

SALVIA NEWS

AUTUMN

2009

NO36



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

SALVIA STUDY GROUP

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THE NOBELIUS HERITAGE PARK SALVIA COLLECTION IS CARED FOR BY THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN FRIENDS GROUP

Lyndi Garnett, Bevan Whelan, Jillian Barkell, Marilyn Johnson, Neil and Margaret Keir, Pat and John Thomson, Geoff and Jennifer Ellis, Karen Meeuwissen, Meg Bentley, Pat Anderson, Christine McDermott..
If your name isn't here please let Lyndi know.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SALVIA STUDY GROUP IS TO GROW AND COLLECT SALVIAS FOR STUDY AND RESEARCH

We study the growth of salvias in gardens enabling us to identify, name and propagate existing and new salvias. Together with members and similar study groups throughout Australia, we exchange information, seeds and cuttings. The gardens of the registered GPA Collections in Hampton & Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald are planted and maintained by us. Salvia plants are collected and propagated for private and registered collections and are also sold at various Garden Shows throughout Melbourne and Victoria.

DETAILS OF VENUES AND DATES OF 'GARDEN SHOWS' AND 'GATHERINGS' ARE PUBLISHED IN SALVIA NEWS AND ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.SALVIAS.ORG.AU



SalviaNews

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

AUTUMN 2009

NUMBER 36

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Since the fires Jillian and I have visited Echuca and Rutherglen, to speak about salvias and to sell plants. Each time we began our journey by driving along the Melba Highway to Yea. The fire blackened trees on both sides of the road and up the slopes were grim scary evidence of the horror past. On March 11th there was no green we could see but on the trip to Rutherglen on April 27th there were brave green sprouts from the blackened tree bark evidence of the amazing resilience of nature. Humans have had such a hard time and we must all try to help. These talks give us an opportunity to meet such interesting people and gain knowledge of differing conditions. After Rutherglen we visited The Benalla Gardens and reviewed the salvias. I'll write about them later. Then last week it was Caulfield and more welcoming people. And now it is disastrous floods in S.E.Q. and Northern N.S.W. Barb Wickes tells of her drama, brooming water out the bathroom plughole. Others have had floods to compete with Noah's and I am visiting in June. No rain falls where I am. Please send plenty of Salvia News to Irene by July 8th.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009

JUNE 21st SUNDAY

Meg's Shed at 11 am
Meg Bentley's, 3 Fords Road, Gruyere
Tel: 5964-9372. Mel: 285-E3
Learn about propagating including division.
Bring chair and lunch to share.
Please phone Meg if you intend to come to this interesting day.

JULY 19th SUNDAY

Nobelius Garden Day at 11am
Crichton Rd. Emerald. (below the packing shed)
Mel: 127-G4
Learn as you work and take home cuttings.
Bring garden implements, lunch to share and chair
Come equipped for the weather: sun hats or macs
Please phone Lyndi: 9803 4534 if you intend to participate on the day.

- AUGUST 15TH SATURDAY Bevan & Lyn Whelan's Survival Garden**
 at 11am. 313 Coolart Road, Somerville
 Tel: 5977 8104. Mel: 107-A10
 Visit this thought-provoking garden which survives on rain water. Bring chair and lunch to share.
 Please phone Bevan or Lyn if you intend to come.
- AUGUST 18th TUESDAY Box Hill Horticultural Society** at 10am
 Whitehorse Room (on right of building) Box Hill Town Hall, Whitehorse Road, Box Hill. Mel: 47-E8
 Trudi will be guest speaker and there will be salvia plants for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified
- AUGUST 29th SATURDAY PAKENHAM GARDEN CLUB EXPO** 9am to 2pm
 Pakenham Racecourse, Pakenham. Mel: 316-C2
 We will be selling salvias. There will also be other interesting and unusual plants for sale.
- SEPTEMBER 8th TUESDAY Bacchus Marsh & District Gardening Club** at 7.30pm
 'The Laurels' (Adult Education Centre) 229 Main Street Bacchus Marsh. Mel: 333-F6
 Trudi will be talking and there will be salvias for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.
- SEPTEMBER 20TH SUNDAY Nobelius Garden Day** at 11am
 Crichton Rd. Emerald. (below the packing shed)
 Mel: 127-G4
 Learn as you work and take home cuttings.
 Bring garden implements, lunch to share and chair
 Come equipped for the weather: sun hats or macs
 Please phone Lyndi: 9803 4534 if you intend to participate on the day.
- SEPTEMBER 21ST MONDAY U3A Knox Home Garden Club** at 8pm
 Park Hill Campus , Park Boulevard.
 Ferntree Gully. Mel: 64-F11
 Ray Boatman will be guest speaker. There will be salvias for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.
- SEPTEMBER 22nd TUESDAY Ivanhoe Garden Club** at 8pm
 Bellfield Community Centre
 North-east corner of the intersection
 Oriel Road and Banksia Street, West Ivanhoe
 Mel: 31-E4.
 Trudi will be speaking. There will be salvias for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.
- OCTOBER 2nd FRIDAY Growville Growers** at 2pm
 Rowville Library
 Stud Park Shopping Centre, Rowville, Mel: 81-J1
 Ray Boatman will be speaking and there will be salvias for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.

OCTOBER 8th THURSDAY Vermont Garden Club at 8pm
The City of Whitehorse Horticultural Centre
82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill. Mel: 62-F4
Trudi will be guest speaker and there will be
Salvias for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.

OCTOBER 10th and 11th SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
Baw Baw (Warragul) Garden Expo
Lardner Park, Warragul. Mel: 612-U8
We will be selling salvias and there will
be other interesting plants for sale.
Plenty of parking available.

OCTOBER 21st WEDNESDAY Mt Eliza Morning Garden Club at 9.30am
Mt Eliza Community Centre
Canadian Bay Road, Mt Eliza. Mel: 105-F1
Wendy Smith will be speaking. Salvias will be
for sale. Bring your salvias to be identified.

