



SalviaNews

Victorian Salvia Study Group
A Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria
SPRING 2007

Number 30

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Spring is a time for garden assessment and looking at what is left after drought, frost and gales and thinking what to use to fill up the gaps. It is also the time of surprises isn't it? Little gifts, such as a new chance seedling or an unexpected survivor making a welcome appearance. I hope you and your gardens have survived too, and blossomed. I am getting Broadband and until more technology arrives please contact Irene Robinson on irenerob@comcen.com.au. She is of tremendous help and together we are braving a new (to us) printing firm and a new 'look' to Salvia News. Hope you all like it. Trudi Fry

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 20TH SATURDAY UPWEY COMMUNITY HALL. BURWOOD HIGHWAY MEL.75A9.
Plants including herbs, salvias, cottage garden plants, & lavender products for sale
from 9am. Official opening at 11am. Floral Art Display. Childrens workshops 11.15am

BENALLA BOTANICA HORTICULTURAL CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE THEME : GARDENS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

OCTOBER 26th 27th & 28th FRIDAY SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Outstanding international and national designers and horticulturalists.

Keynote Speaker : Dan Hinkley, the world's most exciting modern day plant hunter.

Presenters include : Michael McCoy, Dan Hinkley, Georgina Martyn. Workshops include : David Glenn from Lambley Nursery, Phillip Stray and Kate Herd from Crafted Landscapes , William Martin from 'Wigandia' and Trudi Fry from the Victorian Salvia Study Group.

Fri 26th : Registration & Garden Tours; 'Karawarra', 'Rambling Rose' and 'Emu Plains'

Sat. 27th and Sun. 28th Plant Sales 10am to 4.30 pm. We will be selling salvias.

Venue: Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre
57 Samaria Rd. Benalla

For more information contact the convener, Jane Grimwade Ph. 03576 2792,
email grimwade@netc.net.au

NOVEMBER 18th SUNDAY Cloudehill Nursery and Garden visit at 11 am
89 Olinda/Monbulk Rd Olinda Mel. 122 A9
The Salvia Study Group will be visiting this magic garden

DECEMBER 9th SUNDAY CHRISTMAS GARDEN PARTY 11am Trudi's garden
39 Temple Rd South Belgrave Mel. 84 J2 Bring chairs & lunch to share

FEBRUARY Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd 2008 Mark Dymiotis's OPEN GARDEN
21 Barnett St. Hampton. Mel. 76 K5

FEBRUARY 16th & 17th SATURDAY & SUNDAY
FERNY CREEK PLANT COLLECTORS SALE. We will be selling salvias.

Salvia News from Hobart

Memories of the warmest May ever recorded for Hobart, at 2.5 degrees above average, quickly faded as winter arrived with a shock of frosty weather that produced the coldest June for over fifty years and a more realistic experience of the variability of the climate in the Roaring Forties! It was the lack of wind, though, that resulted in twenty-four successive nights of below 2 degrees, recorded at home, through the first month of winter, and especially the -3 degrees in mid June, and abruptly ended the flowering of salvias in my own garden below Mount Wellington!

In contrast, the salvia display at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, was unhindered until the coldest June minimum temperature was recorded, since 1998, of -0.4 degrees in Hobart. Proximity to the River Derwent, as well as distance from the influence of the alpine conditions that prevail on Mount Wellington, produce relatively milder conditions that allow a progression of flowering, through the winter, of the salvia collection. The cool climate is ameliorated with the protection provided by trees and structures that create moderate micro-climates and enables optimum growth. Throughout the winter the display of colour has developed with the flowering of reds of *Salvia Chiapas species*, *S. confertiflora*, *S. fulgens* ('Red Dragon?') and *S. hirtella*, the blues of *S. concolor*, *S. corrugata* and *S. Costa Rican Blue*, pink *S. wagneriana*, and cerise *S. chiapensis* and *S. iodantha*.. As the yellow inflorescences of *Salvia madrensis*, the purple calyces of *S. leucantha*, the white corollas of *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'*, and dark blue flowers of *S. 'Anthony Parker'* had faded by mid-winter, pink flowers started to appear on *S. karwinskii* and *S. dorisiana*, preceded a month earlier by those of *S. involucrata x karwinskii*. The highlight, though, has been *Salvia iodantha*, with the profusion of its many dark cerise, compact inflorescences at the top of stems up to 3 metres in height. This year plants of this species have continued their blooming into a third month with an enduring display that is diminishing, only lately, by mid-August.

Surprisingly, the plants of *S. purpurea*, with a northerly aspect and a full day's winter sun, are only just coming into bloom, in mid- August, whereas those facing west, with only afternoon sun, have been flowering for almost the entire winter.

With a north-easterly aspect, at the base of a wall, a *Salvia gesneraeflora* specimen was trained during autumn with one leader tied to a pole supporting the deck of the restaurant and two other stems tied to bamboo stakes. The former reached 2.8 metres before terminating with an inflorescence of over 30cm in length, in early August. This triumph was short-lived, however, due to the attentions and weight of a Wattlebird but short laterals have developed oppositely along this stem and are producing terminal buds that are developing concurrently and will soon burst into a halo of large, red flowers. The 'Tequila' form of this species has gradually reached the peak of its flowering on the northerly side of the shrub.

John Daniels john-daniels@bigpond.com

BE NASTY TO NASTIES

Don't forget to cover those Salvias just poking up their heads to protect them from those Midnight Feasts. Cut a piece of Flywire in a circle, anything from 10 - 15 cm wide, make 4 cuts around the circle, cover your plant, jamming the wire down into the soil, slip a large rubberband over the mounded wire, placing it at or close to ground level, this will help to hold it in place, stopping it from being blown off. Except in these strong winds we are having now. Take off when plant has grown sufficiently large enough for slugs not to do too much damage.

Lyndi

FURTHER GEELONG GLEANINGS

Every Editor has a cut off date for their journal or newsletter. Regretfully with respect to our Salvia News, I usually ignore it, which then requires Trudi to phone me for an article. This time I have actually noticed the next cut off date is still five days hence so I thought I might save Trudi that phone call.

For me, it has been an exceedingly long, cold and wet winter, which has kept me inside for most of the time. Never the less I did rejoice in the rain. On viewing my garden this morning I noticed some of the lower growing salvias were bothered with weeds. I then spent some time removing them and promised I would do more in coming days.

With the approaching spring season, I now intend to specialise in those salvias which interest me in particular. Over the years I have experienced growing Salvia ‘Black Knight’, but have never possessed its soul mate S. ‘Purple Majesty’. I now intend to rectify this oversight, and have already been given a pot of each from a friend who has them. Those of us who possess Meg Bentley’s Manual will know that she compares them splendidly.

Another pair of salvias I want to grow adjacent to each other are, *S. purpurea* and *S. iodantha*. Both of these produce magnificent flowers which I want to compare and enjoy. Having had them together in the past I am fully aware of the enjoyment they offer.

Similarly I intend to grow close together *S. sagittata* and *S. semiatrata*, both being incredibly beautiful. They both have arrowhead shaped leaves and in fact the former owes its species name to that particular leaf shape. Sue Templeton says of *S. sagittata*, “Its flowers seem to hover above the plant and the intensity of their blue colour is most appealing.”

