds groaning with salvias and other lamiaceous wonders that overwhelm the place with their pungent pong.

Now as if this is not enough, my partner, Pat, collects seeds and then allows them to dry and mature before packaging them. These are then added to her already enormous seed collection which she stores in the fridge, thereby minimising the space available for chilling wine, cheese and other essentials that are needed to appease her partner, not to mention herself. Pat normally uses old butter containers in the glasshouse to dry out her seeds but she sometimes places the freshly gathered seeds in the kitchen in our prized stainless steel bowls which we normally use for serving ice-cream in the summer. My partner's aim when drying seeds in the kitchen is to use the pungent pong, sorry, beautiful bouquet, emitted by the drying seeds to overwhelm the cooking odours and she uses stainless steel bowls in the kitchen as they are a little more decorous than the old butter containers she uses in the glasshouse.

Well, one day last summer, Pat placed a few newly collected seeds of *Salvia reflexa* in one of our stainless steel bowls which she then put on the shelf above the kitchen bench in her usual way. The following day, Pat went to place an object inside the bowl on top of the seeds and was aware of a mouse staring up at her from the bowl, happily drugged to the eyeballs with its tail bolt upright like a newly emerged spear of asparagus. Now, normally a mouse would be off like greased lightning but this poor little bugger could only sit there on its haunches and grin. It was quickly placed in a clear plastic food container and a few drops of methylated spirits were added which the mouse seemed to sniff with great delight. As it did so the tail gradually declined, permanently, to the horizontal position.



S. reflexa is indigenous to Mexico and USA but is now a widespread weed on the heavier soils of much of north-west NSW and south-central Queensland where it causes losses in sheep and cattle (Hurst, 1942; Everist, 1981; McBarron, 1986). Early studies by Australian scientists suggest that the toxicity of *S. reflexa* is attributable to the accumulation of nitrate (Williams & Hines, 1940; Hurst 1942). Nitrate

as such is not especially toxic but it can be converted either by the plant or the grazing animal to nitrite which reacts with haemoglobin to form methaemoglobin. Thus, the action of haemoglobin in transporting oxygen around the body, which is essential for animal function, is inhibited. It would seem that, depending on the availability of nitrate in the soil, *S. reflexa* can be very potent in this regard. In one experiment an aqueous extract prepared from minced foliage of *S. reflexa* was fed to sheep. In less than 6 hours, 72% of the haemoglobin in the sheep was converted to methaemoglobin at which time the animal died (Williams & Hines, 1940). However, it should be noted that these investigations were conducted in the early 1940s before techniques for studying individual terpenes/terpenoids (see below) became available.

Grazing of foliage of *S. reflexa* has also caused losses in livestock in North America but in this case the symptoms are reportedly not consistent with nitrate/nitrite toxicity (Kingsbury, 1968) perhaps suggesting that other compounds (maybe in conjunction with in nitrate/nitrite) could be involved in the toxicity of this species. In this regard, it is of interest that some salvias (e.g. *S. officinalis* and *S. triloba*) contain thujone which has pharmacological properties similar to the active constituent in cannabis (Polya, 2003). Also, salvinin A is an extraordinarily potent hallucinogen in *S. divinorum* (Bruneton, 1999). Thujone and salvinin A are members of a large class of compounds known as terpenes/terpenoids (terpenoids are compounds formed from terpenes) which are common constituents of salvias and are largely responsible for the characteristic bouquet of individual species. The pharmacological activity of individual terpenes and terpenoids varies greatly. Some, such as salvinin A and thujone are extremely potent, some exhibit mild activity but, in the absence of any reports to the contrary, it is likely that many show little if any activity. Clearly, the toxicity and pharmacological activity of any one salvia species is related to the activity of the particular terpenes/terpenoids it contains. Some novel diterpenes have been reported in *S. reflexa* (Neito *et al.*, 1996) and this raises the question whether these and/or other terpenes/terpenoids contribute to the toxic (and maybe hallucinogenic) activity of *S. reflexa*. The fate of the mouse suggests that seeds of *S. reflexa* are no less toxic than the foliage.

Be all this as it may, my partner is very happy to have a new and novel way for controlling rodents that dare to enter her kitchen and she is ever grateful to the poor mouse for providing the perfect excuse for further extending the takeover of our home by salvias and salvia products.

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LAURELLE'S GARDEN IN BORONIA VIC.

The daily walk allows the viewing of many suburban plots and the diversity on show is amazing. Being a 60s/ 70s subdivision there are many cordylines, magnolias, agapanthus and an over abundance of poorly chosen natives. But, just occasionally, a salvia... mostly *Salvia leucantha* looks absolutely beautiful during these cooler months.

Here in my garden I'm looking forward to culling the hugely aggressive *S. involucrata*. Not a plant for a minimal suburban garden. Looks wonderful but has taken so much space and height that all manner of treasures are overcrowded and in danger of demise from lack of air and light. She's got to go. Not that *S. iodantha* or *S. sprucei* are any less large at 12/15 feet tall and nearly as broad!!