OCTOBER 24th SATURDAY Upwey's Annual Garden Show at 9am
Upwey Community Hall
Burwood H'way, Upwey. Mel: 75-B10
Stalls with plants for sale including salvias.

NOVEMBER 7th & 8th SATURDAY & SUNDAY
Rose Show. Sat: 1pm -5.30pm. Sun: 10am – 4.30pm
Mt Waverley Community Centre
Millers Road, Mt Waverley. Mel: 62-2E
We will be selling salvias surrounded by beautiful
rose displays.

NOVEMBER 15th SUNDAY Official Opening Salvia Display Garden at
Nobelius Heritage Park 11am to 4pm
Crichton Rd. Emerald. (below the packing shed)
Mel: 127-G4
Come and join us on this very special day.
Refreshments provided.
Please phone Lyndi: 9803 4534 or email:
highcon@hotmail.com.au if you are attending

DECEMBER 6th SUNDAY Christmas Party venue to be advised.

NOBELIUS SAGA CONTINUED

2009 arrived with very little happening due to the horrible hot weather. We weren't going to ask anyone to try and work in that heat. When we did venture up to inspect the condition of the garden, we were pleasantly surprised at how well the plants had stood up to all that hot, dry weather and had come through with flying colours, especially as no extra water had been applied. We didn't lose any plants at all, thanks to a wonderful location, the soil, the microclimate, protection from the tall trees and of course the preparation when planting. Although most of the leaves had dropped from the big leaved salvias, leaving only sticks, they were not dead, these were pruned down to a good bud, or left

if they were showing signs of coming into flower, all unsightly, fallen stems were pruned. Many of the *salvia greggiis* and *microphyllas* were still in full bloom, the hot weather hadn't fazed them at all.

All the beds are being systematically pruned now it's autumn, March/April/May 09, all flowers being removed, the smaller salvias being pruned down to a good leafy bud, to encourage compact growth before the cold weather sets in. The larger salvias are being pruned for shape and dead wood is being removed. Any late flowering salvias are pruned down for a good shape. With the little rain that we have had, it has been amazing how the salvias have sprung back to life again. The big ones are either beginning to flower or are in full bud, many of the smaller salvias that had been pruned at the beginning are flourishing and beginning to flower again. We are continually planting those bare spaces, pruning and mulching, when most of the hard work is completed. The Group plans to hold an open day in November in the Packing shed, when you can view the whole garden. We hope you will join us on that wonderful occasion.

This autumn and winter will be a wonderful sight from Puffing Billy with a riot of colour in our Display Garden.

Lyndi Garnett

A SMALL OBSERVATION

As a past Pheasant Creek (Kinglake) resident I retain a wonderful fraternity of friends in that fire ravaged community. Over the years many plant snippets from my gardens, including of course salvias, have found their way to gardens in Kinglake and have grown into amazingly large and healthy specimens due entirely of course to the wonderful mountain soil and the generous rainfall.

The fire wrought so much devastation yet just weeks after the horrors growth is abundant, road verges are green, bracken abounds, tree fronds arch gracefully and bulbs are emerging everywhere.

In my friend Beryl's garden a huge *Salvia gesneriflora* 'Tequila' seems to me be emulating the recent burning of blackened stumps and flames with its strong black calyxes and the large vibrant red flowers. It is a stunning survivor amongst the rubble.

And whatever the losses I hope that the plant regrowth eases the pain and shock to the residents of the area and if the occasional vibrant salvia display cheers a heart, I'm pleased.

Laurelle Willis

NEWS FROM OTWAY RANGES NURSERY

It is such a blessing to feel moist warm soil again, and be able to pull out weeds, I love autumn most, a healer after the blast of summer, it did get to 45degrees even here, with strong winds. The garden and especially the salvias handled it all remarkably well despite, or because of, never getting supplementary water, though I had to cut short the supply of fresh herbs for a local café.

I have had some success with new varieties from last season, *Salvia lorentzii* [if that is the correct name] was dormant over winter but sent up 80cm spires of soft heart shaped leaves and deep royal blue velvety flowers, in the glass house. (Stop Press!! Have phoned Judi and it is still powering away!) I have taken cuttings. *S. stachyfolia* has just survived and not flowered. *S. subrotunda* failed to re-emerge after winter like most *coccinea* forms here, So called *S.cadmica* flourished, huge spikes of brilliant blue but it became obvious it was really a very strong, paler leaved form of *S. pratensis*, which previously has not done well here. It has set loads of seed. A look at the internet showed even a reputable UK nursery was making the same mistake. Thanks to Meg for I.D information. The little salvia from Sicily I call *S. monte sicula* flourished this year with 4 branches bearing numerous whorls of rosy purple flowers on 40cm stems. It does not set seed and has a very hairy calyx tube, and may need a special pollinator. I only have one plant and must take cuttings next year. Trudi's Snow White set seed and I have several seedlings just about to flower and looking like coming true. I will plant the mother outside soon , together with recently planted *S. Kathe*, and

