



SalviaNews

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

AUTUMN NUMBER 28

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 22ND HERB AND SALVIA NURSERY AT 11AM

942 Main Rd Hurstbridge Mel. 185 JK8 p.263 A7

Bring lunch to share. Phone 03 9718 2576

MAY 27TH SUNDAY - PAT ANDERSON'S GARDEN AT 11 AM

98 BRADLEY'S LANE WARRANDYTE Mel.23 C 12 ph 9844 3442

We have been invited to this interesting garden. Bring lunch to share.

JUNE 17TH SUNDAY - NEIL & MARGARET KEIR'S GARDEN AT 11 AM

23 BOND ST MT WAVERLEY Mel.70 G2 ph 9802 7139

Enjoy seeing salvias and other lovely plants. Bring lunch to share.

JULY 6TH MONDAY 8pm at Upper Yarra Valley Garden Club, Senior Citizens Hall in Dammans Road ,Warburton Mel 290 A4 .

Trudi will be speaking on Salvias and Jillian selling salvia plants on behalf of The Salvia Study Group.

July 7th Saturday PAKENHAM GARDEN EXPO 10 am to 4 pm, Pakenham Racecourse

PAKENHAM RACECOURSE ROAD, PAKENHAM Mel.317 E 8

There will also soon be many opportunities to take part in the development of the new Salvia Display Garden. Dates to be notified by personal contact.

THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN **AT NOBELIUS HERITAGE PARK, EMERALD**

This exciting project is well underway. The area is approx 40mx14m. It has been rotary hoed, spread with compost and topped with mulch. The beds have been edged and paths completed; salvia enthusiasts, with the help of some local contractors, have done this work. The site is below the Packing Shed, on a slope, easily viewed and surrounded by magnificent trees.

The sense of achievement has drawn an interesting group together that is to be known as The Salvia Display Garden Friends Group. You are all invited to join in and take a special interest in this project. We have always been renowned for friendship, camaraderie and sense of fun. Everyone has something to contribute to this garden; brains, muscles, enthusiasm and the joy of seeing a landmark garden develop. Since our beginning in 1989 the Salvia Study Group has progressed; remaining static was never an option... "one must grow to exist" ...is a quote from somewhere. There will be 'working bees' planning bees' and 'planting bees'. And now that the construction side of things is done, the Design Concept must begin. If you would like to be part of this design process put pen to paper and show how you would plant this plot of land. Your creative ideas may be incorporated in the final concept. Send your ideas to Lyndi Garnett 844 Highbury Rd Glen Waverley 3150. Those interested in the Friends Group should get on Lyndi's List by phoning 9803 4534.

Beginning a Journey

Our place is a couple of acres, perched on a hillside in Ormeau, halfway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. We've only been here 8 months or so, and between trying to follow (sort of) the tenet of waiting for a full round of seasons to pass before doing too much, and the lurking presence of this devil drought, my 'salvia story' doesn't amount to much – yet.

My first touch with salvias came at our last home, only a couple of kilometres from here - it was a large rambling wild garden of advancing years, and hence very shady. I adored that garden. It was bursting with beautiful rarities and learning about them sent me on a journey of discovery which will no doubt last a lifetime. In one deeply dappled nook, were 2 delights – one spreading mass of bright green foliage tipped with electric blue inflorescence. This I was told was *Salvia patens*. Not far away, but not flowering 'til the following autumn was a wonderful sprawling deep pink Bethel sage, (I was told). Completely captivated, I sent off to Sue Templeton for an order of 20 plants – a broad selection, from tiny greggiis and microphyllas, to the larger *S gesneriifolia* and many lovelies in between. By necessity, most of these went into pretty shady positions, so quite a few were lost to my ignorance.

It was a hard lesson, but I took enormous pleasure in the survivors and went on a mission to learn more. My friend and neighbour, Carol Kerkin, as luck would have it, is a passionate salvia grower and she was (and still is) more than generous with advice and cuttings too. The *S patens* was *S guaranitica*, and considered weedy, but I loved it nevertheless, and the bethel sage was *S involucrata*, but not *S involucrata* 'Bethellii'. Of my initial purchases, *S greggii* 'Raspberry', did well in part shade, but not the lemon. *S miniata* was a shining jewel, but my favourite then was *S madrensis*. I loved its wild and wandering habits, and its gorgeous lemon butter flowers were such a gift in winter.

So now we have moved, and I relish the opportunity to plant sun-lovers. The house sits up the top of the hill surrounded by fairly formal hedged beds and down the back is a grassed hillside just begging to be planted out. Hedges are really not my 'thing', and need softening and 'messing up' – salvias being the perfect candidate. I have planted S 'Black Knight', S 'Waverley', S 'Blue Ribbon', S 'Indigo Spires', *S involucrata*, *S karwinskii* 'Tall Grey', *S leucantha*, *S fallax*, and some *S greggii*. These are all cutting grown gifts, growing well, but are too young yet to judge their suitability. My wish list is of course extensive and I lean towards the rich strong colours – burgundy, purples, deeper pinks and, dare I say it – oranges. Foliage contrast is important to me too and darker stems and calyces provide beautiful foil for flowers.

Anyway, after reasonable February rains, our water tank is at last gloriously full and opportunity beckons – hopefully I can do it some justice!

Adrienne Starkey
The Perennial Poppies Group Inc
South-east Queensland

Hello from Otway Herbs at Apollo Bay VIC

The salvias have sailed through summer, and provided lots of flowers for a recent wedding. We had rain for Christmas and New Year, what a blessing! So I planted a few I had lost such as *Salvia sagittata*, *S. semiatrata* and *Salvia* 'Harmony', and dwarf white *S. officinalis*.

I moved all the precious stock plants from the too hot glasshouse to the shelter of a tree fern in the main nursery where they have thrived, the most interesting being *S. digitaloides*, which as its name suggests has flowers like a foxglove, pretty pink and plump, typically Chinese, with a deeper pink striped bottom lip, I hope it sets seed as this group don't last with me. The most successful of last years planting in the salvia border is *S. 'Mystique'* which always has lots of flowers, with generous nectar for my grand daughter to suck on. We have to be quite inventive to keep the nursery viable and interesting in such a season, with more emphasis on local indigenous plants, but true gardeners are a hardy lot, they love their plants, and look forward to the next season. Love to all Judi Forrester

NOTES FROM GRUYERE VIC '07
January 2007-01-22

Flowers and music do seem to go together, after all, the rose has been incorporated in hundreds of songs throughout history but so far there hasn't been a single song written for Salvias. I can't help thinking though that some words can apply to salvias especially in the song sung by John Williamson, 'Hey True Blue'.

Whilst walking around my garden on those very hot weeks, not so long ago and really looking at the salvias, I observe the ones that are just coping, ones that looked fried and the ones that seem to brush summer off like it was nothing at all. These of course are the hardy species from Southern Africa, *Salvia africana-lutea*, *S. africana-caerulea*, *S. lanceolata*, *S. disermis*, *S. namaensis* and *Salvia repens*. Those just coping include *Salvia microphylla* the Baby Sage and other varieties, *S. macrophylla* although very droopy, *S. 'Cookie'* and *S. kawinskii* also very droopy. There are many others, I will need to start off anew, which is usual after the summer months.