Still, one marvelous bonus is the feasting of the little honey -eaters, who, unlike the wattle birds, don't have the weight to break the brittle stems. I'll replant a piece against the enormous pear tree for support and hopefully the honey -eaters will return next season.

The garden must have suffered from lack of summer water and certainly appeared in decline. But now, well into winter, all is happy and lush.

My “mantra” has long been that it is a waste of time, water and effort to water anything other than pots as the big things say “thanks mum” and the little things, who can’t compete with aggressive root systems, die quicker. That said, without watering there were only two casualties and both were newly planted.

Laurelle Willis

Salvia corrugata

I would like to inform members of the study group of the provenance and characteristics of the specimens of *Salvia corrugata* held in the collection at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart.

In June 1992, Ken Gillanders, a local nurseryman specializing in rare, native and exotic plants, collected difficult to find seed of *Salvia corrugata*, growing prolifically in full sun to 3 metres in height along the side of a road approximately 20 kilometres north of Cuenca in southern Ecuador. This population, in association with *Oreocallis grandiflorum* and *Barnadesia cariophylla*, was at an altitude of between 2,600m and 2,800m in montane scrub with remnant forest in gullies. *Salvia corrugata* is common in disturbed Andean mountain forest and along roads with natural vegetation fragments. Ken forwarded his herbarium specimen to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew which consequently identified it as *Salvia corrugata* in 1993. Sue Templeton credits Ken with its introduction into Australia¹. Our specimen of this salvia was obtained, in 2001, from Ken and Lesley’s, Woodbank Nursery, in the hills to the south of Mt Wellington, where they propagated material collected on a number of trips to Southern Africa, Ecuador and Yunnan as well as in the bush in Tasmania.. They still have a long surviving plant of *S. corrugata*, grown from the original collected seed. In 2004, Ken was honoured with an Order of Australia Medal in recognition of services to horticulture, rare and exotic plants and to the Australian Rhododendron Society.

According to Betsy Clebsch, plants of *Salvia corrugata* were introduced into horticulture in the northern hemisphere in about 2000. She quotes the botanist James Compton as saying, that he believed all horticultural specimens of this salvia in cultivation to be descended from material collected in the wild, in South America, in 1988 by the Archibalds, Welsh seed collectors. Their unidentified herbarium specimens were held at Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and eventually forwarded to James Compton at the University of Reading in 1994. There, he not only identified the specimen as *Salvia corrugata* but also successfully achieved its propagation by the germination of six seedlings from this herbarium material that had been treated by freezing to below -18°C both on arrival at Edinburgh and again at Reading, some six years later².

This highland equatorial salvia, found also in Peru, is a most attractive shrub for its foliage and form alone. Dark green and shiny, as well as rugose on the upper surface, the leaves are particularly beautiful with the ‘pebbly’ texture generating a very appealing ‘rustling’ sound on rubbing with the thumb while the ‘velvet’ texture beneath the leaves is silent. This activity generates a subtle aromatic quality from the foliage while brushing the inflorescence produces a more intense sensation. The lanceolate leaves can reach 95mm in length and 40 mm in breadth. Beneath, the leaves are covered densely with a tomentum of pale brown which I vividly remember as also being the same colour as the roots on removal of the root ball from the pot on planting. This is also the colour of the tips of thin, grooved stems which can be lax and arching. Produced, terminally or axially on short stems, are numerous small flowers of the deepest blue, in compact inflorescences, up to 14 cm in length, which are highlighted against the deep green of the dense foliage. Another feature of the flowers of *Salvia corrugata* is the contrast of the conspicuous white nectar lines at the throat of the corolla with the vivid blue of the flower. The narrow, 10 mm long upper hood extends from a corolla, which is 15mm in length, and produces a vertical lower lip 10mm broad and long. Dense, bristly hairs cover the hood and surface beneath the lower lip. The calyces, 10mm long, ribbed and covered in dense grey hairs, are a bright

green but have 'black' tips, especially on the side exposed to the sun. Sepals that divide the calyces are obvious particularly in the lower half of the larger terminal inflorescences.

Because of its densely branching habit, this vigorous shrub can layer prolifically. The forms of *Salvia corrugata* held in the collection vary from those specimens up to 2.70m high with an open habit that are protected from prevailing winds to the more compact, dense and rounded bush of half the height in a more exposed position that results from stems growing more horizontally. Also, the latter have the quality of extra flowers arising from the resulting axial shoots. About to come into full bloom, they are receiving daily visits from Silvereyes which access the nectar through a tear in the base of the corolla. As well as the above features, this salvia has the additional quality of being free of whitefly due to the thick tomentose covering on the lower surface of the leaves.

¹ Sutton, J., *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Salvias*, 1999 (David and Charles), p. 148

¹ Clebsch, B., *The New Book of Salvias*, 2003 (Florilegium), p. 89

Questions for the Forum:

Has anyone obtained their *S.corrugata* from a different original source?

Do the above observations describe the plant in your collection or are there any noticeable differences in characteristics?

John Daniels

john-daniels@bigpond.com

Notes from Gruyere. July 2006.