Betsy Clebsch in her book, writes of *S. semiatrata*’s flower being bi-coloured with its upper lip a luminous dark violet, the lower lip a dusky lavender, and its calyces a rich violet with magenta undertonings. I still remember that about three years ago, Sheila Fox wrote in an article about the lower lip of this salvia.

She delved into the meaning of *semiatrata* and in particular ‘atrata’. She quoted her Latin dictionary giving ‘atratus’ meaning ‘clothed in black as in mourning.’ Then using the ‘semi’, it being salvia in half mourning. Sheila’s definition then became, “The widow then progresses from full to half mourning with her clothing similar in colour to this flowers lower lip of dusky lavender.”

I enjoyed very much Sheila’s derivation of that species name and I hope she doesn’t mind me resurrecting it. She is the Editor of our Herb Age and I found it again in that journal of May issue 2004. However I could not find it in my earlier copies of Salvia News.

Bill Whitehead

Bill it is in Salvia News June July August 2004—with Sheila’s permission.

SALVIAS BY THE SEA

Last Newsletter I wrote about drought and bushfires. This time it is rain and floods. Nature is calling the tune and we must all submit to her will. I escaped flood damage, the 10 cms. of water that covered the backyard after the initial downpour was the result of a blocked storm water drain. It drained away in 24 hours; meanwhile the chooks had to paddle. No plants have suffered from their flooding just the same as they all survived the drought.

Thank you to all the Salvia Group members who rang to enquire how we were faring during the floods. It was comforting to know you were thinking of us.

One lesson learned from the drought is that I have always over watered. I will attend to this in the future. Because of the drought I am now practically self sufficient water wise with a small bore and tanks.

The garden has finally reached the limits of its make over. The Salvia area is now nearly 50% larger than 12 months ago. I have a new shade area where I am planting Plectranthus and Fuschias.

The garden is looking bare at present, everything is either newly planted or has just been severely pruned. I am looking forward to a very exciting and colourful Spring.

Around 30% of my Salvias have been moved to new positions as in my initial ignorance they were planted in the wrong aspect for their individual needs. I am sure there are still mistakes. Some have been left in their

original positions and when the weather warms up I will take cuttings and try them in different places to see where they perform the best. I hope to be able to report on the results in a future Newsletter.

In the meantime I am heading North for a few weeks until the said weather warms up.

Happy Salvia gardening. Coral Kennedy

Werri Beach.

Spring is not far off with warm days up to 23 degrees but still some cold mornings and nights. A couple of inches of rain has fallen over the last couple of days and refreshed the garden.

A nice surprise in the footpath garden was the seedling of *Salvia africana-lutea*. It appeared a couple of months ago but I wasn't sure what it was. With the rain has come 3 or 4 distinctive yellow/orange flowers and I'm thrilled that it's appeared in this garden which relies on rain water. I'm particularly pleased because I had reluctantly taken out one which was becoming a nuisance, blocking the path.

Choosing the right spot, as Sheila wrote last issue, can be problematic. When I cut out the *S.africana-lutea* which was huge, I planted a rooted section below the bed where the plant had been but away from the path. There it has languished making little growth. Yet the one which came up on its own on the footpath is strong, upright and flourishing. I have yet to find the right spot for *S.superba*. My third attempt is now in the rock garden at the back. Third time lucky? Should I then try *S.sylvestris* again?

The *S.africana-lutea* on the footpath has a large *Echium* behind it, also self-seeded, which looks like flowering well this year. In front is a patch of *Chrysocephalum* (yellow buttons), an Australian native. So plants from 3 continents within a metre of each other but requiring the same conditions. I might try some more African salvias in this garden.

Recently the nursery in Berry put out a selection of Salvias they have been propagating in 3-4 inch pots. The deal was 5 for \$20 so I looked through and found 4 that I'd never had and one to replace, *S.chiapensis*, which I had lost. Don't ask me how. I had fun placing them. *Salvia muirii* and *S.aurita* var. *galpinii* in the rockery. *S.nutans* 'Tuyma' with already planted. *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy' and *S.* 'Margaret Arnold' and others. *S.Sagittata* 'Mosquito' I put in front of a flowering quince which, although only small, had the most beautiful pink and white blossoms. *S. chiapensis* I placed in front of a Rosemary and near a pink flowering *Plectranthus* and *S.azurea* which is just re-appearing after its winter dormancy.

I was really cross when visiting a friend's garden to see the size of her *S.* 'Costa Rican Blue'. She had grown it from a piece I gave her but it was huge where mine has only ever grown to about 1 and a half metres. And this only a kilometre away! A nice combination of *S.* 'Anthony Parker', grey *Teucrium* and a variegated scented *Geranium* made a lovely picture beside the trellis in the front garden. I'm never sure when to cut back but I had been looking at *S.* 'Indigo Spires' for a while and one day I thought, yes, you need a trim. Pretty soon the new shoots came through and it makes for a better plant.

I have a small salvia I need identifying. It has crinkly small green leaves and mauve flowers and it seeds prolifically, even coming up in the pebbles in the front path. (Sounds like an annual. What does anyone else think? T.) I saw the tallest *S.karwinskii* in a friend's garden which the birds were loving. She gave me a piece of *S.corrugata* which will be the third time I have tried to grow it. I don't know why it doesn't seem to like it here. I am keen to get *S.involucrata* 'Pink Icicles' which I saw the other night on Gardening Australia.

Flowering well now is *S.dolomitica* with its unusual flowers. I've put a red rose in a pot in the middle of it hoping it will climb through once the salvia flowers are finished. Later a purple *Plectranthus* flowers behind and through it.

I had never heard of one salvia mentioned in the last issue. *S.myriantha*. Could I have some info about this one in the next newsletter perhaps?

Lots to do in the garden from now on plus all the garden visits, shows, festivals etc. Retirement next year might give me more time to get round to it all, hopefully.

Cheers, Maureen Cox.

Victorian Salvia Study Group

LIST OF PERENNIAL SALVIAS IN COLLECTIONS AND MEMBERS' GARDENS at 5/03/2019

Individual members may have other species and cultivars that are being checked for identification, performance and longevity