But that is not what I wanted to talk about, getting back to 'Hey True Blue', have you noticed all the salvias with varying shades of pink, purple, reds etc., how in the heat of Summer, the eye does not stay long looking at these hot colours. Then, as I came around the corner of the garden I saw the small but beautiful clear 'true blue' flowers of *Salvia 'Cookie'*, how easy on the eye it is and flowering for such a long time. The other really true blues are *S. corrugata*, *S. macrophylla*, *S. uliginosa* and *S. patens* although I find this one is rather shy of showing off its flowers in my hot garden... even if it's in a container.

How many other really blue salvias are there, I don't mean *Salvias mexicana*, 'Costa Rica Blue', *guaranitica*, and *azurea*, these seem to have the smallest hint or an element of violet, pink or white in them. There are so many varying shades of blue but it is a colour that is vital in the garden no matter what the season. As for the continuing words of that song...it seems that a lot of salvias have 'knocked off for a smoko and they'll be back later on'... perhaps when the weather changes.

I guess the real joy in my garden of late has not been salvias but the ever-flowering *Gardenia angustifolia*, simply covered in heavenly, fragrant, snow-white blooms, a wonderfully, hardy little plant to grow in either a container or the garden...and amongst some salvias.

Might I add a snippet and say how welcome it is to read every-ones comments about their gardens, the good news and the tough times...you would be surprised just how it helps some gardeners, after all, we each have different climates and circumstances in which we grow our plants so do keep writing and sharing your 'garden notes'!

Meg Bentley

SALVIAS AT HURSTBRIDGE

Florence Morrow is a member of the Grey Army Gardeners. She has always loved plants and flowers, even though her husband Daryl has spent years trying to convert her into growing vegies. After years in outback stations, experiencing droughts and the devastating effects of rabbits, kangaroos and possums on country gardens, not to mention kids who loved playing hide and seek in the broad beans the move was made to the city. But having moved into the city life style and the 50x130 block of land she felt the need to help others establish new gardens and the revival of drought effected landscapes.

Although she is self educated in plants and garden displays, she inherited a popular nursery in Hurstbridge that had been run down and looking for love & some TLC. It has been hard getting things going and the drought is making things hard for the plants and for local and rural gardens, but everything is thriving and seems to love the hand watering and personal attention they all get from Florence.

Salvias were a substantial section of the nursery which Florence has maintained. When she got a copy of the Victorian Salvia Study Group News she made contact with Trudi and Lyndi who have been a great help and inspiration to her. You are all invited to visit her and have a cuppa and a long chat or you can ring-fax-or email her. She invites any help and advice as she is enthusiastic to learn. She also has a large range of Herbs, as well as other varieties of plants as well as a gift shop, and Florence's smile makes everyone feel welcome.

HERB & PLANT NURSERY HURSTBRIDGE
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GOODBYE MY GARDEN 18/12/06

AVONDALE HEIGHTS VICTORIA

I had a lovely day with the Salvia Group last month. It is so nice to have people to talk to about gardening. I work full time and do shift work so I don't have much opportunity to meet other gardeners. Being able to share experiences, the joy and heartache of putting a garden together, is what makes it special for me. Maybe in a few years time I'll start working part time so I can join a gardening group properly.

It is 5.30 in the morning and of course I am wide awake. I always wake up early so it is my favourite time of the day. I love to watch the sun coming up over the Marybyrnong River and see it gradually bringing a glorious light to my garden. It makes everything look brand new, even in this awful period of drought. There is a little fountain outside my lounge room window and I like to watch the birds playing in the water or just getting a drink. The fountain has glass edges, and some birds have dreadful trouble trying to get a grip. They end up sliding into the water with much flapping of wings and splashing about.

My garden has just kind of evolved over the years. I guess I'm like most people... I go to my favourite nursery for some potting mix and come home with more plants that I can't live without. I then spend ages wandering around the garden trying to find a place for them. A big turning point for me was discovering Sue Templeton and her mail order Salvias. I just loved the plants and kept ordering more and they would get lost in the jungle out there. I lost quite a few this way... probably need red flags or something to denote new plantings. In my garden sometimes you would then be seeing a sea of red flags because I'm totally hopeless when it comes to resisting a lovely plant. And there are so many I need!

The last few years have been great for my garden. It has been a bit dry but the Salvias have coped beautifully. Even in high summer they looked good. This year though is different. Very little rain over winter and spring. I got even less than gardeners in the Eastern suburbs unfortunately. The first month of summer looks like being just as awful so I am making some tough decisions right now. I didn't enter for the Open Garden Scheme this February because I had some trees to remove and I wanted to renovate one particular bit. I thank goodness now that I made that decision. My heart goes out to all those striving to have their gardens looking presentable right now.

I have decided to take my garden apart this week. After another two months without water it will look terrible and I couldn't bear that. I will take lots of cuttings, I will transplant things where I can but I must harden my heart and change things now. How will I make it better able to withstand really bad drought? I don't know yet. I will spend many nights reading my gardening books and making lists. I'm really good at making lists. Do I have a few tears in my eyes this morning? Yes I do. I guess we are all in this together so good luck everyone...lets see what we can do. Maureen Scoble

WERRI BEACH NSW

After missing out on a lot of the earlier rain, last weekend we had nearly 10in. which flooded the lagoon and the bottom of the street and overflowed all the tanks. Unfortunately for us, a lot of that rain just disappears through the sand and doesn't stay in the soil as it would some places. Not that I'm complaining! The hills are green again and the little bit of grass we have on the nature strip had to be cut on Thursday.

The rain came just in time for the autumn show of Salvias with some already out and some looking like they're about to do something. I did lose two of the new ones though. One I actually dug out as it was looking a bit sick and put it in a pot and it had recovered. But then I did a very silly thing (why do I not learn?) and after a couple of weeks, replanted it and of course, we got some very hot days and it couldn't cope. The other one I think I killed with kindness. But when a plant looks so distressed, all you can think of is it needs water. However, sometimes if you just leave it alone, it will cope. I need to stop fussing!

Salvia 'Margaret Arnold' and S.'Phyllis Fancy' suffer in dry periods with only grey water and on quite a slope. However with the slightest rain, they bounce back so I don't panic any more. *S.elegans* 'Purple' on the nature strip gets no water unless things are really desperate and even though the salt wind burnt it badly a few weeks back, it has responded to the rain. I am so pleased to have a good specimen of *S.canariensis* finally. In a spot which gets no water, it has thrived and flowered and I've just taken some cuttings to put it in other parts of the garden. *S.lanceolata* has only just finished flowering. *S.melissodora*, while suffering a bit through the dryness, has just burst into flower once more. It's most reliable.

I am determined to try again with some of the clumping salvias like *S.superba* 'East Friesland'. I don't know why I can't seem to get them to grow. I put them in and they just sit there and end up dying on me. Do they need any particular soil preparation or more feeding? When I see them growing so beautifully in the catalogues, I am so envious. I think they would be suitable in our new garden where we dug out the last bit of grass. I can only imagine the picture they would make if they'd only do what they're supposed to.