S.jamensis, whose creamy flowers I love especially next to the large lilac flowers of *S. patens* 'Chilcombe in the stock plants. *S. macrophylla* decided it was happy in three places with its intense deep royal blue flowers now, next to *S. 'Marine Blue'*, which everyone loves. *S. Silke's Dream* is such a bold red it will need a place in the hot colour bed along with *S. involucrata*, 'Mulberry Jam', if only they don't get too big. I may take out *S. 'Blue Bird'* for this reason, it is not only too tall but flops over its neighbours. Further along in the *Salvia* border we have cut *S. corrugata* back from 3m to 1m and it has taken ages to readjust, but it gives breathing space for *S. 'mystique'* who flowers non stop, also much larger than I envisaged, and *S. tubiflora* who is flowering next to *Pelargonium Scarlet Pet* at the front. The *Salvia* border was established about 15 years ago, hiding the shearing shed and is lined on the lower side by towering *S. involucrata*, *S. gesneraeflora* 'Tequila', *S. puberula*, *S. dorisiana*, *S. karvinskii*, *S. elegans* 'Honey Melon', and ending in a newer *S. sprucei* to replace the old one at the top who blocked the path completely and had to be removed. I agree with John Daniels that branches of *S. karvinskii* etc can flower very well when left lying low, better than those one has encouraged to flower at a desired height while others reach for the sky and don't flower much at all. On the top side the mainstays as usual are *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'* and her sister from Tupelo Grove, *S. 'Megans Magic'*, *S. 'Mystique'*, *S. leucantha*, peachy colquounia and tree marigold. My *S. munzii* is past its best and woody, and needs replacing, the larger form of *S. guaranitica* is just getting by, *S. cacaliafolia* also needs replacing, *S. spathacea* rampages between them all when its wet., and forms of *S. mexicana* only look good until the winds come. A group of bright *S. greggis* has done better here than before, but *S. desoleana* just won't perform. Down further *S. 'Hot Lips'* on the other hand is proving very adventurous, lovely next to Bog Sage, white crinum, *S. 'Harmony'* and grassy dianella. *S. repens* is most modest but the toughest of the lot. At the bottom of the garden the *S. forskaohlei* has just been cut to ground level, together with *Geranium Claridge Druce* it has made a bomb proof reliable ground cover under *Rose Duchess de Brabant* for many years. *S. rubiginosa* twined sturdily up the orange verbena with beautiful wine red /blue flowers for months next to ever reliable *S. 'Waverley'* making a good pair. *S. dorisiana* always wilts in the heat and will be cut back hard soon. *S. 'Anthony Parker'* is continuing the show here, so I have planted *S. involucrata* 'Joan' next to him, and a replacement *S. dolomitica*, which is a favourite fragrance. I haven't even mentioned the advances in my *salvia officinalis* collection and will keep that for later. **Judi Forester**

I am a great grand mother to a beautiful Stephanie and now Judi has seedling Snow Whites. I am sure it is most unseemly to brag about this but I can't help it. TRUDI

The Summer That Was

I imagine a number of gardeners have experienced what I have. The summer before last, after heat and drought, I got rid of plants that didn't cope, and thought I then would have a garden that could survive. But the sequence of 40 plus days recently proceeded to show up plants that scorched badly. Who would have foreseen agapanthus reduced to bleached blobs in the garden? But we *salvia* growers seem blessed that this doesn't happen in our favoured genus, though the more vulnerable species just quietly expire when conditions go against them. Digging out plants that scorched too badly, I have replaced them with *salvias*. I know it is possible to trim leaves off badly scorched plants, as I have done for a couple of tree paeonies, but I don't want to repeat the process too often.

All sorts of plants are now promoted as 'drought tolerant', but I think there is a lack of information, and often misinformation, about drought tolerance. A plant might be genuinely drought tolerant if well established, and grown in good loamy soil and in semi-shade. But under other conditions it would need at last some watering to survive a summer like the one just past. Genuinely drought tolerant plants probably come from almost semi-desert places, and therefore continue to not only survive, but even look good in very hot and dry conditions. For me, *Salvia muirii* is a stand out, as the morning after the 46 degree day it was covered in flowers, placing it up there with plumbago and bougainvillea.

The others to still look good were of course the *S. africanas*, *S. lanceolata*, and *S. discolor*. The last two probably continued flowering, though I didn't notice. Other tough plants like the microphylla cultivars, *S. coahuilensis* and S. 'African Skies' etc. temporarily shut up shop during the extreme heat, but came good later. Someone told me they had lost a *S. leucantha*, but a plant I put in for a strictly non-gardening friend never got a drop of water over summer, but is now in flower. There is absolutely nothing like pleasing a non-gardener! They are delighted with everything that does well.

A thing that continues to bother me is not really knowing how effective whatever watering I can do really is. One can know quite well the effectiveness of watering plants in pots. But recently I replaced a small rose plant. I thought I had been watering the area reasonably well, but when digging a hole, was surprised at the dryness of the soil.

The only device I have used is a circle of 75mm wide green plastic edging material, easily cut with old secateurs into lengths, and joined with little nuts and bolts after drilling a couple of holes. Pushing these a bit into the soil around newly set plants, I hope any water applied will soak in around the roots. And I intend to use liquid wetting agents more next summer. Some councils use lengths of black plastic tubing, set when trees are planted. I wonder if any of our members have used a similar material, available in lengths from Bunnings. Having seen moisture probe devices advertised, I am seriously considering getting one of these. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has used one.

So gardening these days is enjoying the periods of kind and pleasant weather, and preparing much more thoroughly for the harsh periods that inevitably follow. I have given up trying to cosset more difficult plants, including some salvias, but was impressed with the large leaf form of *S. guaranitica* at Zöe Monotti's in Geelong, which is supposed not to run, or die down in winter. I have a nice sheltered spot facing north, so of course I would like it to flower all year round! And I am hoping to find just the right place for *S. rubiginosa*, which I have admired at the Keir's, from where my cuttings came. Wishing all you salvia fans out there the luck your hard work deserves.

Geoff Crowhurst, Thornbury

News From Hobart

The three months of summer in Hobart resulted in only eleven days with temperatures warmer than twenty-five degrees. Such benign conditions were interrupted by two episodes of gales. The first, just before Christmas, stripped a lot of leaves and twigs from trees while the second, as well as delivering dust, did more substantial damage to approximately twenty trees at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. The general grumblings about the "lack of summer" gave way to expressions of sympathy for Victorians in February and an appreciation that we were not subject to such extremes, at least this year!

Just a few cool nights by mid-April has suddenly unveiled the beginnings of the fleeting progression of autumnal colours of deciduous trees, a procession as rapid as the cold fronts that roll over Tasmania from the Southern Ocean.

Having flowered sparsely throughout summer, the form of *Salvia mexicana* with yellow-green calyces, has been transformed into a luminous phenomenon, with numerous spikes that predominate over the dark blue corollas both visually and in number. This display of brilliance is enhanced by the declining angle of the sun and the mellowing of the light. *Salvia madrensis* has just produced the first of its yellow inflorescences and corollas that appear atop stems of over two metres.