NRA = Not Readily Available

<i>adenophora</i> (previously sold as <i>pulchella</i>)	<i>concolor</i>	<i>greggii</i> 'Grace' NRA	<i>lavandulifolia</i>
<i>aethiopsis</i> NRA	<i>confertiflora</i>	<i>geggi</i> x x 'Iced Lemon'	<i>lavanduloides</i> NRA
<i>africana caerulea</i>	'Cookie'	2 forms – black calyx, green calyx)	<i>leucantha</i> species, with white corolla
<i>africana lutea</i> – silver and ginger forms	<i>corrugata</i>	<i>greggii</i> x 'Lara'	<i>leucantha</i> with mauve corolla
<i>agnes</i>	'Costa Rican Blue'	<i>greggii</i> x 'Purple'	<i>leucantha</i> with magenta/ purple corolla
<i>algeriensis</i> (syn. <i>maroccana</i>) (Annual)	<i>cruickshanksii</i> (formerly sold as 'Kathe')	<i>greggii</i> x 'Pumpkin'	<i>leucantha</i> 'Santa Barbara' – a compact form
<i>amarissima</i>	<i>curtiflora</i>	<i>greggii</i> 'Raspberry Royale'	<i>leucophylla</i>
<i>amplexicaulis</i>	<i>cyanescens</i> NRA	<i>greggii</i> x 'Ruby Ever Red'	<i>longispicata</i>
'Anthony Parker'	'Desley' NRA	<i>greggii</i> 'Sierra Pink'	<i>longistyla</i> (new name for <i>tubifera</i>)
<i>apiana</i>	<i>desoleana</i>	<i>greggii</i> x 'Snow White' NRA	<i>lyrata</i>
<i>argentea</i>	<i>digitaloides</i> NRA	<i>greggii</i> 'Wensley Apricot'	<i>lyrata</i> 'Purple'
<i>arizonica</i>	<i>discolor</i>	<i>greggii</i> 'Yellow'	<i>macrophylla</i>
<i>atrocyanea</i>	<i>disermas</i> (syn. <i>rugosa</i>) – white and pink forms	<i>guaranitica</i>	<i>madrensis</i>
<i>aurita</i> var. <i>galpinii</i>	<i>disjuncta</i>	<i>guaranitica</i> 'Argentine Skies'	'Marine Blue'
<i>austriaca</i> NRA	<i>dolicantha</i> NRA	<i>guaranitica</i> 'Black & Blue'	<i>mellifera</i>
<i>azurea</i>	<i>dolomitica</i>	<i>guaranitica</i> 'Large Form' (nurseries call it 'Tequila')	<i>melissodora</i>
<i>barrelieri</i> NRA	<i>dombeyi</i> NRA	'Harmony' (might possibly be <i>scordifolia</i>)	<i>mexicana</i> 'Limelight'
'Black Knight'	<i>dorsiana</i>	<i>guaranitica</i> x 'Violet Eyes'	<i>mexicana</i> 'Lolly'
<i>blancoana</i>	<i>eigii</i> NRA (Note: some plants in circulation could be a form of <i>disermas</i>)	<i>hierosolymitana</i> NRA	<i>mexicana</i> 'Major'
<i>blepharophylla</i>	'El Cielo Blue' NRA	<i>hirtella</i>	<i>mexicana</i> 'Minor'
'Blue Bird'	<i>elegans</i> (Pineapple Sage)	<i>holwayi</i>	<i>mexicana</i> 'Snowflake'
<i>broussonetii</i>	<i>elegans</i> 'Honey Melon'	<i>indica</i> NRA	<i>meyeri</i> NRA
<i>buchananii</i>	<i>elegans</i> 'Pink'	'Indigo Spires'	<i>michoacan</i> see <i>cliopodioides</i>
<i>bulleyana</i> (= <i>flava</i> x <i>megalantha</i>) NRA	<i>elegans</i> 'Purple'	(Dwarf form of 'Indigo Spires' called 'Mystic Spires' is available at Bunnings)	<i>microphylla</i> (Baby Sage)
<i>calaliifolia</i>	<i>evansiana</i> NRA	<i>interrupta</i>	<i>microphylla</i> 'Cerise'
<i>canariensis</i>	<i>fallax</i>	<i>involucrata</i>	<i>microphylla</i> 'Cyclamen'
<i>canariensis</i> var. <i>candidissima</i>	<i>farinacea</i> (Annual)	<i>involucrata</i> 'Bethellii'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Heat Wave - Blaze'
<i>canariensis</i> 'White'	<i>forreri</i> NRA	<i>involucrata</i> 'Hadspen' NRA	<i>microphylla</i> 'Huntington Red'
<i>candelabrum</i> NRA	<i>forskaohlei</i>	<i>involucrata</i> 'Joan'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Iced Lemon'
<i>castanea</i> NRA	<i>forskaohlei</i> 'White' NRA	<i>involucrata</i> 'Mulberry Jam'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Kew Red' – (formerly called <i>microphylla</i> var. <i>neurepia</i>)
<i>caudata</i> NRA	<i>fruticosa</i>	<i>involucrata</i> 'Pink Icicles'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Maraschino' NRA
<i>chamaedryoides</i>	<i>fruticosa</i> 'Greek Skies'	<i>Involucrata</i> x 'Timboon Red'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Margaret Arnold'
<i>chamelaeagnea</i>	<i>gesneriiflora</i>	<i>involucrata</i> x <i>karwinskii</i>	<i>microphylla</i> 'Musk Pink'
<i>chiapas</i> sp.	<i>gesneriiflora</i> 'Red Rambler'	'Romantic Rose'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Pink Blush'
<i>chiapensis</i>	<i>gesneriiflora</i> 'Tequila'	<i>iodantha</i>	<i>microphylla</i> '-Red Beacon'
<i>chionophylla</i>	<i>gilliesii</i> NRA	<i>jamensis</i> 'La Luna'	<i>microphylla</i> 'San Carlos Festival'
'Chiquita Blue'	<i>glabrescens</i> NRA	<i>jamensis</i> 'Los Lirios'	<i>microphylla</i> 'Scorcher'
<i>chinensis</i> NRA	<i>glechomifolia</i>	<i>japonica</i>	<i>microphylla</i> x 'Sensation'
'Christine Yeo'	<i>glutinosa</i> NRA	<i>japonica</i> 'White Form' NRA	<i>Microphylla</i> 'Silke's Dream'
'Christine Yeo 'Superior Purple''	<i>grahamii</i> 'Purple' – not certain what this should be called – has frilled lower lip	<i>judaica</i>	<i>microphylla</i> 'Sizzler'
<i>cinnabarina</i>	<i>gravidia</i> NRA	<i>jurisicii</i>	<i>microphylla</i> var <i>microphylla</i>
<i>clevelandii</i>	<i>greggii</i> 'Alba'	<i>karwinskii</i> (greyish leaf, brown calyx)	<i>microphylla</i> var <i>wislizenii</i> (syn. <i>limmonii</i>)
<i>clinopodioides</i> (formerly sold as 'Michoacan')	<i>greggii</i> 'Bi-color'	<i>karwinskii</i> 'Verdi' (less tall than species, leaves greener, calyx green)	<i>miltiorrhiza</i>
<i>coahuilensis</i>	<i>greggii</i> 'Coral' & <i>greggii</i> 'Tangerine'	<i>karwinskii</i> x <i>involucrata</i>	<i>miniata</i>
<i>coccinea</i> -' Lady in Red'	<i>greggii</i> 'Crimson & Black'	'Winter Red'	
<i>coccinea</i> 'Bicolor'	<i>greggii</i> 'Desert Blaze' NRA	'Kathe' see <i>cruickshanksii</i>	
<i>coccinea</i> 'Brenthurst' NRA	<i>greggii</i> 'Furman's Red'	<i>lanceolata</i>	
<i>coccinea</i> 'White'			