I am so looking forward to Autumn! Time to re-think the garden after another trying summer and time to order some new salvias. Maureen Cox

Mount Waverley Victoria Report

In response to a reminder from Trudi to write something for Salvia News I have just had a walk around the garden to assess it's condition. Those of us who are permitted to water twice a week are fortunate as we are able to keep most plants alive, although some struggle. When I look critically from the street I can see that the passer-by may think that all is well as the structure seems unchanged. You can look across to see the ever flowering pink rose Renee and beside it in full flower S. 'Phyllis Fancy'. Down the slope is a compact *S. microphylla* 'San Carlos Festival' and across the path is *S. chamelaeagnea* with its mauve and white flowers.

Large clumps of *Sedum Spectabilis* – Autumn Joy and Icicle – brighten up the corner near the drive with wonderful pear shaped heps on the species rose Geranium and a red flowered salvia which needs identification. You don't notice the wilting *S. corrugata* at first but it is one of our oldest salvias and is looking decidedly yellow and stressed. Another of these at the far back corner of the rear garden where it gets no water looks finished. (I love to see rose 'heps') Trudi

Look closer and you can see many problems. There are spaces in the garden where dead plants have been quickly removed and damaged foliage has been cut back. In the four day period between watering some plants look close to expiring and are rescued with bucketed grey water, and others are just not happy. *Salvia africana-caerulea* suddenly died to a crisp

but when I cut it off I found a fresh shoot at the base. *S. aurita* suffers badly and is no longer vigorous looking. Many of the *S. greggii* plants are spindly and slow to put on new growth and *S. miltiorrhiza* and *S. verticillata* 'Purple Rain' may survive.

Among the trouble free plants are *S. apiana* which still has the last of the white flowers on the long pinkish stems, *S. fruticosa* 'Greek Skies', grown from cuttings from Trudi's garden, *S. semiatrata*, *S. chiapensis* and others.

We are nursing the new plants given to us at the Christmas function awaiting normal weather patterns to return so that we can get on with planting and reorganising our gardens.

Neil Keir

Salvia News – Autumn The Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens Hobart

Water restrictions were set at Level 1 two weeks before the end of 2006, the driest year in 125 years of meteorological record with a touch under 350 mm of rainfall recorded for the entire year, yet Hobart City's water reservoirs were over 90 per cent full due to the catchment of Mt. Wellington and the highlands to the west. Being a public education tool in the judicious use of water and a solution to the inadequacy of the infrastructure in meeting unrestricted weekend demand during the summer months, these restrictions have just ended with the beginning of autumn. They limited our use of water at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, with an extra days' concession, to four days a week with sprinkler systems, and seven days a week with hand held hoses, if not subject to Total Fire Ban Days. A fortunate situation, indeed, compared to our colleagues in Victoria's Botanic Gardens and residents in Victoria, as well as NSW and Southern QLD, which suffer through this extreme drought. This was pointed out to me through expressions of envy by such a number of visitors that my sympathy quickly evaporated along with the water and I had to point out in fact we had no shortage!

Consequently, the growth of the salvia collection at the RTBG has not been constrained by the limiting factor of water, given that we also recorded 100mm of rain in January, although half of that fell in half an hour!

Salvia 'Phyllis Fancy' and *S.* 'Anthony Parker' were received as an exchange of material from Geelong Botanic Gardens in September, 2005. Both were initiating their first flower spikes as early as mid-December, but only the former continued into a display of inflorescences of up to 70 cm in length on stems that have grown between 60cm to 1 m from a hard pruning, of similar extent, down to 60 cm in height, during early September. The latter, pruned similarly, however, continued into vegetative growth through summer, and is only now starting to reveal the dark violet tips of the flowering spikes. *S. leucantha*, one of the parents of both these hybrids, commenced flowering, like *S. azurea*, as early as mid- January, which was surprising, given that the cold winter had reduced it to a perennial crown.

Salvia 'Black Knight' displayed its first purple corolla in early November, almost two months after pruning of the cold-damaged shrub with slender stems, down to 1.30m. By the end of summer, it has responded to the irrigation and rain and has doubled in height with a width of similar dimension and is becoming an impressive display of 5cm long, purple flowers emerging from 2cm long calyces of an even darker hue, against a foil of shiny green leaves.

The only major pruning required during the summer was a drastic reduction, in early January, of the three metre broad clump of the 'Tequila' form of *Salvia gesneraeflora*, to keep it under some semblance of control as it threatened to engulf its neighbours, *S. agnes*, *S. guaranitica* and *S. chiapensis*! Further pruning is now necessary on *S. canariensis*, the calyces of which have suddenly lost their purple colour. The bright contrast of the bi-coloured flowers of *S. chamelaeagnea*, with pale blue hooded upper lip and white lower lip, on dense, branching inflorescences, has collapsed due to the recent persisting drizzle at the end of February and will need the 40cm flowering tips pruned off these 1.50m long stems that bow with the weight of this spectacular floral burden.

John Daniels john-daniels@bigpond.com

Leongatha Victoria Horticulture Club

Sorry I haven't made contact before Christmas as Josie Rutherford had asked me to but we were busy with hay making and then buzzing around preparing for Christmas, you know how it is.

Salvias are surviving well in the very dry conditions being experienced in Leongatha and South Gippsland generally.

Leongatha has been on stage four water restrictions since September '06. Up until Christmas it has been as dry as anyone can recall for the area with rainfall about half the average.

The salvias in my garden are doing well irrespective of the dry conditions. The new salvias are watered when planted and then again in a week or so and then they are left to do the best they can. The only losses I had are from blackbirds scratching them out !!. I noticed the salvias with large leaves droop on the very hot days where the small leaved ones don't show the same stress.

Since Christmas we have had about 80 mm of rain which has turned the dreadful dry to a green tinge now, fingers crossed for more to come and our salvias will grow and bloom beautifully.

Leongatha Horticulture Club thank Trudi Fry and Jillian Barkell for coming down 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 size of the plant. We all loved the idea of her pruning only when she couldn't get past the plant. We loved the flower samples they brought 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 an entertaining demonstration on taking cuttings. (*That all seems so long ago. It was such fun. Trudi.*)

Heather Sullivan

Salvias by the Sea at Lakes Entrance Vic.

What a summer. Heatwaves, drought and bush fire, all those weeks of smoke and black soot that infiltrated its way inside no matter how tightly you shut windows and doors. The plants in the bush house were coated, I got black hands picking Apricots and Peaches. I don't usually need to wash my own fruit as I don't spray. One day the Weather Bureau told us we had 7000m of smoke over us. No wonder we had lights on at 3 p.m. to find our way around inside. Thankfully we were fortunate and never actually came under Ember Attack. But the Salvias all stood up and flowered beautifully providing nectar for flocks of small birds that don't usually visit my garden. I have put out several more water containers for them and hope they will stay permanently.

I started growing Salvias early in 2003. I am just starting my fourth year with these wonders and my garden is undergoing its third make-over. Thankfully Salvias are very tolerant, even large shrubs don't mind being dug up and transported to a new location. They probably realised before I did that they were in the wrong position. Hopefully things will be a lot less labour intensive when I finish.

I have collected over 100 different Salvias now and I will have been on another buying spree by the time you read this. I am learning all the time and in the future I hope to be able to write about my cultivation successes and failures.