One feature I am particularly pleased with is the resulting growth from a plant of *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'* that I moved as a root ball of 600mm diameter last August because of insufficient room for its spread. In a protected

position with a north-westerly aspect, it is in full bloom at over a metre and a half in height and two and a half wide.

Another interesting occurrence is some thirty seedlings of *Salvia* 'Indigo Spires' that have grown in situ following mulching of the plants with compost last winter. The parent plants were themselves seedlings grown from seed collected from the original named cultivar in the salvia display. All seedlings appear identical to each other and the original plant.

I would be pleased to receive members' observations related to any of the above.

John Daniels
john-daniels@bigpond.com

Plant of the Month **Salvia 'Snow White'**

Salvia 'Snow White' was found as a seedling in the garden of Trudi Fry. This is a lovely small shrub similar to *S. greggii* 'Alba', but more open, the stems not being as densely clothed as *S. g.* 'Alba'. It grows a little taller, approx 60 cm, where as *S. g.* 'Alba' grows approx 40 – 50 cm.

The main difference is in the leaves. As one of the parents is *S.g.* 'Alba' the other is most likely to be a promiscuous, pertinent *microphylla* gene. The leaves are much longer and broader, the edging crenulate, thus showing all the typical signs of a cross.

The flowers are a pure white, almost with a luminosity about them, and a completely green calyx. It seems to flower continuously the whole year.

During this last hot summer, it certainly proved how hardy it was, only wilting on those 2 horrible hot blustery days. 'Snow White' is an easy plant to grow, it seems to grow quite happily in most soils, in full sun or shade

As the seed has not been tested, I wouldn't think it would come true. The best way of propagation is tip cuttings which take quite easily.

The best position in the garden would be to grow a few of them either in the front of the bed, with something green and large behind, to allow the white flowers to stand out and be seen, or just behind the front border, which should be of a contrasting colour and low, to again show off the white flowers behind.

Lyndi Garnett

ROSES AND SALVIAS AT RENMARK

In the early 1990's I was asked to lecture and demonstrate arranging flowers in the style of the Old Masters at a conference in San Francisco. While there I was taken to see Betsy Clebsch's garden in the hills behind the city. Betsy's collection of salvias was huge and her knowledge awesome, as was her enthusiasm.

I came home and managed to find as many salvias as I could. I did not progress very much until Renmark girl Jillian Barkell – we were at school together – arrived on Boxing Day 2007 with 20 plants of potted salvias. It was 42 °C so I planted them in large pots in semi-shade. All grew well. I took cuttings from them and started to become really keen. Jillian arrived again in 2008 with more plants. This time it was even hotter. All but one survived the day of 48 °C in the first week of February.

As I write this in the middle of May the garden looks great with *Salvia* 'Cost Rica Blue' cascading out of Queen Elizabeth and white spray roses. Huge plants of *S.* 'Anthony Parker' 6 feet high across as a foreground to deep blue *Plumbago* and mauve *Duranta*. This lasts for 3 months or more. *S.* 'Purple Majesty', *S.* 'Black and Blue' and the gaunt *S.* 'Black Knight' contrast well with the roses in the long rose walk where the roses are all over 50 years old and still in good shape.

Some of Jillian's presents that I love are *S. semiatrata* – subtle colour combination. It nearly died in February but has recovered. I also love the rusty red brown *S. confertiflora* combined with the red-brown seed heads of *Sedum spectabilis* 'Brilliant' and *S. oxyphora* with its huge flowers of hot pink with furry calyces.

My best repeat flowerers that must last for 6 months are *S. 'African Skies'*, *S. murii*, *S. 'Hot Lips'*, most of the *S. gregii* cultivars and *S. chamaedryoides*. *S. madrensis* is my favourite. I first saw it in Toowoomba. The plants were 10 feet across and had a hundred heads. It came in so handy for the demonstration I had to do.

From this year's plants from Jillian I like *S. 'Megan's Magic'* – the almost white flowers look great against the steel blue calyces. The foliage of *S. sagitatta*, *S. leucophylla*, *S. canariensis*, *S. tubiflora* and *S. dolomitica* are striking all season and even more so when the plants are in flower.

We do have heavy frost some years and I find that *S. wagneriana*, *S. purpurea*, *S. 'Romantic Rose'*, *S. 'Timboon'* and *S. 'Winter Red'* can be burnt back in late June. I very seldom lose any and I follow Betsy's and Jillian's advice of planting these deep so that the base is below ground level. After -6 °C two years running I did lose the lovely *S. purpurea* until I heaped soil up round the base.

S. 'Josh' has just started to flower. It is a lively orange red. *S. 'Wendy's Wish'* is just coming out and *S. 'Ripe Raspberry'* is a nice plum pink colour and a strong grower.

I can find a salvia in flower all the year thanks to *S. 'Mystique'* growing in a pot in a protected position that starts in autumn and flowers to late spring.

I do enjoy the *Salvia News* from so many different climatic zones and would love to see the Salvia Study Group's collection in the Dandenongs. Keep up the good work.

One last thing. When I was at the Autumn Rose Show I was delighted to see a huge pedestal of roses with huge stems of *Brillantaisia* in full flower as a background. It was stunning. (*Brillantaisia subulgarica*) *I agree, Wish it was a salvia.*

David Ruston

PLEASE REMEMBER SALVIA NEWS DEADLINE JULY 8TH AND SEND TO

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SALVIAS IN THE U.K. 2008

The weather in 2008 was generally very poor. Spring was just about acceptable, but Summer was generally very cool and overcast. However there were no deluges like in 2007. We bought a new barbeque in May, and not once was it warm enough to use it! The first half of October was quite pleasant, and the Autumn-flowering Salvias started to put on a good show. Where I live, we usually experience our first frost at the end of this month. But, in 2008, instead of frost, we had a freak snow-storm in the last week of October. Three inches of snow fell within 2 hours, which settled everywhere. Then it froze. Just about every Salvia in flower was smashed. I was particularly upset that *Salvia madrensis* was destroyed, as it was in its full glory. That's life, I suppose. Best not to mention "global warming." But having just mentioned that, it is now early February, and we have had 8 inches of snow within the last 24 hours. UK at a standstill as is the norm, but my greenhouse heaters have not let me down, and many Salvias are flowering well in there.