<i>muelleri</i>	<i>patens</i>	<i>reptans</i>	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Caradonna'
<i>muirii</i>	<i>patens</i> 'Cambridge Blue'	<i>riparia</i> (syn. <i>misella</i>)	<i>sylvestris</i> x East Friesland'
<i>munzii</i>	<i>patens</i> 'Chilcombe Mauve'	<i>roborowskii</i> (Annual)	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Lye End'
<i>myriantha</i> NRA	<i>patens</i> 'White'	<i>roemeriana</i>	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Lubecca'
'Mystique'	<i>patens</i> 'Giant' - NRA	<i>rubescens</i>	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Rosenwein'
<i>namaensis</i> (sold in the past as	<i>pennellii</i> (formerly sold as	<i>rubiginosa</i>	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Snow Hills'
<i>runcinata</i>)	'Tammy' / Tamaulipas)	<i>rumicifolia</i> NRA	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Tanzarin'
<i>napifolia</i>	<i>penstemonoides</i> NRA	<i>runcinata</i> (Weedy)	<i>taraxacifolia</i>
<i>nemerosa</i> ***	'Phyllis Fancy'	<i>sagittata</i>	<i>thymoides</i>
<i>nemerosa</i> x' Amethyst'	<i>plectranthoides</i>	<i>scabra</i>	<i>tiliifolia</i> (Annual)
<i>nemerosa</i> x 'Lambley Dumble'	<i>polystachya</i>	<i>sclarea</i>	<i>tingitana</i>
<i>nemerosa</i> x Marcus'	<i>praeclara</i> NRA	<i>sclarea</i> 'Alba'	<i>tomentosa</i>
<i>nemerosa</i> subsp <i>tesquicola</i>	<i>pratensis</i>	<i>scutellarioides</i>	<i>transsylvanica</i>
<i>nilotica</i>	<i>pratensis</i> subsp <i>haematodes</i>	<i>semiatrata</i>	<i>tubiflora</i> (formerly sold as
<i>nipponica</i> 'Fuji Snow'	<i>pratensis</i> 'Tenori Rose' NRA	<i>sinaloensis</i>	<i>oppositiflora</i>)
<i>nubicola</i>	<i>prunelloides</i>	<i>somalensis</i>	<i>uliginosa</i>
<i>nutans</i> NRA	<i>przwalskii</i>	<i>spathacea</i>	<i>urica</i>
<i>officinalis</i>	<i>pseudonutans</i>	<i>splendens</i> 'Van Houttei	<i>urica</i> 'Blue Ribbon'
<i>officinalis</i> 'Alba'	<i>puberula</i>	<i>sprucei</i>	<i>verticillata</i> 'Alba'
<i>officinalis</i> 'Berggarten'	'Purple Majesty'	<i>staminea</i> (syn. <i>transcaucasia</i>)	<i>verticillata</i> 'Purple Rain'
<i>officinalis</i> 'Icterina'	<i>purpurea</i>	<i>stepposa</i> NRA	<i>villosa</i>
<i>officinalis</i> 'Purpurescens'	<i>ranzaniana</i> NRA	<i>subpalmatinervis</i> NRA	<i>virgata</i>
<i>officinalis</i> 'Rosea'	<i>recognita</i> NRA	<i>subrotunda</i> NRA	<i>vridis</i> (Annual)
'Omaha Gold'	'Red Dragon' (could be	<i>superba</i> ***	<i>viscosa</i>
<i>oppositiflora</i> (NB: <i>tubiflora</i>	synonymous with <i>fulgens</i> or	<i>superba</i> x 'Blue Queen'	<i>wagneriana</i>
was formerly sold as this)	<i>cardinalis</i>)	<i>superba</i> x 'Rose Queen'	'Waverly'
<i>oresbia</i> (syn. <i>darcyi</i>)	<i>reflexa</i> (Annual) NRA	<i>superba</i> x 'Ruben'	
<i>oxyphora</i> NRA	<i>regla</i>	<i>sylvestris</i> x 'Blauhugel' ***	
<i>palaestina</i> NRA	<i>repens</i>		

***There is considerable uncertainty about the parentage of many *nemerosa/sylvestris/superba* cultivars and it may be better to refer to them as their cultivar name only. They have been listed above according to their original purchase labels, which are not necessarily correct.

Packenham Expo 2007

Once again, the group was invited to participate at the annual Garden Expo at Packenham Racecourse. This year the weather was foul but this didn't stop the patrons, which included the ever-enthusiastic crowd from "Sale and District", from flooding in when the doors opened at 10am. Our display looked terrific, thanks to the tireless efforts of Jillian and Lyndi on the day before. Three large tables were groaning with plants for sale, arranged by colour, and on either side of the eye-catching banner were tall vases of colourful winter salvia blooms. This is what attracts the buyers and, of course, they all want those particular plants.

Members who turned up to help on the day included Jennifer and Geoff Ellis, Laurelle Willis, Wendy Smith, Pat Anderson, and of course Jillian, for whom the organisation of such events is an art form. Trudi was also present, not only for her wisdom and advice at the stall, but as one of the guest speakers. Her talk generated another flurry of sales, but by and large, it was all over by 2pm, allowing us to pack up before the scheduled 4pm.

Thank you to all who donated plants. The money raised will help cover the cost of developing the new display garden at Nobelius. **Pat Anderson**

Salvias Attract Birds

I am often amused and sometimes a bit annoyed when I read some newspaper and magazine articles about attracting birds to gardens. Invariably the writers support planting native Australian plants in order to attract them. Once I was on the verge of apoplexy when one writer claimed that non-native plants hold nothing of interest for Australian birds. What nonsense! I can only presume that the writer

had never had the chance to observe native birds in a garden of non-native plants but, in that case, she should not have made such a statement on something about which she had no knowledge. We salvia growers and lovers know better.

During the winter just past, I have been charmed by a pair of eastern spinebills who have made themselves at home in our garden in order to take advantage of many of the salvias that have continued to flower during our mild winter months. I have observed them harvesting the nectar from the flowers of *Salvia* 'Black Knight', *S.* 'Costa Rica Blue', *S. dorisiana*, *S.* 'Indigo Spires', *S. iodantha* and *S. semi-atrata*. They may have visited others as well when my back was turned.

Clearly these sweet little birds prefer to sup from the sturdier, shrubby salvias which provide them with a firm foothold but if necessary they will also visit the softer stemmed salvias. I have seen one hovering like a hummingbird in order to gather nectar from a long stem of *S.* 'Indigo Spires' flowers.

Bigger birds occasionally take advantage of our salvias, too, and among these are satin bower birds. They are omnivores and, in winter, they probably frequent other parts to get the protein and fruit that they need. But one day when the other person in our household was ironing and idly looking out on our garden at the same time, she called that she had just seen a bower bird fly off with a pink flower in its beak. This must have been from a salvia that was given to me by someone who did not know its name but which I think might be *S. microphylla* 'Musk Pink'. I am particularly fond of this one both because of its pretty colour and also because it does not grow higher than about 90cm, a very handy size to balance out the garden a bit. I am glad that the bower bird also appreciated it. I have three specimens of this salvia in the garden now and the one that attracted the bower bird has been planted barely a year and so its flowers were within easy reach of a bird that is very much heavier than an eastern spinebill.

I suspect that when summer plant growth returns, our pair of eastern spinebills will go elsewhere for their food needs but I was glad that our salvias could fill the gap over winter.

Sheila Fox

Our Guest Speaker at Rathdowney – Trudi Fry

As Leonie didn't attend the last Poppy Day at Sheryl Jenyns I will tell you about it. Rathdowney is a long way away from everything, but on a crisp, beautiful winter morning it was great to arrive at this hidden garden, secreted away by a cypress hedge, where we were sheltered from the wind in a beautiful oasis. Imagine the smell of a wood fire burning and leaves falling gracefully onto the lawn, the winter sun just taking the chill off the air and the tops of the surrounding mountains hidden by mist - and there we all were. Sheryl says the house was an old fibro place taken from Broadbeach. It is now surrounded by a verandah, and it was just perfect for the 'Poppies' to have their morning tea while overlooking the garden. Camellias frame the house and various garden beds are brimming with colour from plants such as yellow holmskioldia and orange of the bromeliad 'Blanchetiana'. There were colourful varieties of cactus and succulents, African daisies in autumn tones and a perky scarecrow keeping an eye over a very healthy looking vegetable patch. Sheryl explained that the climatic conditions here are very difficult, being neither temperate nor subtropical, and the tropical plants died over the winter, particularly during frosts, and the temperate plants died during the hot summers, but despite this the garden was beautiful. We would all like to say congratulations Sheryl and Flip and thank you for your hospitality to the 'Poppies'.