Happy gardening. Coral Kennedy

From your editor

*I love my patch of earth. I love the view, the possums on the roof, the rocks, the poor soil, the wild winds and, no, not the drought. But those tanks I moaned about re cost are holding enough water for me to manage, with care, and my terracotta pots are a joy preserving a nucleus of salvias to replenish the garden when rain comes. In spite of my physical inadequacy my family have said "you are OK for another 10 to 20 years at Selby Mum!" So with apologies for Salvia News being late again, here I am. With wonderful news, Irene Robinson has offered to help edit. This means so much less stress. Thanks to all you people who have made time to write for us again. We all appreciate your effort **Deadline for next Salvia News is May 20th as I am visiting my Old family in June.***

THE FERNY CREEK PLANT COLLECTORS SALE

17th and 18th February

The temperatures sounded ominous, 38.5 C on both days for the Ferny Creek Plant Collectors Sale and yet I was determined to attend. I had read in the Salvia News that the Salvia Study Group would be there. Being only a new member to the group I wanted to purchase salvias and meet some of the “workers” with the study group.

I spent some hours reading through my two Salvia News letters with notebook in hand in an attempt to glean what salvias would suit my garden. I had a few already but over time their labels had disappeared with enthusiastic grandchildren foraging for treasures. The only thing I knew was the colour of the flowers and size of the leaves. From the descriptions given I was able to come up with a few pages in my notebook with various notations. ‘Need to have’, ‘maybe’, and ‘let’s see what it looks like’.

I arrived later than planned at about 12.15pm and on the way from the car park noticed that the majority of the people leaving appeared to be carrying bags of salvias. Or I think they were salvias. I felt a bit uneasy wondering if there would be any plants left. Was I too late?

I saw rows of white tents and soon spotted the sign saying Salvia Study Group and hurried over. To my delight the tent was full of plants. I looked at the vases displaying salvias with their beautiful colours and shapes. Yellow, blues, purples, pinks, white and reds pondering should I choose from them or my notebook. Probably a bit of both.

Some of the plants I had written down weren’t available or had sold out but I was able to leave my name, phone number and the plant on a list so I could be contacted. I found Trudi and Jillian helpful and knowledgeable. They answered my many questions with ease and used terms that a layman would understand.

I sat and talked with Trudi for a short while and left my plants which included Salvia ‘Costa Rican Blue’, S. ‘Anthony Parker’, S. ‘Hot Lips’, *S. involucrata* ‘Pink Icicles’, *S. discolor*, S. ‘Phyllis Fancy’, *S.greggii* ‘La Luna’ and S. ‘Silkes Dream’ at the plant nursery as I explored the remainder of the Plant Sale.

Irene Robinson

Testing New Products

From time to time, new, promising products appear on the market and some people report using these products with a degree of success. Being the archetypal “Devil’s Advocate”, I rarely take the manufacturer’s claims at face value, being only convinced when I have carried out my own controlled experiments.

Two products that have been reported in Salvia News include “Paramagnetic Potting Mix”, the magnetic sand supposedly having beneficial properties, and “Stressguard”, claiming to reduce the stress of frost and drought. Both products sounded good. Jillian gave me a small container of the former, so I have no idea of its cost or where to buy it. The latter I found in a local nursery, and it wasn’t particularly cheap.

I carried out a test last autumn, using seedlings that I had germinated from seed obtained in England, some from the Salvia expert, Robin Middleton, and some from the Gardeners’ World Exhibition. When I came to pot the seedlings on in late May, I

chose some seedlings of the same size and divided these, putting half in my standard mix (at the time this was "Osmocote Premium mix from Bunnings @ \$6.00 for a 30 litre bag with a bit of perlite mixed through) and the other half in "Paramagnetic Mix". I used six different species. The two trays were placed in the glass house but the growth was fairly slow because of the time of year. The plants were not monitored too regularly, but the photos taken September, after about 3 months, speak for themselves (although a little less clearly in black & white).

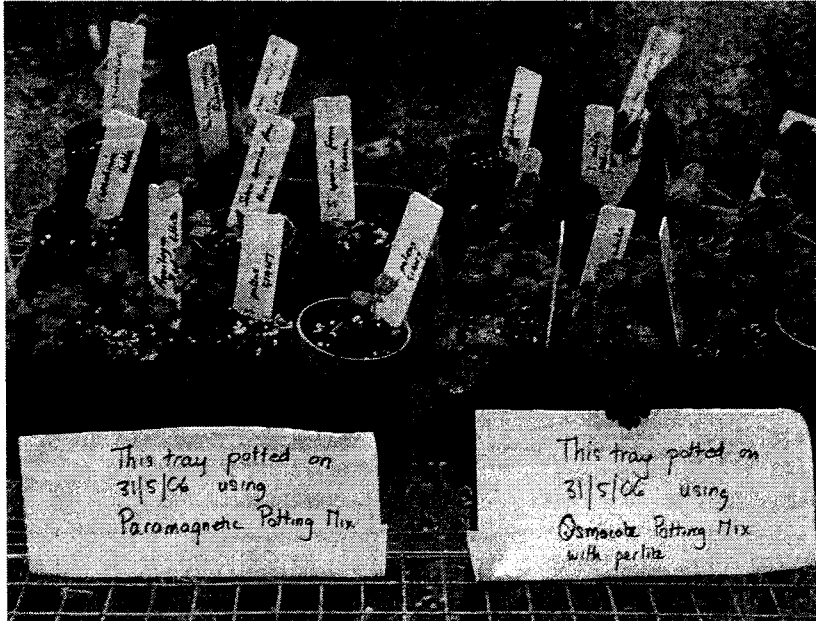


Fig.1: Comparative growth of seedlings

Left hand tray in "Paramagnetic Mix"
Right hand tray in "Osmocote Mix"

Back row: *Salvia subrotunda* and *Salvia indica*

Middle row: *Lepechinia bella* and 2 pots of a *Salvia* species from Verona

Front row: 2 pots of *aquilegia* and 2 pots of *Salvia patens* Giant

The plants in the Osmocote Mix had clearly outstripped their equivalents in Paramagnetic Mix and the colour picture would show that they were also better nutritionally. Admittedly, the Osmocote Mix was a "Premium" mix and would therefore have had some slow release fertiliser in it. Perhaps the Paramagnetic Mix was not intended as a straight potting mix, but merely as an additive. I did not have any printed instructions, but from these results, I doubt very much that any addition of it to my usual mix would have improved the results..... but then, if this is the intention, perhaps I should try.

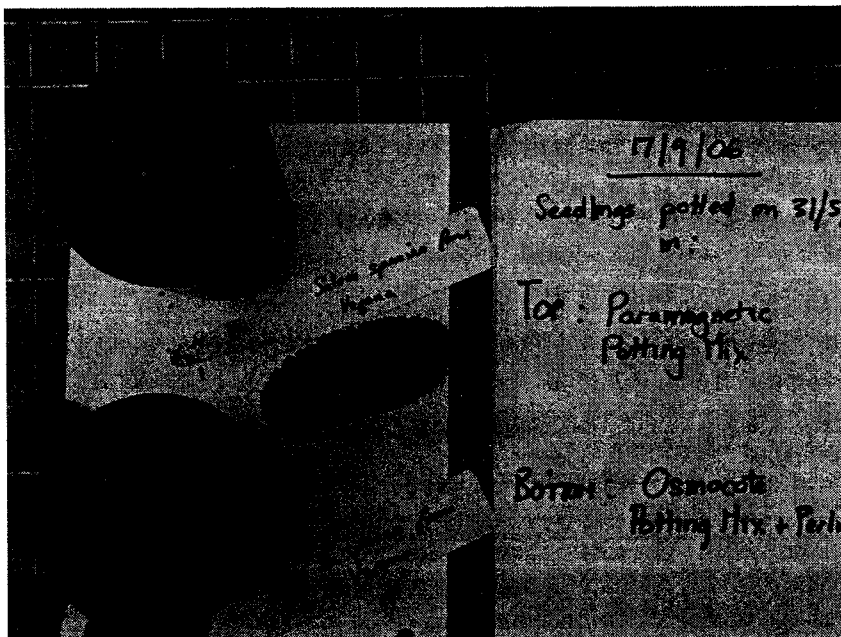


Fig.2:

Close up photograph showing the clear difference in growth of this particular species of *Salvia* (a *S. pratensis* - type of species found in Verona).