Weird and wonderful things have been happening in Australia for the last two years. There are no *Salvias* endemic to Australia....though the weedy *Salvia plebeia* (or *plebeja* as it is sometimes spelt), has been found in the northern areas. Long story attached to this, but, let it be said that there are no *Salvias* that originate from Australasia. There are new hybrids, but, in many cases, the parents are unknown. *Salvia* "Wendy's Wish" is an example. Not yet available in the UK, this seems to be taking Australia by storm, as a wonderful, non-rampant plant, flowering all year-round. It would seem that the enigmatic *Salvia buchananii* might possibly be involved in the parentage, but there are experts who consider *S. buchananii* to be a hybrid, parentage unknown! I desperately hope that this *Salvia* will find its way to Europe before long. Another superb Australian hybrid which has reached our shores is *S. involucrata* 'Joan', This is proving to be very hardy, and I am delighted that cuttings I gave to RHS Wisley are in abundance in the borders there.

Robin Middleton.....Please Robin send us some more news on your return. **Trudi**

MT WAVERLEY NEWS

What a difference a couple of weeks make. We were feeling quite depressed with the drying garden a few weeks ago and then some rain came. Within two weeks plants were shooting and some which we thought had died reappeared. Some new plants were waiting to be planted so this was our chance while the ground was still warm, and some spaces have now been filled or should I say overfilled as that is what we tend to do in our small garden.

Last year we took cuttings of *Salvia lavanduloides* when that plant became too woody, and they have grown well. They are now planted out in a group and after this recent rain can almost be seen growing. I have been pinching out new growth and we have just returned after a week away to find that all the new tips already have flower buds. These plants have replaced *S. corrugata* which over the years has performed very well, but in dryer times spent a lot of time wilted and spoiling the view of that prominent section of the garden.

In another area a tree correa damaged by borer was removed and replaced with *S. indigo Spires*, *S. 'Megan's Magic'* and *S. dorisiana* all planted in front of two well established *S. involucrata* plants and where they will be sheltered from winds and the hot westerley sun. *S. madrensis*, from Maureen Cox's garden (thank you Maureen) has thrived and has survived the low water levels, clumped up and has its long flowers ready to open. This too, has protection and should avoid the winds that knocked over our earlier attempt at growing this plant.

On our journey last week we realised how *Salvias* are becoming better known and growing in many fine gardens. Two gardens we visited in Renmark made good use of them, one where most of the plants were in containers and very beautifully grown, and the other successfully integrated in a mixed garden.

In the Adelaide Botanic Gardens there is a drought tolerant "Mediterranean garden" where *Salvias* play an important part. A handsome patch of *S. apiana* stood out but much larger areas of *S. apiana x chilensis* (from Chile) were used extending to a long hedge. The leaves of this cross were spearhead shaped but a dull dark green and rough texture and looking quite drab. *S. 'Anthony Parker'* was in most if not all the gardens we visited, and in a ten acre garden in the Coonawarra region of a heritage rose enthusiast this and many other varieties showed just how well they compliment rose gardens.

We arrived home after dark and it was very cold looking at the garden by torchlight anxious to see how the forty millilitres of rain, which had fallen after we had left, had benefitted our plants.

Neil Keir

NEWS FROM SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Whilst our calendars up here are telling us mid-autumn, it's still so like summer, so hot and humid, with only the rare odd dry week coming as pleasant respite. The rains have been incessant and in some areas, very destructive. The luckier gardeners have lush verdant growth and those less lucky have much work ahead of them.

Our garden, which is fortunately on a hillside, has not suffered too badly from water damage, but some of the gustier winds have taken a toll on the more brittle plants, and those more exposed. Larger salvias have fared the worst, with *S. madrensis* snapped like twig at the base. Its butterfly flowers were just at their peak, so at least I didn't miss flowering altogether. *S. 'Romantic Rose'* suffered the same fate, but it had only the beginnings of bud, so another year to wait now. My salvias haven't been in long, at the most – 2 years, but most much less than that, so I'd like to think that with more mature plants and stronger root systems, they'd hold up better than that.

Smaller salvias and obviously those better protected from wind have been gorgeous though. *S. azurea* has shone light blue for 2 months easily, and still looks good. I have it flopping over a sleeper wall, and it looks just right. Not far from it, *S. greggii* 'alba' and *S. discolor* mingle in flower together. It's a soft fusion that works not because I'm any kind of 'arty gardener', but rather, a naughty one, who plants everything far too close together.

The microphyllas I have are all doing well. *S. 'Heatwave 'Glitter'* is a nice plant, *S. 'Desert Sunset'* a favorite in the apricot tones. *S. Heatwave 'Blaze'* was one of my first of the smaller ones, and I wouldn't like to be without it – it flowers year-round.

S. buchananii – we all seem to say the same thing up here – it nearly dies, we stoically pop in a cutting, then start again – all for very few flowers. I feel committed to the poor little thing!

S. 'Wendy's Wish' is doing beautifully for me, as it seems to for most of us here who've tried it. It's one of the lovelies that you never know when to prune, they look good for so long. *S. 'Waverley'* comes into flower within weeks of pruning almost to the ground and I would have to call it my favourite for year-round performance. It seems to blend with so many other plants, so comfortably. I'm keen to see how *S. 'Megan's Magic'* develops, as its parent (?) *S. 'Anthony Parker'* is beautiful now. Another long-flowerer that fits in anywhere.