Our guest speaker was Trudi Fry, a member of the Victorian Salvia Study Group (which is part of the Herb Society of Victoria) who talked of her life experiences. She spoke of the beginnings of the 'Salvia Group', working with her husband Don when they were younger. In her late sixties she survived the loss of her husband – a devastating time as they had worked together in business sculpting for many years and were very close. In time she took on new things including becoming the editor of the 'Salvia News', learning how to use a computer, building brick garden walls etc.

How did the salvia group begin? Many plants are destroyed in the wild and nurseries only stock those which they think will be profitable, so the Herb Society of Victoria decided to start a Salvia Study Group. This group now holds a salvia collection for the Ornamental Plant Collections of Australia Association. The aim is to ensure that rare and unusual plants survive and there are many garden groups holding various plant collections throughout Australia. Trudi thought she had great knowledge of salvias as her mother had grown them and she could recall about four of them - *Salvia leucantha* which her mother called Mexican Sage and grew on the path to the outback dunny, and pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*), Graham sage (*Salvia microphylla* 'Grahami' and *Salvia officinalis* with which she used to stuff the Christmas chook. Trudi was to learn that there are about 900 salvias, none indigenous to Australia. After rooting through people's gardens the group were chuffed to find about a dozen varieties. Salvias were brought to every meeting in cardboard boxes upon which everyone leapt. Trudi recalls arm wrestling one elderly man for a salvia she really MUST have - he turned out to be the oldest member of the group Bill Whitehead! Bill who is over 90, lives in Geelong and they have remained great mates despite this beginning. The salvia was *S. discolor* which prefers a well-drained bank and never needs water. It has sticky foliage which becomes an insect catcher. This salvia comes from Peru and belongs in a class all of its own (Discolores). Bill calls it 'Black Tears'.

The salvia group has two study plots - one at Hampton, which has coastal conditions and one at Nobelius at Emerald which is in the Dandenongs. Nobelius was a nurseryman to the early gentry and used to send plants via 'Puffing Billy' from the Dandenongs. His old nursery is now council land and still has remnants of rare and unusual plants and trees that are all named.

In 1970 Trudi and Don bought a block of land in the Dandenongs at Selby, with a most wonderful view to the north west and set on a granitic ridge on which nothing would grow easily. Because they were both sculptors they built a studio first and then the house, around which there is prolific wildlife. If a fire hits the valley Trudi says she would have only 12 minutes to leave the area in safety. Now alone, she is making the best of it - changing her way of gardening and living. She needed an area in which to grow salvias that was easily accessible as with severe back problems she envisages that one day she will not be able to do what she now does. Around the ugly concrete tanks right in view, her son built a stockade wall which is an ideal spot on which to keep salvias. After 30 years people had left 'found objects' on the property and with this she built up layers in front of the wall to create a platform on which 200 terracotta pots could be stood. People say that terracotta pots need to be glazed and waterproofed but Trudi says NO, every plant needs a cool root run and terracotta pots do that. Accidentally Trudi left a very special plant in a plastic pot and in just one day it was cooked!

For her 70th birthday her children gave her a poly house, and steel tipped Blundstone boots, and her sister in law gave her a computer. At that time the 'Salvia Group' thought they were becoming stagnant and decided to publish a newsletter, so as she owned a computer she was the designated editor. Her four-year-old grandson showed her how to turn it on and so she started - she has gone on from there on a fast learning curve! Recently Irene Robinson volunteered to become assistant editor and now Trudi posts handwritten contributions to her and they come back via email typed and ready to be inserted in the newsletter which is a wonderful help.

In the past Trudi also turned her hand to laying brick walls around the garden beds. There is no clay on the land - the ground is porous hence there is no drainage problem so she has backfilled with compostable materials - wool is great she says. Another great present she was given many years ago by her father-in-law was a bricklayer's 'bolster' which she uses to cut bricks, into which tiles, left over from sculpture days, are inserted to ornament the walls.

Trudi's garden includes an African garden bed in the centre for the African bunch of salvias, i.e. *S. africana-lutea* (terracotta colour) *S. africana-caerulea*, *S. somalensis* and aloes (from Africa also). Winter flowering salvias include *canariensis*, *wagneriana*, *involutata*, *greggii* and *microphylla*. While Trudi calls them promiscuous, with all the colours of the rainbow, she was thrilled to bits with a seedling which came up white - not *greggii* 'alba', but bigger and better - she has called it 'Snow White'. This is possibly a *microphylla* and is being trialled for the next year. Another seedling of Trudi's is *S. greggii* 'Crimson & Black' which was trialled for 3 years before releasing. This is now in southeast Queensland. Trudi emphasized the need to trial seedling salvias for a long period to ensure they are worth releasing to the public. Members of the Victorian Salvia Group do a lot of research on salvias and before they are released this research is printed in their newsletter.

A most interesting lady and one who proves:

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.

Lorraine Roberts S.E. QLD

THE VISIT TO TRUDI FRY'S GARDEN

I had never seen Trudi's garden before and I was looking forward to visiting it. Trudi had said not to expect anything wonderful; it was not like a garden in the Open Garden Scheme.

For those who have never seen Trudi's garden it is equal and in some cases even better than gardens in the Open Garden Scheme. It was sheer fantasy; filled with salvias, succulents, climbers, shrubs and trees on various levels and, more salvias.

Then there were the sculptures. Everywhere I turned there was something beautiful and different. In one garden there were large handmade urns, all different shapes, standing about 5ft high with masses of succulents planted in pots sitting on top of these wonderful structures. Some of the sculptures were rough and stony others swirling and twisting as they sat amongst the salvias and other plants in this creative garden. There were handmade pots of all sizes and shapes, some mosaic pots were filled with more succulents and other plants. One collection of pots was even used to hold Trudi's garden tools.

Trudi's 'Wall of Salvias' are all planted in terracotta pots. It was magic.

A bus load of people came from the Sale Garden Club to add to the enjoyment on the day. A long way to travel but I am sure they were as captivated as I was by this imaginative garden.

All is I can say in finishing "Well done Trudi" and I came home as I am sure many others did inspired by what I saw.

Irene Robinson

Thank you Irene. I love people loving my garden. It is a rough wilderness. Just a 35 year old garden belonging to a 76 year old woman. Some of the plants people asked about were the Gynea Lilies or *doryanthes*, and *melamoselinium decipiens* or Tree Angelica with its posies of flowers and underneath the Angelica is another self-seeded friend *smyrnium perfoliatum*, much loved by Christopher Lloyd. **Trudi**

The Various Ways to Kill a Salvia

In general, salvias are wonderfully tough plants, but as collectors of this genus, we insist on growing plants that originate from diverse environments ranging from lush tropics, to near desert and from lowlands to the Himalayas. Not only that, but we (I) cram these diverse plants together into a near mono-culture – a recipe for collective damage by pests, and on top of that, most of us have lousy soil, if any, in which to grow them. It is not surprising then that we have some losses.