I was keen to try "Stressguard" for myself as our

garden suffers regularly from frosts, being located close to the river in the Yarra Valley at Warrandyte. On a clear night when the night time minimum temperature for Melbourne is forecast as 6°, we can expect something more like 2°.

Following the instructions, in early June I sprayed one half of several plants – 2 or 3 species of *Plectranthus*, plus *Salvias iodantha*, *purpurea*, “Van Houttei” and *involucrata x karwinskii*. June 2006 soon brought on some heavy frosts – it was a fairly exceptional year for frosts – and while I didn’t record the actual temperature in the vicinity of these plants, I can record that the “Stressguard”, applied this way, made no difference whatsoever. You may argue that I should have sprayed the whole plant, but differential protection was clearly demonstrated on my *Plectranthus* ‘Mona Lavender’. This large shrub is in a pot on the veranda, the back half under cover, the front half exposed. I had carefully sprayed the **right half** (ie part under the veranda and part exposed). The protected half under the veranda stayed green, the exposed half turned black! It was the veranda and not the “Stressguard” that had helped.

This next winter, I shall have to make sure that I have a pot of anything tender tucked away in the glasshouse or under the veranda and not rely on “Stressguard”.

Pat Anderson

Salvia greggii ‘Snow White’

I was one of the lucky recipients of a cutting from Trudi’s chance seedling that she has called ‘Snow White’. Although just a little guy, the root system looked strong enough so I decided to plant it out instead of potting it up. That was in mid-December. I did water it fairly regularly at first but other garden projects grabbed my attention so it became a bit neglected. In spite of missing regular watering it toughed out the drought and summer heat and is now a flourishing, flowerful plant. Long inflorescences have it standing at over 60cm tall. The corolla is nearly 3cm and the upper lip has a creamy hue. When I opened the flower I noted invagination at the base but no papillae and because the leaf margins are entire I doubt it’s a cross with a microphylla. Although a few strange shaped leaves have developed I think it’s pure *greggii*.

When I compared it to *S greggii* ‘Alba’ the only notable difference between it and ‘Snow White’ is the leaf size, *S greggii* ‘Alba’ has much smaller leaves. I’ve found it to be a wonderful addition to my *Salvia* collection and garden. Cait Hoogenbosch

NOT ALL SALVIAS ARE HERBS

There are many definitions of the term herb, but the major two are: In cookery it may add flavor to a cooked dish or salad. In medicine, it may offer healing with its health giving properties. There are other well known herbal usages too. When our parent body Herb Society of Victoria selected common sage together with all other members of its family, we *Salvia* Study Group members knew we had a big task ahead of us. John Sutton in his book states, “It is approaching one thousand species in all.” Like all correctly identified plants, I found it had the botanical name *Salvia officinalis*, and that both these terms directly referred to its medical usage. The genus *salvia* was from *salvere* to save or heal, whilst *officinalis* gave the assurance that its medicinal properties were verified. On occasions when I had a sore throat or mouth, I eased this by sucking or chewing a couple of sage leaves.

For countless centuries common sage was recognized as a wonderful herb, I had no problems with that. Likewise its cultivars with their similar properties. Take *Salvia officinalis* ‘Alba’ and ‘Rosea’: with their white and pink flowers respectively, these differed only in flowers color, their foliage exactly the same as common sage. All these cultivars must be herbs. Greek sage, *Salvia fruticosa*, is a well known herbal sage. Betsy Clebsch in her book states, “Valued for centuries for its bountiful beauty, Greek sage has medicinal and culinary properties as well as sweet nectar and pollen.” Clary sage, *Salvia sclarea*, is well known, Betsy Clebsch says of it, “It has been recognized for its essential oils and used extensively since well before the birth of Christ.” Even its common name ‘clary’ is said to be a corruption of the word “clear eye” when it was commonly used for that purpose. The Herb Society of South Australia published a booklet detailing 34 *salvias* used for medicinal and culinary purposes. Yes indeed there are many *salvias* used as herbs.

Salvias comprise of a huge family, and I believe not all of them are used as herbs. In believing that, I do not denigrate these wonderful plants in any way. Take bog sage, *Salvia uliginosa*, for instance, I have not heard or read of this sage having herbal usages. I have

grown it as a massed planting which shows its lovely pale blue flowers to great advantage. Indeed I love this salvia very much.

I am aware that some of my best friends regard all salvias as herbs or having herbal properties. I understand their position and fully support them in that. I think they hold that position because common sage is, in many ways, the supreme herbal plant. They possibly believe that its herbal properties must carry over into all its family members. Of course in this article I have proved that it does so for many of them. This writer has a more limited view of salvia herbal usage. I believe that a plant is a herb when he reads, finds, or is told that it has a herbal usage. I'm sure my friends will allow me to hold that personal opinion. In no way do I believe the huge genera of salvias will be diminished. I very much enjoy growing and studying them.

Bill Whitehead

Salvias in Rosebud, Vic.

I'm sure this summer has tested the gardening enthusiasm of all members. Here in my garden on the Mornington Peninsula I have very fine grey sand beneath large gum trees with spreading roots. It is very difficult gardening without rain, and I give thanks for our rain water tanks and bore water (although brackish). I am constantly using water saving granules and mulching the garden with whatever I can get my hands on. I sometimes become a little disheartened when I compare the growth of salvias here with those I have planted in the heavy clay soil in my daughter's garden at Narre Warren. There they grow so strong and upright. Never mind, weeding is a breeze here! The salvias doing well, and looking good at present are the ones Trudi mentioned in the last newsletter - *Salvia africana lutea*, *S. africana caerulea*, *S. dolomitica*, *S. lanceolata*, *S. chamelaeagnea*, *S. discolor*, *S. scabra*, *Salvia palestina*, and some *S. microphyllas*.

It appears that some salvias are very susceptible to leaf burn from hot drying winds and bore water, and they have lost their foliage in varying degrees. In some cases whole plants appear dead but I am hoping that when rains come they will reshoot from underground stems. Here's hoping! Most of these are the taller stemmed, soft leafed varieties such as *Salvia purpurea*, *S. urica*, *S. curtiflora*, *S. confertiflora* and the *S. mexicanas*, and *S. involucretas*.

Many plans are being made on garden reorganization when rain finally comes, and I intend to try growing more in large pots (inspired by Trudi's potted plants).

No matter how tough the conditions, there is always something to surprise and inspire one in a garden. *Salvia oxyphora*, *S. "Mystic Spires"*, *S. "Phyllis Fancy"*, *S. muiirii*, and *S. "Waverley"* are looking wonderful and making up for their poorly relatives. And now, we are getting beautiful flowers appearing on bulbs such as nerines, scadoxus, and crocus, as well as the begonias, alstromerias and roses adding some welcome colour.