S. mexicana 'Lime calyx' is looking a little wind-blown now, but it has flowered since January, even in quite shaded conditions. Next to it is a limey-yellow coleus – lovely! One salvia that has coped amazingly well with driving wind (and complete neglect I confess) is *S. leucantha* 'Midnight'. It was popped in as a straggly cutting and promptly forgotten about, and now it's a 1m x 1m blob of deep purple – very enduring – I'll be planting more of those!

One area that our extreme weather here has impacted on, is cuttings. The constant wetness has caused many of my cuttings to damp-off, especially the grey leafed ones, such as *S. leucantha* varieties. Enthusiasm for these most adaptable of plants never wanes though, so there will always be more cuttings. I'm finding quite a few salvias (certainly more than I first thought) can cope with a fair amount of shade. Of course I'd prefer them all to be in the sun, but here it's a balance between protection from the winds, and the needs of the plants, and sometimes a shady nook is the best option. Microphyllas don't flower as well in the shade, but they do flower. The involucrata group seem good under trees, and the honey-eaters appreciate the extra protection. *S. karwinskii* 'Tall Grey' is in shade and grows sturdily, with somewhat less flowers, but it has beauty in its strong grey foliage too, so I think it's worth the compromise.

In the meantime, my fondness for salvias has me currently pulling out other plants in an attempt to make room for more of these most adaptable plants. Our Salvia Group up here is a wonderful group of generous and clever gardeners, so inspiration is never far away.

Adrienne Starkey
Ormeau (Southside of Brisbane)
The Perennial Poppies Group Inc

Note from Barb Wickes: *Wendy's Wish* is a superb plant that thrives in all areas up here – mine has never stopped flowering since it was planted in April last year. I have found that it thrives in full sun and never drops

its head in extreme heat but others have found it needs a bit of semi-shade and it wilts quickly in full sun. One garden in particular has very sandy soil so this may be the reason.

NOTES FROM GRUYERE

The past summer has been a terrible one for many people and their gardens too! Fortunately autumn brought some relief and with the cooler weather plus some rain the plants have put on a spurt of new growth. Some salvias are starting to flower and will give a bit of colour in the garden for the propagating day here in June (Sunday 21st).

Salvia ‘Phyllis Fancy’, S. ‘Anthony Parker’, *S. leucantha* and S. ‘Megans Magic’ are all looking particularly good at the moment, they are a great source of nectar for all the honey eaters.

At the top of the garden, *salvia africana caerulea* has had a massive prune and clean out along with *S. lanceolata* and *S. aurita var galpini*. It has now opened an area where I can either plant more salvias or better still, plant a few more roses. This area has also been a delight with golden flowering daylilies growing around Salvia ‘Anthony Parker’ and the gold and royal blue looks fantastic especially with autumn foliage of the Golden Ash nearby. *Salvia semiatrata* has never looked better in my garden at almost 5ft (1.5m).

Garry and I recently traveled to Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens where we saw a magnificent display of S. ‘Phyllis Fancy’ in full flower, growing in two very large containers and set against a wall painted deep lavender which brought out the colour of S. ‘Phyllis Fancy’. Quite an interesting feature and introduction to other salvias growing in the gardens. There was a great display of *S. miniata* growing in full sun (which I cannot do here in Gruyere) and *S. cacaliaefolia* also in full bloom. *Salvia leucantha* looked good with bright purple and pink dahlias and a large display of Bog Sage – *S. uliginosa*. At the front entrance to the gardens there was a great display of red flowering *S. splendens*, performing very well in that cool climate garden.

JUNE 21st SUNDAY at Meg’s Shed at 11 am 3 Fords Road, Gruyere Tel: 5964-9372. Mel: 285-E3

Everyone is most welcome and as always, we bring lunch to share (tea and coffee will be provided). You may need to bring a seat, especially if we have a good turnout of interested folk.

We will have a demonstration of salvias for division, cuttings and layering and seed. There will be ‘Information Notes’ to take away with you and hopefully it won’t be too cold in the ‘Shed’, but we will all have good fun just the same.



Learn about propagating including division and see the amazing ADVENTUROUS ADVENTITIOUS ROOTS

NOTE: I know some of our plants go to God – or head that way before the weather changes but I do have to make reference to the photo in the last issue of Salvia News (no: 35), regarding the article on Adventitious Roots with the photo showing roots heading upwards instead of down into the ground. (Sorry about that Meg.)

Also known as prop roots=adventitious roots arise from lower nodes and provide support to a stem. Root development is promoted by auxin naturally present in cuttings [auxin: a class of substances in minute amounts which regulate the growth of plants and root formation].

Meg Bentley

BENALLA SALVIA GARDEN

In late April it was very pleasing to see how well the salvias have grown during this tough weather. I will list them as we saw them hoping someone from the area will write a report for next Issue.

Salvia canariensis 14 plants, *S. 'Christine Yeo'*, *S. 'Purple Majesty'*, *S. neurepia*, *S. lanceolata*, *S. spathacea* 3 plants, *S. coccinea*, *S. darcii* (many, note goes down in winter) *S. namaensis*, *S. africana lutea* ,3 plants, *S. cohuiensis*, *S. somalensis* 3 plants, *S. guarantica 'Argentine Skies'*, *S. chamydryoides* 2 plants, *S. 'Black Knight'*, *S. leucophylla* 4 plants, *S. involucrata 'Bethellii'*, *S. involucrata 'Joan'*, *S. 'Romantic Rose'* 4 plants, *S. 'Anthony Parker'* *S. agnes*, *S. disermis* 3 plants, *S. gesneriiflora 'Tequila'* 4 plants, *S. 'Costa Rica Blue'*, *S. uliginosa*, *S. iodantha*, *S. 'Hot Lips'*, *S. aetheopsis*. Plus many *greggii* and *microphylla*.

'A LITTLE WILD IN SPOTS'

A COLLECTORS GARDEN

I have been gardening for a long time now, and I sometimes wonder what it is that influences us to become the kind of gardeners we are.

I began to garden as soon as I married and had an empty piece of land around our brand new house. I joined the local garden club at Oaks Flats, NSW and how I looked forward to those monthly meetings where treasures could be bought from the cutting table for a few cents and we would listen to talks on different aspects of gardening.