So what are the various perils to watch out for?

1. Frost
2. Drought
3. Poor drainage, especially combined with over watering or with cold, wet conditions
4. Pests- snails, white fly, red spider mite and tiny beetles
5. Letting them go to seed
6. Kindness

FROST

Winter 2006 was especially bad. Not only were frosts numerous, but they began early in June, and occurred quite late, in September. Various people reported frost damage in their gardens. Our property is in a typical frost hollow, lying close to the Yarra River. On clear, cold nights, cool air drains downhill, forming pools behind barriers. Hedges can sometimes help protect plants in their immediate lee. So too can a cover, either artificial or provided by the tree canopy. Sadly, in this respect, our trees are very tall and have fairly sparse canopies that provide little, if any protection. The worst aspect of winter 2006 was that the winter flowering salvias were only in bud when the early frost struck in June, leaving blackened foliage and a general mess for the whole season. By the time the last frost had finished, it was time to cut everything back for Spring. In this way, we missed out on a good show of *Salvia adenophora*, 'Blue Bird', *concolor*, *curtiflora*, *dorisiana*, *elegans* 'Purple', *fallax*, *hirtella*, *holwayi*, *involucrata* 'Pink Icicles', *iodantha*, *karwinskii*, *madrensis*, *purpurea*, *rubescens*, *rubiginosa* and *wagneriana*. These weren't the only ones to suffer either. Many of the larger leaved plants that flower at others times of year also suffered, including *Salvia* 'Black and Blue', 'Black Knight', 'Blue Ribbon', *chiapas* sp (whatever it is), *coccinea*, *confertiflora*, *discolor*, *disjuncta*, *dombeyi*, *leucantha*, *macrophylla*, *mexicana*, *microphylla* 'Mystique', *sagittata*, *semi-atrata*, *splendens*, *tubiflora*, *tubifera*, *urica*, and 'Van Houttei'.

By and large, the small leaved *greggii*- and *microphylla*-types survived well. So too did all the South African species. These are seriously tough plants and are so well suited to our tough conditions. Happily too, most of the affected plants pulled through, in spite of the mess, some even trying to flower in Spring. Certainly, the safest plan is to leave the affected plants until well after any risk of further frost before cutting back. I should also try to re-position some of these, but it's hard to find sheltered spots for such big plants. Perhaps this next season, I shall try keeping them smaller which will make it easier to cover them. Then of course, it is worth keeping a potted, back-up plant in a safe place. After all, our colleagues in England have to do this with so many plants – such dedication!

DROUGHT

This summer (06/07) will have decimated many gardens. In this respect we are luckier than many, having a very large storage tank of river water as well as our mains water. Even here, it is clear that the South African species and the tough Californian and Mexican species are the best survivors. *Salvia* 'Hot Lips' is remarkably tough too. In general, it pays to keep plants well pruned, to reduce the leaf area and therefore the rate of transpiration. It also pays to toughen the plants up – ie not over watering and fertilising them, making them large and fleshy and therefore less tough. Meg's garden is a good example of how tough plants can survive. She can't spare any precious tank water for her plants and yet they seem to bounce back with the autumn rain (if it comes), producing a late show.

DRAINAGE This is a critical factor for *Salvia* survival. Many can tolerate very poor soil or climatic extremes, but they generally can't cope with a combination of these. There seems to be two broad groups of plants to consider:

1. Mediterranean types: various forms of *Salvia officinalis* (especially the variegated leaf ones), *candelabra*, *tomentosa*, *indica*, *barrellieri*, *cyanescens*, *recognita* and others. We have killed these with unintentional over-watering – not really so much water, but too much for the "soil" they are in. I look at Robin Middleton's garden in England where it rains far more than here in summer, but his garden is located on a geological stratum called "Bagshot Sand", which is exceedingly well drained.....A couple of inches of Warrantdyte clay, albeit with organic material worked in, does not constitute "well drained".
2. Chinese species with basal foliage. These may be spring or summer flowering and often die down in winter, some never to re-emerge, and poor drainage is usually the culprit. I have lost *Salvia evansiana* this way. More particularly I have lost *Salvia castanea* – a gorgeous chestnut coloured flower and one which I haven't yet managed to get to the flowering stage. Again Robin Middleton has the answer. In England, he over winters his plants in pots, in a very gritty medium, and placed in a cool frame (not his glasshouse which is heated), where they will remain cool but out of the rain. Any necessary watering is achieved from below by standing the pots on wet stones. He can then plant them out in Spring and enjoy the results. I shall try this strategy this winter.

PESTS There are a few of these to watch out for:

1. **SNAILS:** Watch out for these, especially at the time of newly emerging growth in Spring. They seem to find *Salvia patens* quite tasty, and also *Salvia eigii*. They also like to hide under the large basal leaves of others, from where they set out to wreak havoc on other tender plants.

2. **WHITE FLY:** This tends to be a phenomenon of late summer/early autumn on the backs of large leaved salvias, especially when the atmosphere is humid and where air circulation is poor. Well spaced plants would help, but it is best to keep a look out and spray if necessary with pyrethrum. This is a contact/knock down spray, and won't kill the eggs, so you will have to repeat the dose, but please don't spray the good guys like bees and ladybirds. Alternatively, white fly will probably not kill your plants, so you could leave it, but a heavy infestation will develop discoloured leaves due to the associated sticky mould. It would be best to destroy leaves that are badly infested.
3. **MITES:** Red spider mites abound in hot, dry conditions – like this last summer in Victoria. The main *Salvia* sufferers in our garden are *concolor*, *dombeyi* and 'Red Dragon'. Insecticides like pyrethrum won't touch mites and the only specific miticide that I know of is a systemic spray called Kelthane. It should be applied when the problem is first observed (yellowing of leaves – turn them over and observe the minute red things and webbing). I tried to avoid this approach last year and by the end of summer, my *Salvia dombeyi* was so weakened that not only did the frost finish it off but the cuttings I had taken were also infected and contaminated other plants in the glasshouse! Again, destroy any infected leaves and apply any systemic spray with care.
4. **BEETLES:** Yes, tiny little things the size of the hibiscus beetle – not sure if they are the same thing. I have observed small brown-edged holes caused by these in the leaves of various *microphyllas*, a couple of *greggiis*, *leucophylla*, *involutrata* 'Mulberry Jam', *taraxacifolia* and *amplexicaulis*. This tends not to kill the plants, but if it becomes a problem in my monoculture, I shall resort to using "Confidor".

SEEDING: One way to kill of some species prematurely is to let them go to seed. This seems to apply to some of the European/Mediterranean species like *Salvia sclarea*, *barrelieri*, and *indica*. They are probably biennial, but will supposedly keep going longer if the spent flowers are removed. However, we need a few seeds in case they don't keep going, so perhaps more than one plant.....Some of them will self seed. However, in my experience, while this may occur readily in gravel paths, it doesn't occur readily where beds are heavily mulched with pea straw.

KINDNESS: While not generally a fault in a gardener, this is just a reminder that plants brought up tough tend to stay tough and that too much water is not a good thing for some species, unless you have created good drainage by raising beds and incorporating gravel. By the same token, be kind to those lovely Asian Salvias and give them some winter protection from soggy feet and if you live in a frost prone area, try keeping the plants smaller, locate them where there is some protection or cover them. In any case, if you are a collector, you need to keep a back up specimen in a safe place.