Happy gardening, and my wish is for rain for all fellow gardeners needing it desperately.

Wendy Smith, Rosebud.

GLENROWAN NEWS VIC

You are either an optimist or a pessimist. You can wail and moan, cursing the weather gods for their unspeakable lack of consideration to all of Australia in not blessing us with rain for our gardens and agriculture, or be realistic, and prepare plan B for when the heavens do open again. Many years ago there was a Walt Disney movie "Song of the South" in which Brer Bear sang "It's not what ya do with whatcha got, but never mind what not ya got", that pays off in the end. I believe that is the way we should approach most things in life, regardless if it is money, health or water. There is always someone worse off than you, so stop groaning about something you have no control over.

Now - The Garden. How many times do you hear someone say - "I'd like to start the garden from scratch now I know what grows best in these conditions?. For many of us this is our chance!"

My Losses - A lot of natives, the exception being grevillias with leaf similar to Superb and Ned Kelly. Hakeas were one of the first to bite the dust, Westringias followed, Echiums, which will of course sprout seedlings along the way. Ceonathus, a French lavender hedge, plus several other lavenders, all supposedly bullet proof.

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Approx. 8 roses, 2 Maples (which of course, shouldn't have grown in the first place), 3 camellias (ditto). We often plant unsuitable species because they appeal and we have to take up the challenge.

Our last good rain was September 23rd last year. Since then we have had under an inch of rain. Our tanks emptied in January, and we have been buying in water for the house since then. We are very fortunate to be able to do so.

To Salvias. --Fatalities – *Salvia hirtella*, S. 'Waverly', S. 'Raspberry Ice', *S. discolor*, *S. corrugata*, S. 'Black Knight', S. 'Red Dragon', and S. 'Navajo Red'.

Survivors – *S. involucantra x karwinski* "Romantic Rose" (probably because it is one of my favourites, so I mollycoddled it), *S. spathacea*, *S. 'Southern Belle'*, *S. dolomitica*, *S. iodantha*, S. 'Hot Lips', S. 'Costa Rican Blue', and my wonderful *S. canariensis*, which is grown in pure granitic sand, not fertilized, and not a drop of water given. It looks tired, but with a good drink when the rains arrive, it will continue to amaze.

On Saturday 3rd March the Benalla Garden Club travelled to the Mornington Peninsula to Malcolm and Tamie Fraser's Open Garden day. I resolved not to make any purchases until we had good rain. Alas, there was a stall run by Wendy Smith from the Peninsula, with just salvias. I ask you, what is a girl to do? Purchased were *S. tomentosa*, *S. microphylla* 'Margaret Arnold', S. 'Indigo Spires' (another I had lost), *S. candelabrum* and *S. glutinosa*. These will all stay in their pots until probably April. "How does Your garden grow?" – I do hope you have had better survival rates than this area.

Jess Kay, Glenrowan, Victoria

Geelong Botanic Gardens VICTORIA Salvia Collection update

Our new Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens is Annette Zealley. Many Friends and team members know Annette through our membership of the Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) network.

Annette's previous role was the Coordinator of the Dandenong Ranges Gardens for Parks Victoria. This group of gardens and arboreta included the National Rhododendron Gardens, Pirianda Garden and William Ricketts Sanctuary. Annette has worked with Friends Groups and other community groups and sees community support and involvement as vital for all gardens.

The Salvia collection at the Geelong Botanic Gardens continues to develop. The dry conditions have seen some plants suffer and others come into their own as they cope well with less water. There are some valuable insights into plants which are more drought tolerant, and we will share these with you in the next edition of Salvia News.

Des Lawrence, Geelong Botanic Gardens

SALVIA NEWS FROM SOUTHERN FLEURIEU S.A.

My in-ground salvias are in a bed across the front of my house facing south-west. We have Level 3 water restrictions, which severely restrict watering times, but not amount at this stage. My soil is very alkaline with a lot of limestone rocks, varying from pebble size to large rocks and fairly sandy.

We have had very little rain for months. Salvias that have tolerated these conditions well are S. 'Anthony Parker', S. 'Waverly', S. 'Phyllis Fancy', *S. microphylla cyclamen*, S. 'Christine Yeo', *S. africana caerulea*, *S. chameleagnea*, S. 'Indigo Spires', *S. chiapensis*, *S. discolor*, *S. greggii* 'Raspberry Royal' and *S. involucrata* 'Joan'.

I have been experimenting with some salvias in shrub tubs in an area with less sun, but feel plants withstand heat and wind better in-ground.

Margaret Arnold. Goolwa. SA

Two gardens at Southern Fleurieu in what would have to be toughest year on record.

1. **Currency Creek** – 4 Salvias are growing with no water.
 - a. *Salvia grahamii* paddock planted and flowered after 2" in January.
 - b. *Salvia somalensis* – 2 plants on edge of eucalypt forest. Also flowered after rain in January.
 - c. *Salvia africana caerulea* looking as though there was no drought.
 - d. *Salvia chameleagnea* – original 12 year old plant is woody but has suckered some new plants 2-3m from original and starting to make good clumps.
2. **At low water garden** 300m from Southern Ocean.
 - a. Christine Yeo is the best performer.
 - b. *S.africana caerulea* is compact and hardy.
 - c. *S. muirii* excellent, low growing, water hardy.

Probably over the years I have tried 100 salvias. Most die a slow death of intense salt drop out.

Simon Ardill
Goolwa Beach SA

NEWS FROM BENALLA VICTORIA

So the drought tolls on and Benalla is now on Stage 4 restrictions, no doubt hastened a little because of the battle with nearby bushfires. Actually there were fires before Christmas and more again in mid January. The smoke haze was about for several weeks and not good news for those with respiratory problems. Of course the smoke got into the buildings and ash was clearly visible.

During perhaps the worst heatwave, my pump gave out and remained out of action for four days. Calling in at the pump shop several hours before the agreed completion time, I was to learn that it hadn't been looked at. The grumpy sales/service person remarked, "Flowers don't matter. What about the b..... farmers?" No I did not feel like a valued customer. (I had purchased the pump there.) When it was suggested that I would write to the pump company, the salesperson's response was, "You wouldn't do that to J... !" Returning from the rear of the building the sales person informed me that the pump would be ready at the time agreed to originally. When collecting the pump I was told that there was no warranty because of the presence of sand. My requests to be shown the sand fell on deaf ears – not a word – silence. Then the salesperson had the cheek to say, "You have caused trouble before." This was not true. Perhaps my friend had hassled them in the past when they failed to meet timelines. After paying \$245.00 for two small parts and labour, (the pump had cost \$46.00 eighteen months ago), I wrote to the pump company. There have been several telephone conversations and a visit to the pump shop to receive a weak apology and a promise to look after me next time. I doubt whether there'll be a next time. Yes, the staff were under stress. Maybe I could have reminded management of the challenges confronting gardeners.