What I really loved the most, were the bus trips where we would visit other gardens and nurseries further afield. Even back then I wanted to grow every appealing plant that I had heard or read about just to see what it was like for myself.

On reflection it's not surprising that I have become something of a collector. Not that my focus is narrow-minded, although I do have a particular love for old roses, but it seems that I go through phases, and so I try and find every available species or variety of my current love.

Over the years I've collected viburnums, dogwoods, maples, buddleias, violets, grasses, salvias and many wonderful old shrub and climbing roses. I also love trees, and if I find one I don't already have then I feel I must find a home for it. It doesn't make any difference whether it is common or rare, deciduous or evergreen. Then there are the shrubs, such a vast range, how could you choose from such an array? And I haven't even touched on bulbs and perennials.

I have a large country garden now in the Yarra Valley area of Victoria, and my plants survive on the rainfall that God chooses to bless them with, so I can indulge in my passion for all these plants.

I find that the real difficulty is in weaving this wonderful tapestry of plant material into an aesthetically pleasing whole. If you read any general book on gardening, it invariably starts with 'First plan your garden', or something similar. Well, this is fine if you have limited space with a boundary, and you know all the plants you want to include at the outset, but if you're like me and have no idea at the beginning how far you will eventually spread, and you keep coming across plants that you can't live without, then it's not easy.

I'm now at a point where I've almost filled the available space, and I need to assess the garden as a whole, in particular, the oldest areas as I've allowed seedlings to develop that detract from the original planting. This is the hard part of being a collector/gardener, as the temptation to just let plants grow to see what the flowers are like has been too great to resist.

Removing plants that are healthy and strong is not an easy task, but one that I must make myself do if I'm not going to end up with a jungle. I've already begun removing many seedling roses that have beautiful flowers but desired to take over everything nearby. I've also many seedling buddleias that are lovely, but cutting them back only makes them grow stronger. Maintenance often comes down to making choices as to what doesn't happen this year, but my reasoning tells me that as the garden matures it will be easier to manage. Whether this is true or not only time will tell.

Years ago I read 'A Gardeners Log' by Edna Walling, and she wrote 'A garden should, I always feel, be just a little too big to keep the whole cultivated, then it has a chance to go wild in spots, and make some pictures for you'. This is what I live for.

By Karen Meeuwissen

Published in the Autumn 2009 issue of 'The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc' magazine – 'Our Gardens'.

My relationship with salvias

In the beginning of my gardening life I had always grown the few salvias that were available and when I came to Victoria I think I had about twelve. It was few years later that I came across new species, many in Tasmania, from where I would bring a suitcase of plants home each time I visited.

Then there were the Ferny Creek salvia sales where there was a great variety of new salvias available and I found that these plants were extremely addictive. I recall that after making an appearance at yet another Victorian Salvia Study Group plant sale that Lyndi called me a "salvia groupie". And she was right!

As I have admitted to being something of a collector I felt I had to have them all. Well I don't actually but I do have quite a lot and I'm really enjoying getting to know this wonderful group of plants.

Plant habits, likes and dislikes, can take time to learn and of course you can read plant descriptions, but when you have them growing in the garden you find the places that suit them best. By nature and necessity (not enough time) I am not much of a pruner but I've found that many salvias respond to a light clipping-over with hedge trimmers. This is quick and easy and usually results in a dome shaped bush which then flowers all over. *Salvia* "Anthony Parker" is a particular favourite treated this way as the foliage is beautiful even without a single flower. Needless to say the flowering is spectacular.

I love the fact that there are salvias for all seasons and with so many different flowers to be had. Just now, as I write in early May, the rich tapestry of salvia flowers looks spectacular amongst the reds, gold and russet tone of deciduous trees.

It is hard to choose favourite salvias but I will name a few that I find easy and rewarding. *Salvia semiatrata* grows into a lovely shrub and is so delicate and airy in appearance. The dainty sprays of blue and purple flowers appear as a warm haze and goes with almost anything but is very good near red or crimson roses. Another salvia that seems to flower forever and fits easily into garden borders is *Salvia* "Mystique". It is best to avoid it with neighbours in the bluey pink colour tones as it clashes in a not too pleasing way as I found out when it ended up next to a *Cistus*. It is a very accommodating plant and I'm sure it would make a good small hedge if planted reasonably close together. I do love *S. corrugata* and I've let one of mine just grow. It makes a great screening plant and is quite happy with a rambling rose using it as a support. (Quite a few plants support roses in my garden). I love *S. dorisiana* for the smell of its foliage and I have this below where a small tank overflows. It is also sheltered from the frost so it makes a rather large thicket which I've allowed to grow right out to the front of the garden bed. I can get a really good smell when I go past on the mower.

I don't smell many of my salvias though I should because I'm sure its a great help in identification and I really want to learn them all by name without having to look at the label. I'm sure a better memory would help but I

guess I'm not the only one who looks at a plant you should know; but its name remains in the back of your mind – just out of reach.

I've probably got too much garden and so I'll never be able to give my plants the attention they deserve, but, nonetheless I find them very rewarding to grow – just as they do – and for this I'm extremely grateful.

Karen Meeuwissen

Geelong Botanic Gardens and the Salvia Curator

On Anzac Day I visited the Geelong Botanic Gardens (GBG) to look at the salvias and to write a story on them. I noticed the main pathways in the gardens run on an east-west axis. The first entry opens up to the 21st Century Garden which is an extension built at the beginning of this century. After passing through this extension we then enter through the original iron gates to the earlier GBG

Just inside on our left is a large observatory building where a salvia bed has been built against its western wall. In the centre of this bed was a large unlabelled salvia bush which I took to be common sage (*Salvia officinalis*). Belonging to this salvia were a number of its cultivars arranged around the bed. They were *S. officinalis* cultivars 'Icterina', 'Grandiflora', 'Berggarten', 'Tricolor', and 'Purpurescens'. Also there was *S. dolicantha* which had one flower remaining, largely tubular with a deeply violet colour and *S. algeriensis* with its pale violet flowers, hooked upper lip and lower lip cupped and yellowish. Also *S. cadmica* with its purplish blue flowers. It had interesting calices; their top halves were white with the bottom halves brown. There were other salvias in that bed too.