Sometimes one has to wait for quite some time before being able to plant in the garden... especially when there has been a scarcity of rain. Well, now we have had a little and the water tanks have been topped up a bit, not full mind you but feeling a little better than under half full. It does wonders for gardens and the gardeners alike!

The gardens here in Gruyere have been under going a bit of a spruce up and a change around, new areas opened up and new vistas to see.

At last now we have a beautiful large 'flat' area.... the mind races into full swing. Will I use it for my potting area, somewhere flat to stand the plants after potting up instead of using sticks or mulch to help prop up the potted plants?

Will I use it for an outside sitting area or a 'turn around' to park the truck?????

Ideally, it would make a beautiful gathering area for sitting and relaxing and build up the surrounding areas into lush gardens with trees, shrubs and SALVIAS of course!!

There are many different salvias with colour schemes to accommodate and this creates a whole new scenario of plant textures, contrasts and colour blends, be it bold and in your face or harmonious and soft. I guess it depends on the types of areas in which you work, dark or shaded spots need a lighter colour to lift it, that's where *Salvia involucrata* 'Pink Icicles' is a good choice. Because of its height and the fact that it is a winter bloomer with long spikes of soft pink flowers, makes it a good choice, so too the pale form of *Salvia wagneriana*.

Both of these salvias can be planted in a shrubby border, amongst camellias or along a fence on their own. Other salvias that can be added, especially in large areas are *Salvia* 'Blue Bird', *S. wagneriana*, *S. involucrata* x *karwinskii* 'Romantic Rose' and the tall species *Salvia involucrata*. (All salvias mentioned above and below are winter to spring bloomers)

We all know about the virtues of *Salvia iodantha* and planting it with *S. purpurea*, the colour combination of both flowers is great and looks quite good with other taller flowering plants like the Tree Fuchsia and Tree Dahlia. My tall, bright cerise-pink dahlia is actually flowering and the possums haven't eaten it, not like the beautiful white Tree Dahlia that was devastated by these little creatures.

One of the best combinations of flower colour with *S. iodantha* & *S. purpurea* was in Jillian Barkell's garden at The Patch where magenta blooms of *Fuchsia arborescens* and lavender-blue flowers of *Abutilon x Suntense*, along with *S. 'Black Knight'* here and there and *S. madrensis*. **Meg Bentley**

SOME REMINISCENCES FROM GEELONG

Being an active member of the Salvia Study Group for some years, the herb Common Sage was well known to me. I had grown it for years, and knew of its acceptance from time immemorial as a medicinal plant. I have occasionally chewed its leaves, with a good result, whenever my mouth or throat felt sore. I was pleased to read Arja's second article in our latest Salvia News, extolling its medicinal values. Indeed its botanical name *Salvia officinalis* relies totally on this usage in ancient times. Betsy Clebsch in her book states, "Old herbal books tell of the miraculous properties attributed to it. Its specific epithet '*officinalis*' refers to the plant being sold in shops for its medicinal virtues.

Only after I joined the SSG did I realize it was indeed a salvia. Then again, I also found that other sages, bog, clary, Mexican and pineapple, were also salvias belonging to a huge family. No wonder that the HSOV selected this marvelous family to explore, collect and to set aside for eventual registration by the OPCA. As my collection grew, I found it impossible to select favourites from amongst them. Each time I ventured into my garden, I would always find a new favourite amongst these marvelous plants.

Salvia roemeriana has been and still is a long time favourite. On reading successive issues of our Salvia News, edited by our brilliant editor (he can't mean me!!) , I find that this salvia to be somewhat neglected by its readers, and I wonder why. John Sutton in his book, extols this salvia and expresses his surprise, page 57, at its neglect. He says, "Surprise must particularly attach to this species". I often have difficulty in identifying my salvias, particularly when they lose their labels. This salvia in my garden, never needs to bare a label. I find it instantly identifiable from the shape and structure of its leaves. Sutton says, "They are deep green, more or less round, or cordate, ie heart shaped". Its flowers are strikingly between scarlet and deep cherry red. It is a small, compact plant, which only grows biennially in my garden. It more than repays for this by seeding profusely and even self-sows. It responds to my efforts at sowing its seeds, much more so than my attempts with other salvias. It is indigenous to Texas and surrounding areas, and introduced to cultivation in 1852 according to Betsy Clebsch. It was given the common name "Cedar sage", because it was found growing amongst cedar brakes and copses of bracken. Named after the German von Roemer, who was recognized as the "Father of Texas Geology"

Yes indeed, it has been my favourite salvia for many years. I invite other readers of Salvia News to grow and enjoy this wonderful salvia.

In the last two issues Salvia News, I have thoroughly enjoyed the articles by John Anderson on "Salvia Fanatics". He certainly shows deep insight into the behavior of these strange people. Also in the latest SN I found the article entitled "What's in a Name" by Pat Anderson, dealing with the differences between greggiis and microphyllas, very interesting. The resultant cultivars are continually growing in number, making it increasingly difficult to identify them. Some years ago, our long time member Lyndi Garnett, also gave us excellent information on this topic. Referring to Pat's article with the sub-heading " When is a Jamensis not a Jamensis", I had simply thought that the hybrid swarm found by James Compton, near the village of Jame in Mexico, were the only ones entitled to that part – cultivar name of jamensis. Is Pat now suggesting this part -cultivar name may be extended to include others?