Pat Anderson 5 March 2019

Post script: Since writing this, we have gone through another winter. Yes, we had frosts again, but at least for us, at any rate, the first one didn't arrive before we had a reasonable showing of winter colour – and, I have moved a few. Not quite brought myself to culling the tender ones.

BALLARAT ENHANCED NOT JUST BY WATER IN THE LAKE BUT ALSO BY THE RECENT VISIT of The Victorian SALVIA STUDY GROUP

What a wonderful surprise to see Jillian and Trudi, (the ultimate ambassadors) at Ballarat recently. Well yes, of course I'd had my updated newssheet, but being me, I'd completely forgotten that my planned trip to Ballarat would coincide with the Study Group's talk to the members of the Ballarat Floral Art group.

The floral displays were simply stunning but not a salvia to be seen - guess what, should anyone do the trip next year, salvias will be well represented in the arrangements as Trudi's chat elicited much interest in the attributes not just of the *Salvia* flowers but their ability to hold bracts for extended periods.

Sometimes the visual season is extended dramatically simply because of those bracts - certainly in my patch where secateurs are generally unused, this is the case and flower arrangers love the unusual.

Most of the audience were enthralled by *Salvia africana lutea*, more especially when it was pointed out that not only were the flowers an unusually attractive shade but there were bracts and silver /grey

leaves to attract attention. Much interest also in anything with blue and as we know, salvias have a wide ranging blue spectrum even further extended these days by Meg Bentley's "Violet Eyes" with large wonderfully coloured flowers - doing well for me in a very casually maintained garden and with far too much root competition from trees.

Just a few more drops of rain and we should all be looking towards an amazing spring display, **Happy Gardening.** *Laurelle Willis*

KEEPING IN TOUCH

I spent the month of June 2007 in South East Queensland. Three of my children and their families live there now and I have decided I am a de-facto member of the area without being a resident. Kate lives near Barb Wickes, lucky girl, in Buderim. Kate and Peter and the two boys shifted there from W.A. in November. I'll miss W.A; especially as I was too ill to visit the special places I love last time I was there. But SEQ is a different sort of feast to the eyes. I left a cold, gray Victoria and landed in Maroochydore into warm sun and the warm arms of my daughter.

Everywhere there was a blast of colour; glowing greens, startling yellows and every shade of bright reds, pinks, purple and blues flashed by as we drove the few miles to their house with its palm trees and palm trees and palm trees and green grass and no sign of personality in the garden. The house is great, and did I mention that Barb lives nearby? After falling into bed I woke still quite disoriented. Only my family was familiar.

It was the strong burst of colour of the leaves, the flowers and the trees that disconcerted me; all unfamiliar. Not a salvia anywhere until Kate took me hurriedly to Barb to recover in her wonderful tropical cottage garden. I don't remember how Barb became friends ages ago but her kindness was there for me when my son was ill as well as the caring thoughtfulness of the Perennial Poppies Group members.

We share salvia information with the Poppies. They are a large garden group, have a Newsletter called The Poppy and have a wide range of activities and interests all plant based. There is a salvia sub-group and we had a valuable and informative round table discussion in Barb's garden later in my stay.

I also was taken by Barb from Brisbane on a 500K round trip to see gardens filled with treasures. We drove to Denise and Henk Hortchner first. They have a 'Brisbane Cottage Garden' (also the title of Denise's book) and there I saw so many fascinating plants that I realized that I needed to concentrate on salvias or suffer from complete plant overload. There was *Salvia oxyphlora* which flowers for 6 months, many self seeded *S. splendens* with variegated leaves and mixed colours, and *S. 'Salsa'*.

Then onwards to Carol and John Kerkin's garden at Kingsholme where there was *Salvia Excelsa* which is a *wagneriana* with very dark burgundy bracts and flowers, *S.myriantha* (blue/purple flowers) and S.CJ seedling. Please realize that there were truly amazing plants everywhere in all the gardens, and, there is an amount of random salvia seedlings in all of them and more salvias than I can remember.

Then up round Tambourine Mountain to Elwyn and Neil Paton at Ashby where there is an uncountable number of hybrid *S. karviskii/involutrata* in shades of watermelon to almost red. A seedling of S. Follet's Folly very like *S. Mystique*, *S.elegans* which smells of grapefruit not pineapple, a salvia seedling with terracotta bracts which is very long flowering and my diary says masses of other wonders as well. It was just on sundown so it was off to Denise Long at Upper Coomera to stay the night for a 6am start next day! The others kindly left early to set up, leaving me to sleep in and Denise to ferry me onwards.

My diary just couldn't keep up and neither could I so for the people and places I've missed out I apologise. I remember lunch somewhere and my first sight of the eerie 'Bat Flower' and one of Don and my sculptures from the 1980s on a wall. I remember all the kind and interesting people I met but, of course not their names, and as for the salvias they are overwhelming and I haven't even mentioned the Barb's garden. That deserves an article all to itself.

Sheryl and Flip Jenyns' garden at Rathdowney near the NSW border is where I spoke, to my surprise, and this is described by Lorraine Roberts. Standing, rather dazed, on a green, green lawn in that superb garden and looking at lovely people in that magical setting was an experience I will always treasure.

Trudi Fry

I will write more about my SEQLD trip including the 'Round Table' salvia orgy next time.

Salvia Fanatics and Their Sense of Smell

Collecting the newspaper from the front gate should be a simple affair. Admittedly our front gate is a little further from our home than average since we live on a one acre block but nonetheless I find it only takes 2 or 3 minutes to collect our paper. After returning I like to sit at the kitchen table and peruse the paper at leisure over breakfast.

Sometimes my partner sets out to collect the paper. All goes well initially. She gets to the front gate, picks up the paper and sets off to return to the house. The return journey however is invariably very protracted as Pat cannot get back to the house without checking a few things. She begins at the glasshouse – have any new seedlings emerged overnight? – is the temperature OK? – is there any evidence of mites or white-fly? – etc. After emerging from her glass parlour Pat meanders along the pathways on the other side of the driveway causing her person and clothing to come in contact with the salvias that line the pathway, some with hairy blue foliage, others bright shiny green. Inevitably, she sees something that requires attention such as some gastropods that haven't returned home before the morning inspection. She puts the newspaper down while she deals with the problem whereupon she soon finds other matters to divert her from her mission to bring the newspaper indoors. Before long she moves on to the nursery to inspect the stock located there. By this time about 30 minutes has elapsed since she set out to get the paper. Naturally I get tired of waiting so I set off to try and locate the paper so that I can read it over breakfast. When Pat sees me coming she announces that she has already collected the paper and that she has “put it down somewhere”. Finding the paper amongst the salvias, however, can consume much more time than walking to the front gate. We eventually locate it and I make my way inside to have breakfast. Pat usually completes what she was doing and appears in the kitchen a few minutes later. Her arrival is heralded by that distinctive salvia aroma which pervades her person and clothing as a result of dallying amongst the salvias. The aroma immediately pervades the kitchen. It is unmistakable.