The Benalla Garden Club applauds the Salvia Study Group's intention to replace some of our salvia losses. Over February I have lost *S. microphylla* 'Cyclamen', *S. greggii alba*, *S. aurita var galpinnii* - also *S. 'van Houtii'* some time ago. *S. 'Purple Majesty'* is struggling. Could it be too much soapy water, as it's near the back door where I frequently dump grey water. Nearby there are several self-sown seedlings. I could be lucky. Most of the salvias that I have lost were in large terra-cotta pots. All were very root bound and may not have enjoyed the bore water. (*Advice is to repot and/or trim roots*).

Meanwhile, the ferals are testing my patience in the vegetable garden at Springhurst, some 35 minutes up the Hume Hwy from Benalla. The garden is located a considerable

distance from native bushland but no doubt animals are thirsty and very hungry. In mid spring the carrot tops were nibbled away by the rabbits. When the tops were short I was able to use dozens of hanging basket frames to protect them. On the other hand the parsnips remained untouched – the best I've ever grown, but obviously not appealing to the taste buds of rabbits. Later, the red beet, dwarf beans, cucumbers, potatoes and rock melons were to be severely pruned.

With dwindling water supplies in the huge dam dug by Vicroads when building the Hume Freeway, I am holding off planting winter vegetables like silver beet, celery, cabbages, cauliflowers, white turnips, snow peas and broccoli. Often after a drought I feel that plants grow better after the soil has had a rest. Hopefully, the autumn break will come while the soil is still warm. We must forever remain positive.

Steve Coutts

Surviving the Heat in Adelaide

Adelaide has been undergoing the hottest and driest weather in many years. Added to this the Government increased water restrictions in January. In my garden the salvias are doing surprisingly well considering the conditions. I generally water the garden once a week or two, usually late at night. Watering at that time reduces evaporation and seems to cut down on salt burn of the leaves. In full sun are *Salvia africana lutea*, *S. africana caerulea*, *S. scabra*, *S. pseudo nutans* and *S. greggii* 'Maraschino Cherry'. The *greggii* which has been flowering throughout summer stopped flowering in the latest heatwave. The leaves of *S. pseudo nutans* tend to wilt in the hottest of days but recover at night or with a splash of water.

In partial shade are *Salvia disermas*, *S. discolor*, *S. lanceolata*, *S. forskahlei*, a number of *S. microphyllas*, *S. coccinea*, *S. canariensis* and *S. leucantha*. The *microphyllas* seem to be particularly hardy, *microphylla cyclamen* is partially sheltered by a building but is rarely watered. It has been growing well and flowering profusely all summer.

Many of the salvias are growing under the canopy of two huge gum trees (Lemon Scented Gum and Tasmanian Blue Gum) and have dappled shade during much of the day. While the salvias are protected from the direct sun they probably grow smaller than in an open position due to root competition and flower less due to the partial shade. The salvias include; *apiana*, *spathacea*, *leucophylla*, *melissodora*, *officinalis*, *lavandulifolia*, *guaranitica*, *fruticosa* and a couple of *microphyllas*.

The large leaved autumn and winter flowering salvias including *S. gesneriiflora*, *S. 'Anthony Parker'*, *S. involucrata x karwinskii* and what I know as *S. pulchella* are also doing well. They are under the canopy of the gum trees but are also close to western and northern boundary fences which provide shelter. I water them every week or two but give them extra water if I notice the leaves starting to wilt. *Salvia 'Costa Rican Blue'*, which is among the other larger leaved plants, is barely surviving having lost most of its leaves.

Fruity Sage (*S. dorisiana*) is growing near the other large leaved salvias and is faring well except that I water it more frequently than the other salvias to stop the soft leaves from wilting. A normal Autumn has been forecast. Let's hope there is plenty of rain. **Peter Love**

OUR VISIT TO RORAIMA

If you missed our nursery and garden visit to Lyle Felipe's paradise at Lara you must go there soon. It is an amazing place. One becomes quickly lost in the jungle of rare plants ranging from *Salvia apiana* growing on a raised bed in a hot spot and even self-seeding on the gravel path to aloes, agaves, beschenorias, pseudo panax. There are different forms of foliage plants, both upper story and lower story.

To collectors of rare and interesting plants, especially, these architectural plants, rarities, exotics, and oddities are so eminently desirable. It was a joy to buy such well grown plants ready to take a place in my dried up garden to add substance to my salvias.

Nearly all the following plants are suitable for dry and harsh conditions. Lyle has many forms of hard to find plants such as; various forms of succulents, Cussonia, Beschorneria, Sonchus, Macropiper, Euphorbia, Iochroma, Sophora, Doryanthes, Wigandia, Buckinghamia, and many NZ species. These are all set amongst oversize iron sculptures made from treasures found in an old refinery, in a six acre garden visible from the Princes Highway.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

One way we keep in touch is when we are invited to Garden Clubs to speak on salvias. These visits and talks we do are a great opportunity to meet people and see new places. Ray, Jillian and Trudi seem to be doing the most 'talking' lately but there others who speak too. If your club needs a speaker ring Lyndi Garnet 9803 4534.

Tuesday March 13th Ray Boatman spoke on salvias to the Bayswater Ladies Proboscis Garden Club bringing a display of salvia flowers to discuss.

Ray Boatman spoke on salvias and sold plants on Monday March 26th at Knoxfield U3A Garden Group. Once again with a good display of flowers.

Tuesday March 27th at Castlemaine & District Garden Club Trudi Fry spoke on salvias and Jillian Barkell sold salvia plants. Castlemaine is a lovely town we, should have stayed overnight and really seen it.

Monday April 2nd we spoke to Ballarat Horticultural Society. Trudi Fry and Jillian Barkell amazed themselves by finding a mass of colorful salvia flowers in their gardens after a light shower of rain and Jillian sold plants to enthusiastic people. All money from the plant sales goes to funds for Victorian Salvia Study Group activities, such as our new garden at Nobelius Park.

From John Daniels for the KEEPING IN TOUCH section. "I would like to pass on the observation of a couple of weeks ago of a strong, sweet scent around *S. chamelaeagnea* but not noticeable up close to the flowers. Has anyone noticed this phenomenon as I could not account for it from anything else around?"

I mentioned this to Meg Bentley and she had noticed a similar waft of perfume from *Salvia farinacea*. *Salvia mellissadora* is very perfumed in contrast to other salvias where the scent is from volatile oils from the leaves and stems. Has any one else anything to say?

Meg wonders if the lack of moisture in the soil has changed some element which has changed the color of flowers. *Salvia Cookie*, for example, was a nice blue to start with but as the soil got drier the blue has a hint of purple in it.

We have offered salvia plants to the Benalla Garden Club to help replace their losses. This is a gift from gardeners to gardeners and if you need help please let us know perhaps by mentioning our offer to your club.

My terracotta salvia preservation method has now grown to over 200 plants. They look a picture painted in exuberant colors and cheer me up wonderfully. There are a lot of 'chance seedlings' as they help themselves to space in next-door pots. Mostly these appear to be *greggii* *microphylla* crosses. One is an odd bronzy colour with a brown calyx as well as the usual red-pink-cyclamen-purple lot. Snow White, described by Cait, is a treasure I think. Well as its mother I would, wouldn't I? And *S. greggii* 'Crimson and Black' thrives in pots and in the garden.

Peter Love Reports from SA on New Plant Names

A cultivar of *Salvia leucophylla* found at Tupelo Grove Nursery has larger leaves and flowers than the parent plant and is now being marketed under the name *Salvia leucophylla* 'Imperial'.