I am pleased our Editor is continuing with the topic "Salvia Forum". On the last page of the latest issue, the terms Cultivar and Sports are briefly discussed. In my opinion, whilst these two terms have some similarity in interpretation, I feel they should be weighed against the International Codes for naming plants. Pat Anderson names 2 of these Codes on page 13 in the Winter edition of SN. As I do not possess these codes I cannot quote from them. Pat did send me several pages from the journal entitled, "Plant Names, A Guide to Botanical Nomenclature" used by the Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens.

I quoted from that journal in my article "Naming Salvias", see page 5 SN Spring 2005 No.22. In that I stated , when naming salvias, where possible, the epithet species which is part of the botanical name , should be used. Failing that, and immediately below its rank, the term cultivar should be used. If the

term “sport” is used for a salvia, I see no objection to that. But the terms just used above, I believe, would carry precedence over it. I note that Sutton in his book, page 111, states that ‘Purpurescens ‘Variegata’ is a sport of *Salvia officinalis* ‘Purpurescens’, and similarly Kew Gold is a sport of *Salvia officinalis* ‘Icterina’. I accept these as fair statements.

Again referring to *Salvia* Forum in the latest issue, I wish to quote the statement immediately following the sub-heading “Cultivar” “thus, on the other hand-----cross pollination of 2 plants, resulting in leaf formation the same---- of different colours”(NB. My underlining). I suggest that cultivars can have leaf formation which is different also, to that of the parent. Perhaps the statement quoted was just a little too brief to fully explain the point I have raised. As one example of a cultivar with different leaf formation to its parent, I refer to *Salvia officinalis* ‘Berggarten’(note **gg**). Sutton, again on page 111, quotes its leaves as “broad and have characteristically rounded tips” No doubt there are many other examples.

Bill Whitehead

GARDENERS INC WINTER SEMINAR BENALLA 20TH JULY 2006

The guest speaker was Michael McCoy, well known for his books and articles. A very interesting speaker with wide garden experience both here and abroad; particularly his learning experience with Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter. A large audience of gardeners were enthralled by his knowledge. The morning talk was “Seasonal Sparkle” and after lunch “Northern Exposure”.

The *Salvia* Study Group was invited to Benalla for salvia sales. Jillian, Trudi, and Meg picked salvia flowers, packed salvia plants and filled Jillian’s car. Garry was kind enough to take time off work to lend us a hand and help carry plants in the truck. Garry also ran our ‘salvia creche’ to make things easier for our customers.

It went very well and it was great to meet the folk of Benalla and surrounding areas, especially Jess Kay and others who send in articles for our *Salvia* Newsletter. A massive job to organise and well done by Ian & Jill Macintosh, Stuart and others. Over two hundred people attended and certain salvias sold out like hot cakes, sorry for those who missed out on many of the winter flowering species!

On the evening of our arrival we went to see the salvias in the Rose Garden and was quite shocked to see how devastated most of the plants were after the heavy frosts that Benalla has encountered this year. No wonder many requests were for frost hardy salvias. On the other hand, it was amazing to see which salvias were surviving these frosts at the Rose Garden and those that were re-shooting around the base of the plant. Quite surprising was the *Salvia canariensis*, which looked untouched by the severe cold and so did *Salvia disermis*, some others that held up well were *S. microphylla* ‘Hot Lips’ and *S. argentea*. Small *S. roemeriana* plants had self-seeded and looked fine.

The next morning we had to scrape ice from the car windows and I noticed that some of the flowers in the back of the truck had been nipped by the frost and they were under cover, but I was pleased to see that the plants were not touched.

We took along a wonderful supply of mixed flowers for the display and after Trudi’s floral arrangement, they really looked fantastic and did wonders for our plant stall. The flowers, from 50 or so different species were used, which included quite a few winter flowers. See below for the list of salvias used in the display.

Salvia agnes, *S.* ‘Anthony Parker’, *S. africana caerulea*, *S. africana-lutea*, *S. aurita* var *gilpinii*, *S.* ‘Black Knight’, *S.* ‘Blue Bird’, *S. chiapas* sp. *S. chiapensis*, *S. concolor*, *S. confertiflora*, *S. corrugata*, *S.* ‘Costa Rica Blue’, *S. disermis*, *S. discolor*, *S. dombeyi*, *S. dorisiana*, *S. elegans* Pineapple and Honeymelon, *S. gesneraeflora* ‘Tequila’, *S. greggii* ‘Coral’, *S. hirtella*, *S. involucrata* and its cultivars ‘Bethellii’, ‘Joan’, Mulberry Jam’, ‘Pink Icicles’, *S. iodantha*, *S.*

karwinskii x involucrata, 'Romantic Rose' and 'Timboon', *S. leucantha*, *S. madrensis*, *S. mexicana* 'Limelight', *S. microphylla* 'Hot Lips', *S. microphylla* 'Navaho Red', *S. microphylla* 'Mystique', *S. 'Marine Blue'*, *S. muelleri*, *S. namaensis*, *S. pulchella*, *S. 'Purple Majesty'*, *S. purpurea*, *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'*, *S. rubescens*, *S. 'Violet Eyes'*, *S. van Houttii*, *S. wagneriana* and *S. 'Waverley'*.