Peoples' reactions to the aroma of salvias differ greatly. Descriptions I have heard range from “ethereal extravagance”, “flighty fragrance” and “beautiful bouquet” to “pungent pong” and “smell of cats piss”. Well people are entitled to their opinions. Despite these differences in appreciation of salvia aromas most people find that some species have more pleasant aromas than others. Indeed, it is sometimes possible to identify particular salvias by their aroma. Here it is informative to draw an analogy with garlic (*Allium sativum*) and onion (*Allium cepa*). They both belong to the same genus (*Allium* in this case) yet we are all familiar with the similar but distinctively different aromas and properties of these two closely related species. The onion when cut or crushed makes our eyes water in a way that garlic does not and garlic has a more penetrating odour. These differences are attributable to the presence of different but very similar chemical compounds in each of the two species (see footnote if you would like specific details) which are not found in most plants. By the way this example shows how useful chemistry can be in aiding plant identification and in understanding the culinary characteristics of plants.

The matter of fragrance in salvia species is much more complex than in alliums. Whereas garlic and onion each have a distinctively different but closely related flavour compound which is formed only when the cells are ruptured, the aroma of a salvia (of which there are about 900 species) is given by a blend of a large number of chemically related compounds called terpenoids most of which are quite volatile. Some salvias have a very strong and characteristic aroma. One of the most fragrant is *S. clevelandii* which pervades our garden for months and visitors often ask the source of this bouquet. Other salvias have a less subtle aroma (eg *S. sclarea*). Indeed, some salvia fanatics can identify certain salvias by their aroma but some salvias exhibit little odour. It seems that a complete analysis of the occurrence of each of the various terpenoids in each of the 900 salvias is not available but some salvias of western North America (Mexico, California, etc), the so called Audibertia group of salvias, have been investigated. These show that each of the Audibertia salvias contain similar mixtures of terpenoids but that the relative amounts of each of the terpenoids in the mixture between individuals of a specific species can vary more than between species within the Audibertia group. Thus, in this instance, chemistry cannot help us identify or distinguish individual species of the new world group from each other. However, the bigger and perhaps more important question of whether other groups of salvias have different, perhaps distinctive, cocktails of terpenoids to the Audibertia group and to each other awaits an answer. If they should be found to be distinctive in some way, this would be of great interest to the evolution of the different groups of salvias. Moreover similar information on the cocktails of terpenoids in the various species of closely related genera such as *Perovskia* and *Agastache* could provide some extremely useful information about differences and similarities, and hence phylogeny, of the various genera within the family Lamiaceae.

One last thing. The idea of preparing this article about aromas was triggered by a conversation with a salvia fanatic who told me as I drank a cup of weak black tea (while she drank a cup of strong black coffee) that she hated tea because “tea stinks”.

When I reacted with amazement the fanatic on the other side of the table said “Yes. I can smell your smelly cup of tea from here”. All of which suggests that heavy doses of salvia fragrances destroys the ability to appreciate the aesthetic delights and finer nuances that natural products made by plants other than salvias can bring to our lives.

Footnote: Intact cells of onion (*Allium cepa*) contain the compound *S*-propenylcysteine sulphoxide. When onions are crushed or cut with a knife, the membrane surrounding the compartment in which this compound is located is ruptured, causing the compound to come in contact with an enzyme from a different compartment of the cell. The enzyme reacts with *S*-propenylcysteine sulphoxide to produce propenylsulphenic acid which is the highly volatile lachrymatory factor that makes our eyes water. Garlic (*Allium sativum*) on the other hand contains *S*-allylcysteine sulphoxide, which differs from the compound in onion only by the position of a double bond. When garlic is crushed it gives rise to allylsulphenic acid which, does not cause eye watering and has a much more penetrating odour than its counterpart from onion. John Anderson

Salvia africana lutea

I expect I like *Salvia africana lutea* so much because I got off to such a bad start with it. The Victorian Salvia Study Group was very new when I told a meeting that it had never flowered for me, therefore was a very disappointing plant. The others were all boasting about their masses of unusual flowers. When I got home I found mine was flowering away neglected and hidden by weeds. I was too mortified to confess. This meant that the generous VSSG friends all struck cutting of their treasures for me. Eventually I did confess. Nowadays there is sure to be a *S. africana lutea* flowering somewhere in this wilderness I call a garden all through the year.

Now I truly don't know how many forms I have. It includes self-seeded plants. There are pale soft tan ones with a lime green calyx and very yellow buds, fiery bright ones with densely packed pointy leaves and the one I think was the original, with very dark brown flowers and black calyx. A special joy is 'Silver', a neat ladylike plant who maintains an elegant shape as though she was constantly clipped. The leaves are dense and very silver, the flowers are paler than usual with a pale calyx though not quite green. Ornamental enough to grow for foliage alone.

They are frost and drought hardy and deserve more attention. At the Ballarat Floral Art Group they were quite a success. Plant one with a red salvia for attention of quite the wrong kind! Red or pink just doesn't 'go'. *Euphorbia wulfenii* matches the lime bracts and *aeonium schwartzkoff* the dark ones. I resolve to take cuttings of them all, label accurately and plant them in a bed where they can be 'looked' over.

Trudi Fry

WORKS IN PROGRESS

NOBELIUS DISPLAY GARDEN

Planting has been started with lot of work having been put in by various members, spraying and clearing the plot before this could happen.

Working bees are going to take place on Wednesday, Friday and Sundays and all those involved will be notified.

The first planting was with large red and blue salvias. Lyndi Garnett has done a planting plan for the smaller plants and will work with Pat Anderson to choose appropriate plants.

A huge numbers of salvias are needed for mass plantings. We are not just putting in 1 or 2 plants of each but groups of 4,6,12,20 . Please ring Lyndi ph. 9803 4534 for either pick up or delivery of plants if you are able to contribute or wish to take part in this exciting project.

HAMPTON

Lyndi Garnett and Jillian have spent time at Hampton pruning and putting down manure and mulch. There is more of this to be done as well as much planting as there were losses over last summer. The watering system which has not been operating successfully requires some adjustment.

There was an interesting article and photo about Mark Dymiotis's Hampton garden in the Epicure section of The Age on Tuesday 25th September. It was mainly about the herbs and fruit trees in the garden but the photo showed a variety of salvias.

The garden will be open 2nd and 3rd February 2008 10am – 4.30pm. 21 Barnett St, Hampton. Melways: 76:K5. Entry fee: \$5.

THE SALVIA MANUAL

BY MEG BENTLEY

Contents :

- **List of Named Salvias and Cultivars**
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VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

(Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.)



**Associated with the Ornamental Plant
Conservation Association of Australia**

**The group holds 2 Salvia Collections within the
Herb Society**

- Hampton
- Nobelius Park at Emerald

Purpose

- **To grow and collect Salvias for the purpose of study, research
and for enjoyment**

Aims

- **To encourage members to grow & study Salvias in their own gardens**
- **To assist with the planting & maintenance of the registered collections**
- **To exchange & gather cuttings, seed & information with members of
similar groups in Australia**
- **To collect seed & propagate plants for sale to the public**
- **To correctly name existing & new Salvias appearing in nurseries**

Meetings

- **Meetings are held regularly, usually every other month**
 - **Venues are notified by a Calendar of events in the Salvia News**
- To obtain plants, please contact the following members**

Contact :

Lyndi Garnett Ph 9803 4534
Email : highcon@hotmail.net.au
Ray Boatman Ph 9754 4889
Jillian Barkell Ph 9756 6361
Trudi Fry (Editor) Ph 9754 4041

SalviaNews

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