The salvia known as *S. microphylla* 'White Blush' has been renamed *Salvia microphylla* 'Red Beacon'. The name 'White Blush' was confusing because the flower is actually red. Sometimes the color fades in the sun hence the old name.

Some new names for old salvias

Periodically, it is confirmed that a name that has been in circulation for a while is incorrect. *Salvia runcinata* was one of these. For whatever reason (possibly the original supply of seed) the plant with fine, ferny leaves that was called *Salvia runcinata*, turned out to be another *S.* African species – *Salvia namaensis*. Sometimes, a plant with a cultivar name turns out to have a real species name.

Some plant names that have been corrected over the past year or two are:

Name formerly used in some gardens in Victoria	Probably/Possibly the Correct name?
<i>S. oppositiflora</i> – frost tender plant, about 45cm high, orange/red flowers with hairs	<i>S. tubiflora</i> The real <i>S. oppositiflora</i> was introduced in 2005 – a plant with smaller, narrow leaves and flowers that are more orange in colour and not hairy) – not to be confused with <i>S. tubifera</i>
<i>S. tubifera</i> – late summer flowering – long, narrow, tubular, dark red flowers, fairly well spaced out – limited flowering season	<i>S. longistyla</i> , According to Robin Middleton in England, who has a plant of each name, <i>S. longistyla</i> flowers later for him and the plant is larger. Evidently there is another plant called <i>S. excelsa</i> with similar foliage that has not yet flowered for Robin. (NOTE: <i>S. longistyla</i> is on the AQIS's list of No No's)
<i>S. pulchella</i>	<i>S. adenophora</i> – a very tall, caney plant flowering in Autumn and other times. My plant was in bud in June before being hit by frost then XXXXX
<i>S. 'Tammy'</i> – plant introduced from Tamaulipas in Mexico – gorgeous thing flowering in Autumn with velvety purple flowers. Mine was thankful over its best before the June frosts spoil it	<i>S. pennellii</i>
<i>S. 'Kathe'</i> - pale green foliage – lovely soft blue flowers in late summer. Mine looks a bit frost beaten right now	<i>S. cruickshankii</i>

There are plenty more queries:

- I think I read somewhere that *S. clinopodioides* is the correct name for *S. 'Michoacan Blue'*, but Christine Yeo evidently has a plant called *S. clinopodioides* that looks more like a *S. glechomifolia* type of plant.
- I gather from reading various bits that *S. fulgens* and *S. 'Red Dragon'* are probably the same thing.
- Then Lambley Nursery was selling a plant called *S. xalapensis* – looked similar to *S. polystachya* in the catalogue photo. Maybe a different form. Maybe a different species. I don't know. There is a pretty thing called *S. myriantha*, which seems to be a more purple and more compact form of something like *S. polystachya*.
- The *nemerosa* x *pratensis* x *sylvesris* x *superba* will probably never be correctly sorted while we get plants from seed. It is safer to stick to the cultivar or cross names, such as *S. x 'Mainacht'* or *S. x 'Lye End'* or *S. x 'Lambley Dumble'*.
- **Pat Anderson**

THE NOBELIUS PLOT

The Nobelius Plot has now been in existence for 15 years and our garden plan shows that well over 200 salvias have been trialled here. One of the important features of the research has been the longevity of many of the plants. Amongst the several plants that were in the original planting and still survive are *Salvia fruticosa* (stems are now very woody but new growth is made each year, and a magnificent flowering period is evidenced each year).

S. officinalis 'Purpurescens' (these were planted as a low border, and have been a colourful foreground for the pale mauves and pinks of their background plants *S. puberula* and *S. polystachya* – also planted quite early in the history of the plot).

These purple sages are now experiencing some die back, the woody stems are unattractive, but they still show healthy new growth each year and flower well.

I have taken cuttings from the plants: the new plants are ready for planting but I will regret the passing of the 26 original plants.

Also amongst the surviving original plants are *S. africana lutea*, *S. officinalis Icterina*, *S. microphylla* 'Huntington Red', *S. dolomitica*, *S. canariensis* (cut back heavily each year) *s. patens* (well protected by taller plants), *S. forskaohlii*, *S. leucophylla* (about 12 years old) *S. apiana*, and two or three forms of *S. leucantha*.

Many more salvia have been trialled over the years the majority successfully. The plot is reasonably open to the elements. Over the trial years, the plants have had to endure strong winds, severe winter frosts, snowfalls (we did not lose any plants during a two day period when snow remained on the ground – even *S. dorisiana* survived!) long cold winters, and more recently extended dry periods. Several of the more delicate plants have not lasted long under the above conditions, but over-mulching has smothered several smaller plants and self-seeding has ceased which is a shame, because this kept up our supply of *S. sclarea* and *S. interrupta*. Vandalism, in the form of plants being removed, has happened in the past (we think some of our neighbours just love salvias).

Usually, over the years, very little summer watering has been given to the plants. New plants have been 'watered in' and during prolonged dry periods in summer I have given the plot a good soaking, but never more than three or four times in the course of the dry season.

However, during the past six months no artificial watering has been given (I have a two acre garden of my own to attempt to keep alive and water restrictions apply to Emerald also). But in spite of this, the plot has survived well, with very few 'dry sticks'. An area under the shade is not going to survive, but *S. uliginosa* and *S. involucrata* 'Bethelli' are easily replaced. All of the South African species are thriving – *S. dolomitica*, *S. africana lutea*, *S. caerulea*, *S. scabra*, *S. lanceolata* are appreciating the dry weather, as are most of the other grey leaved plants, *S. leucophylla*, *S. leucantha* and all of the *S. officinalis* group (including *S. officinalis tricolor*, surprisingly) and *S. fruticosa*, *S. mellifera* and the *S. karwinskii* – *involucrata* group are showing no sign of stress, and producing healthy new growth (these were all pruned back heavily after flowering last year).

The list of salvia in bloom, late February 2007

<u>Blooming period is almost completed</u>	<u>Plants which always have a few flowers</u>
<i>S. apiana</i> <i>S. arizonic</i> <i>S. argentine</i> 'skies' <i>S. scabra</i> <i>S. canariensis</i> <i>S. forskaohlii</i> <i>S. chamleaeghea</i> <i>S. microphylla var microphylla</i> (baby sage) <i>S. sinaleosis</i> <i>S. clevandii</i> (has had a very long flowering) <i>S. microphylla</i> 'Huntingdale Red' <i>S. guaranitica</i> <i>S. spathacea</i> <i>S. uliginosa</i>	<i>S</i> 'Winter Red' <i>S. africana caerulea</i> <i>S</i> 'Waverley' <i>S. leucantha</i> (all colour forms) <i>S. greggii</i> (and <i>microphylla</i> – <i>greggii</i>) <i>S. buchananii</i> <u>Plants with a full flush of bloom</u> <i>S. involucrata</i> 'Joan' <i>S. lanceolata</i> <i>S. azurea</i> <i>S. Grahanni</i> (<i>S. neurepia</i> ?) <i>S</i> 'Fulham's Red' <i>S. discolor</i> <i>S</i> 'Hot Lips'

ATTENTION When filling out renewal forms please check and PRINT NAMES AND EMAIL ADDRESSES CLEARLY We have quite a few incorrect phone numbers and email addresses, so we can only contact you by snail mail !!! So much quicker when things are correct.