It's no wonder the people wanted so many plants... the flowers really looked great and everyone could see what they were getting, it also gave a wonderful boost to the sales area.

MB

SALVIAS IN SURREY HILLS VIC. AN EXTRACT FROM THE HSOV PRESIDENT'S PAGE

In spite of the fact that we need to take care when exposed to the sun for any great length of time, we miss it after a few days. Well, I do anyway, and my understanding is that the pituitary gland requires twenty minutes stimulation by the sun on a daily basis for our health and wellbeing. That's my reasoning at this time of year for escaping into the garden when the sun is shining through. Just so today, and I've weeded and pruned and hopefully not cut back *Salvia* 'Black Knight' too hard. Reading Meg Bentley's manual on salvias I'm not sure.

Although it is winter we have many flowering salvias at present. *Salvia* 'Anthony Parker' is a beautiful deep blue, and still a wonderful sight although it has been flowering for weeks. Deep ruby red *Salvia* 'Van Houtii' behind it and mauve and white *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy' alongside it are still flowering but only just. Jillian Barkell did say how magnificent *S. involucrata* 'Romantic Rose' is when I purchased a plant or three a few years ago. It is truly magnificent, with centre stems up to nine feet tall and side stems sweeping in graceful arcs, all with rosebud heads, the bracts opening up behind each pink head to display cherry red flowers. The *S. corrugata* which gets more sun, is flowering well, a bright mid blue, a metre tall. Another tall one and as striking is *S. iodantha*, a wonderful magenta colour. It has been blooming for weeks. *S. semi atrata* is not a very inspiring name for a dainty salvia with a lilac/purple calyx and a blue flower and very pretty. The *S. gesneriiflora*'s, which are also 8-9 feet tall, are flowering. The *S. gesneriiflora* 'Tequila', with the black bract and red corolla/flower impresses me. It has sometimes been called *Salvia* Essendon for obvious reasons. *S. involucrata* 'Pink Icicles' is a bright pink daintier salvia, again a metre tall. Both *S. leucanthas* are blooming well, although the straight purple one I think is a stunner and is the one most noticed. *S. purpurea* is another 10 feet tall salvia with mauve/purple flowers. These tall salvias are great as screens but can be kept lower with pruning should you wish. *S. longispicata* and *S. polystachya* in this garden have similar coloured mauve/white corolla/flower, however the calyx on *S. longispicata* is green (whereas on *S. polystachya* the calyx is mauve). It is not as colourful as other salvias. The bees are still happy with it, which is another reason for my interest in salvias. Bees do so love blue/purple/mauve colours.

Wattle birds are also attracted to salvias and they can do a bit of damage, meanwhile it is a delight to watch the small Honeyeaters hovering to take the nectar from the flowers. They particularly like *S. elegans* (Pineapple Sage) which seems to flower all year. Two *S. 'Costa Rican Blues'* are in flower, the one facing south the better of the two, gorgeous purple/blue flowers with almost black calyces with just a touch of green where the base meets the stem. *S. dorisiana* (Fruit Salad Sage) is not flowering, but spurting with growth since being moved to a shadier position about 8 months ago. I look forward to its flowering, though the perfume of the leaves is blissful. Well, all this flower talk, a piece for the *Salvia* Study Group's news you might think! Maybe, but I wanted to share with you that despite grey skies we've so much colour in our garden, thanks to this genus, and not forgetting the rosemarys and lavender which are also in bloom.

Glad to hear you want to publish my bit about the salvias in our garden. Four Aprils ago when we met at Meg's place my mind had difficulty coping with all the names. I am amazed that after this time not only can I remember them but I believe I pronounce them correctly!

Marion Bond

WINTER IN SE QUEENSLAND

For all salvia enthusiasts, winter this year started on a real high. The Cottage Garden and Salvia Spectacular was held at the Mt. Coot-tha auditorium the first weekend in June. For all involved the lead-up was filled with very mixed feelings. Not only were we trying to encourage gardeners in southeast Queensland to catch the cottage gardening bug during times of drought, but we were attempting it just one week before water restrictions were bumped up to 'buckets only'.

All our negative predictions were for nothing. With a 9 o'clock start we had people lined into the car park at 8.30. The display gardens were 'oohed and aahed' over with questions being fired left and right... 'What's that plant there?' 'How big does this get?' 'Are there other colours?'

The bottled display of salvia flowers bought amazed comments of 'but I thought they only came in red.' And the plant sellers were run off their feet. All in all a very successful week-end with more than a few people going home having been inspired to give cottage gardening a little space in their own gardens.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the release of the new *Salvia oxyphora* by Sue Templeton. Some who purchased the plant have reported that it has been flowering beautifully since mid-July. Our small plant I am sorry to say didn't make it to the end of the week-end unscathed. A large side branch was knocked off and following the old adage of waste-not-want-not, John stuck it into an unused pot of mix until we could attend to it on the Monday. I am pleased to say that the mother plant is now happy in our garden (although not flowering yet), and the casualty is looking to turn into a second healthy plant. (Other members have their plants flowering beautifully).

Some other new additions to our garden courtesy of the 'Spectacular' are *S.*'El Cielo Blue', *S. amarissima* and *S.* 'Mulberry Jam' which is looking like being a very strong and healthy plant. It was in flower when we bought it and is budding again now. Another new salvia that I am watching with anticipation is *S. macrophylla* which has reached about 60cm high by about 1 m across so far with huge heart-shaped leaves. I can't wait to see what the mature plant brings.

There is quite a bit of cutting back that needs to be done on our salvias at the moment but some of the winter-flowerers have still got too much colour for me to bite the bullet and attack. I think I'll just start with those that have completely finished and enjoy the others for another few weeks. We've been lucky enough to have had a reasonably mild winter so-far (touch wood) with intermittent rain in our area to keep things in healthy growth. Fingers crossed for those areas not quite so lucky. Spring is just around the corner so until then, Happy Gardening. **Carol Kerkin The Perennial Poppies Group Inc**

A useful little booklet has been compiled by Barb Wickes for the Perennial Poppies Inc on 'Salvias in SE Qld'. Contact ...Barb Wickes Roms Court Buderim 4556 ph (07) 5445 6875 email wickes@bigpond.net.au

News from Lemon Tree Cottage Upwey

Leon and I have reached our one year milestone of 'Elleon Garden Design'. With our consistent absence from most gatherings you may have realized that life has been pretty full on. We have met many wonderful people, all of whom have been enthusiastic to our garden designs. The most important criteria is always low maintenance and dry hardy. Unfortunately some salvias don't fit into the low maintenance box, but recently we were given the challenge of creating a cottage garden with blue as the dominant colour and a client who was happy to prune and preen her new treasures. She was unaware of the many varieties of salvias available and I'm extremely happy to teach her the joys of being the proud owner of a salvia garden. Of course, there will be the inclusion of lots of other interesting perennials.

With our work commitments, our own garden got a very early prune this year leaving it looking a little forlorn but already there's lots of new growth. I am still madly attempting to transplant and change a few things for greater visual affect for our open garden next year March 24 and 25, 2007. The collection of daffodils throughout the garden has been stopping walkers and passing traffic even though most salvias have had a good prune. *Camelia* 'Spring Festival' is at its peak at the front of the garden,

Camelia 'Brushfield Yellow' at the front door is also a picture. *Hellebores orientalis* abound but those seeds from last year are rearing their ugly heads almost in weed proportion.

Our neighbour has just removed a huge pine tree in the back and the visual hole that remains in the skyline is quite dramatic. In saying that, I will not miss the year around cleaning up of the pine needles through ferns and every other plant in the garden plus all the pathways. One less job to do !!!!. Our citrus tree hedge has rewarded us already, starting three months ago with oranges and mandarins. We have eight varieties that will see us through till November. Leon has recently pulled the *Salvia scabra* hedge out down near the veggie patch, on my request of course, and I am going to replant with *S. muirrii*. It is such a hardy little survivor and won't self seed as prolific as *S. scabra* does, plus the foliage makes a nice contrast to the already established green leaves of *S. spathacea*, *S. polystacha*, *S. Cookie*, *S. 'Hot Lips'*, *S. madrensis* and *S. elegans* 'Honey melon' in the same area. Every year I toy with the notion of pulling out the border of *S. greggii* 'Raspberry Royal' but all our garden visitors love the colour so much and I'm still at a loss as to what to replace it with, hence it has survived another year. If only my plants could talk, what stories they could tell about a mad woman running around with a spade in one hand and secateurs in the other, and a very obliging husband who picks up the mess she leaves behind. Leon and I are both happy in our work and just managing to keep up with garden chores at home and not forgetting the grand children of course. We hope all our fellow salvia friends are fit and well and shall see you all soon. **Happy Gardening. Leon and Elly Roos.**

Pakenham Report.

Geoff Crowhurst, Laurelle Willis, Lyndi, Trudi, & Jillian along with Elly and Leon did an excellent job setting up, selling salvia plants and welcoming many old friends and salvia lovers both old and new. A feature was tall branches of the winter flowering salvias standing out like flags to show people what we were and where we were. The silver champagne bucket from the OP shop held a mass of pink, magenta and blue and the big brass goblet showed *Salvia africana lutea* & *S. confertiflora* standing tall. Plant sales were most successful.

Another invitation has been received from Pakenham for 7 July 07. Try not to miss it. This is a great place for people and plants.

YES WE HAVE NO BANANAS (or 'The Search for Salvias in Far North Queensland')

On previous winter sojourns in far North Queensland (Cairns, Atherton Tablelands, Port Douglas and Cooktown) during open garden visits and 'window shopping' at markets, particularly plant stalls, I have noted a smattering of salvia plants, mainly *Salvia splendens* varieties (Black Knight etc) and *S. coccinea* in various colour forms, particularly the 'Apricot' form, seems to have taken over vacant blocks and uncut nature strips, indeed it has become feral in many gardens.

Last July, I took special interest in plant trading tables at markets in Kuranda, Port Douglas and Cairns and although many lovely perennials had pride of place, there was not a salvia in sight! When asked where the Salvias were, one stall holder replied, 'No one grows them up here any more'. Cairns has experienced a 'tidy-up' campaign since my last visit and nature strips are much neater, vacant blocks have been built over and gardens are resplendent with chiefly, foliage plants, so the 'ferals' have vanished from sight (like the bananas!)

However, one overcast day while we were touring on the Atherton Tablelands, my spirits were uplifted and my joy restored. Salvias at last! In an enclosed valley, leading down to a magnificent waterfall, a mass of brilliant red blooms met my eyes. In a foreground of jungle plants, tropical ferns, palms and umbrella plants etc. were huge clumps of *Salvia splendens* plants in full bloom – a fiery red. Some of the bushes were almost tree-like, up to 8feet tall, lush and vigorous – a glorious sight for eyes deprived of salvias for three weeks! Yes, there are still salvias in far North Queensland!

Ray Boatman

GLENROWAN VICTORIA

Recently Gardeners Inc. of north east Victoria, had Michael McCoy come to Benalla as a guest speaker. They also invited the Salvia Study Group to attend with their plants to sell to members on the day. There were 220 people attending from as far away as Mansfield, Euroa, Yarrawonga and Albury. The display of salvia stock was a gardeners' delight, with the sales area becoming a feeding frenzy of enthusiasts. Unfortunately it was so busy, the experts didn't have time to spare to answer too many extended queries, however a lot of appetites were whetted for those who had previously not ventured into growing salvias. It was most beneficial to have some details on the name tags, something not done a lot – e.g. Red Dragon, 1.5x1.5, flowers summer, autumn and winter. Part or morning sun. Silly Me!! I thought all salvias liked full sun. Black Knight was for sun or part shade, and likes summer moisture (tough, it can't have it).

One of the comments overheard was that you do not cut back Waverley (true or false please). Another comment made was that Trudi and others do not cut back hard, but merely dead head – again please set us straight. The Sclarea, are there different colours, I have a white one called Turkish something, and I saw a pink one advertised. Just when I think I am starting to extend my salvia knowledge, I realize how little I know. *(Forum will answer queries next issue)*

A suggestion, would it be possible each month to enlighten us on a few requirements of the most popular sellers? I lost my *Salvia discolor* to the winter frosts, obviously because it was well in the open, as I was unaware it was frost tender. This could save quite a bit of frustration.

My big thrill for the day was when I asked the gentleman to identify a flower which turned out to be *S.spathacea*, and was asked how I got such a tall spike. I didn't think of why at the time, but on reflection, I had fed it with the Supercharge fertilizer recipe I submitted earlier in the year. Last week I bought *Salvia dolomitica* from Gentiana Nursery in the Dandenongs. The label says soft mauve, clumping, so I am waiting with interest to see how it turns out.

With the approaching summer looking like a gardener's nightmare, we will have to keep sharing our cuttings in the hope of available replacement stock in the autumn.

Closing thought for the day “Life is like a ten speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use”.

Jess Kay

Below are the species, as opposed to cultivars and varieties, that appear on our lists, together with their meanings – where understood. Pat Anderson, January 21, 2005

Species	Meaning
<i>aethiopsis</i>	From Greek for Ethiopia (although the plant is from Mediterranean/N Africa)
<i>africana caerulea</i>	africana: from Africa caerulea: deep blue as of the Mediterranean sky at midday
<i>africana lutea</i>	From Africa Lutea: deep yellow. NB the flower is far from yellow when mature but deep yellow as it first emerges
<i>algeriensis</i>	From Algeria

<i>amplexicaulis</i>	Stem-clasping (leaves) – ie no petioles
<i>apiana</i>	Pertaining to bees
<i>argentea</i>	Silvery
<i>arizonica</i>	From Arizona
<i>atrocyanea</i>	atro: cyanea: dark blue
<i>aurita</i>	Eared, auriculate
<i>austriaca</i>	From Austria
<i>azurea</i>	Azure, pure deep blue
<i>barrelieri</i>	? but the Latin noun Barrel refers to a wide-mouthed globular jar, but the form of the name suggests that it refers to a person of the name Barrelier
<i>blancoana</i>	? named after Blanco
<i>blepharophylla</i>	Relating to eye lashes, ie leaves marginally fringed with hairs
<i>broussonetii</i>	Named to honour Pierre Marie Auguste Broussonet
<i>buchananii</i>	Named after Buchanan
<i>bulleyana</i>	? Named after Bulley
<i>cacaliifolia</i>	Foliage resembling the genus <i>Cacalia</i> (stem = <i>cacali</i> + <i>i</i> + <i>folia</i>)

Pat's valuable species list will appear as a 'serial' in *Salvia News*, now that I have found it in the depths of my computer. There three pages, if anyone wants a complete copy straight away ring me, also I will have some copies with me at the Nobelius working bee.

GROWTH FORMS OF SOME SALVIAS
Lyndi Garnett

Annuals : Growth, flowering and setting of seed all in one season

Deciduous : A perennial that loses its leaves in winter / cooler months

Herbaceous : A perennial that dies back during winter and reshoots in spring or warmer weather

Rosettes / Clumps : Plants that produce usually large basal leaves that either remain in a rosette type form or form a clump of leaves. Most of these plants (but not all) are herbaceous. Most send up 1 – 2 branched flower heads in the form of panicles above the clump.

Herbaceous (not clump forming)

arizonica
atrocyanea
azurea
forrerii
guaranitica & forms
(tuberous rootstock)
judaica
jurisicii
lanigera
merjamie
michoacan
palaestina
patens
(tuberous rootstock)
penstemonoides
prunelloides
puberula
reptans
uliginosa

Annuals

algeriensis
columbariae
farinacea forms
henryi
hispanica
plebeia
praeclara
reflexa
roborowskii
roemeriana
splendens(Melb)
tiliifolia
viridis
(syn *horminum*)

Deciduous

darcyi
gilliesii
microphylla var
wislizenii
regla

SALVIAS 'ANTHONY PARKER', 'PHYLLIS FANCY' & 'WAVERLEY'

AND THEIR DIFFERENCES

There are some difficulties in telling one salvia cultivar from another, especially when they are at the growing stage and not in flower, more so to the untrained eye.

Salvia 'Anthony Parker' and *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy' are two that have similar leaf shapes and young growth structure, another cultivar to add to this confusion is *Salvia* 'Waverley'.

Have a close look at the stem of *S.* 'Anthony Parker', the main stems show a slight indumentum or furriness especially on the lower part near the base of the plant, this is more visible on new growth. The leaves also show indumentum on the undersides (reverse) where the veining is raised and white-grey in colour. Top surface of the leaves (the blade) are bluish-green with slight indumentum, not quite as prominent on the older leaves.

As the plant grows and the flowering stems produce buds, these stems take on a purplish-brown hue (uppermost, facing the sun) while the peduncle (the stalk of the inflorescence) is a deep shade of royal purple this includes the calyx and corolla. The calyx has indumentum, deep purple with a slightly lighter colouring on the undersides towards the tip, they are thickish in texture and brighter green inside.

There are also winter markings or blotches of purplish-brown on the leaf blade and around the margins of some leaves. This is caused by stress due to the cold and is only a visual problem (some plants have it in summer due to the heat and dry).

Salvia 'Phyllis Fancy', on the other hand has new growth of a brighter yellow-green, main stems are not as thick in texture with much less, if any indumentum. The leaves are not as hairy, as they grow become slightly glabrous, thinner in texture and do not appear to obtain the same 'stress' colour markings on the blade. The flowering stems are thinner, almost glabrous in appearance with a slight brownish-lavender colouring on the topside (facing the sun) and green on the undersides. As the flowers form, the peduncle (stalk of the inflorescence) becomes a deeper shade of wine-lavender as does the calyx, also glabrous and thinner in texture with lighter green on the undersides and inside the calyx. The flowers are a mixture of white and pale lavender, with the top of the hood usually darker lavender.

Salvia 'Phyllis Fancy' grows much taller in a rather top-heavy or upside down pear shape, showing more basal stems than *S.* 'Anthony Parker' which is lower growing, more compact and well covered in flowers and foliage. *S.* 'Anthony Parker' can also re-shoot from the base and along the stems whilst the last of the flowers are blooming whereas *S.* 'Phyllis Fancy' seems to be much slower at reproducing new growth.

Salvia 'Waverley' is different again yet in some ways similar. Sparse bush, wiry type stems, brownish colour on the topside of stems. Leaves are brighter green and rather corrugate, glabrous (as with most parts of this salvia) with a crisp texture, well- defined veins on surface and undersides of leaves. Flowering stems have a wine-brown colouring with the wine colour showing on the topside of calyces towards the tip and green near the pedicel and on the under-sides. Both *S.* 'Waverley' and *S.* 'Phyllis Fancy' are similar in stem, calyx, corolla type and growth behaviour (heights differing of course) where as *S.* 'Anthony Parker' and *S.* 'Phyllis Fancy' are somewhat similar in leaf and new growth.

The shapes of each corolla are too similar and show that they could be related in some way. Blunt, furry type of hood, short side lips and a blunt upturned lower lip with slight hairiness underneath. If one looks at each stem of flowers and top portion of leaves one can see the colour blend, pertaining to each calyx and flower, eg. the deep purple colour runs through the top end of *S.* 'Anthony Parker'; lavender-brown with *S.* 'Phyllis Fancy' and the pink-wine colour runs through *S.* 'Waverley'. See page opposite for leaf & flower differences.

Salvia iodantha & *S. purpurea* are another two that will be covered at a later date. *Meg Bentley*