Now moving along the main path there were initially plantings each side of the path of *S. coccinea* "Lady in Red" with these interspersed by a cultivar of *S. leucantha*. Moving further on I reached the main salvia beds and commenced looking at those on the northern side of the main path.

Outstanding by its huge size, about 3 metres high, was *Salvia* "Costa Rica Blue" and which is so outstanding with its deep blue flowers. *S. 'Desley'* was lower at 2 metres and was brilliant with its tubular, purplish red flowers and their blackish calices. At a similar height was *S. elegans*, well known to us as Pineapple Sage and outstanding with its red flowers. *S. sprucei*, though not in flower at this time of year, was very noticeable. Betsy Clebsch in her book says "the upper surface of its leaves are green with a yellow undertones". *S. splendens* 'Van Houttei' at 1.5 metres had eye-catching tubular, deep red flowers contrasting with their brownish red calices. *Salvia* 'Silke's Dream' was aptly named with its reddish pink flowers whose top lips were hooked and the bottom lips widely splayed. So many salvias along this northern side were outstanding.

Directly opposite these on the southern side of the path were wonderful salvias with only a few to be mentioned. *S. discolor* was here with a height perhaps 2.5 metres. It is indigenous to Peru and what a gem it is. Betsy Clebsch knows how to describe it in her book. She states "Exceedingly dark purple flowers saturated with colour, held in a beautiful pistachio green and with a 2 lipped calyx. The term discolor applies to the leaf which is white on one side and green on the other. This term also applies to the flower which is purple whilst the calyx is a pale green."

S. gesneriiflora "Tequila" was huge, over 3 metres high. Its long tubular red flowers are pitched against the blackish calices. *S. clevelandii* surprised me by covering a circular area of one metre. *Salvia* Study Group (SSG) members have spent many years trying to keep this one available to anyone. *S. rhyacophila* seemed to possess the tiniest deep blue flowers with their white throats peeping out. Des Lawrence called this plant a chia, which shows it is one of several salvias in use as a food product.

Of the heaps of salvias available, I'll quote one more. *S. desoleana* with its huge heart shaped leaves attracted my attention. Its flowers possessed a hooked white upper lip, with the lower lip splayed and yellowish. Its label indicated it was indigenous to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia.

The final salvia bed I looked at was a huge circular one located at the western end of the main path. The latter then diverged around this bed to continue. The bed contained 3 huge cultivars of *S. mexicana*. I believe they were 'Lolly', 'Limelight' and 'Snowflake'. The remainder of this bed contained mostly various cultivars of *S. microphylla*.

With GBG containing about 140 to 150 species and cultivars, I consider it to have the largest quantity of these plants amongst the publicly owned gardens in Australia. The GBG staff member Des Lawrence has been almost totally responsible for building, planning and maintaining them since their inception, perhaps 7 years ago.

At the time of writing, Des has just returned home from hospital after experiencing a triple bypass operation for his heart. I wish him well for his continuing future. He has maintained a close liaison with SSG in the Melbourne region. He has been wonderful to me by frequently taking me to the meetings of the SSG in the Melbourne region. This article is just a small tribute to him for his dedication to the world of salvias. It is a privilege to me to know him.

Bill Whitehead

Some More Name Changes 2008/09

This time last year I reported some name changes that I had received via email from Robin Middleton in England. Already there has been a re-think of 2 of these. Following the publication of Christian Froissart's new book, "La Connaissance des Sauges", there are also some further changes to report. Christian is one of the foremost world specialists on the genus *Salvia*, and he has determined his name corrections after scrutinising herbarium specimens and original descriptions.

Here then is a list of changes and updates. For those that want to know the rationale for these changes, the details appear below the list.

S. praeclara is now *S. exserta*

S. gilliesii is now *S. cuspidata* subsp. *gilliesii*

S. Chiapas species is now *S. univerticillata*

S. cruickshanksii (what we called 'Kathe' previously) is now *S. flocculosa*

S. melissodora is still *S. melissodora* (not *S. keerlii* as reported last year)

S. meyeri is still *S. meyeri* at this stage (not *S. rhinosina* as reported last year)

S. africana caerulea should just be called *S. africana*

S. africana lutea should be called *S. aurea*

S. fallax is now *S. roscida*

S. oresbia should be called *S. darcyi*

S. 'Michoacan' is now *S. clinopodioides*

S. 'Red Dragon' is probably *S. cardinalis*, although this in turn may be a form of *S. fulgens*

S. 'Lassie' is now *S. keerlii*

S. africana caerulea

Christian Froissart explains that Linnaeus used this specific epithet in his first edition of Species Plantarum, but in his second edition, he had changed this to *S. africana*, a name which conforms to the rules for naming that he had prescribed himself. For this reason, the current, contemporary usage should be the latter – ie *S. africana*.

S. africana lutea

This plant was initially named in 1753, but was finally given the name *S. aurea*, in 1762, following the process mentioned above. The name 'aurea' refers to the colour of the flowers when they first emerge.

S. fallax

According to Christian, the correct name for this species, named by Fernald in the early 1900s, is *S. roscida*. And 'fallax' is a mistake. *S. 'roscida'* is also the name which appears on Robin Middleton's website.

S. gilliesii

There is no mention of this name change in Christian's book. So, for now at least, we can retain this name, or go with *S. cuspidate ssp gilliesii*.

S. melissodora

In spite of Christian's confirmation in his book that *S. melissodora* and *S. keerlii* are synonymous, it transpires (see Salvia Association of Australia newsletter for Jan 2009) that at the Cabrillo Summit in August (a few months after Christian's book was released) they were determined to be separate species after all. So *S. melissodora* stays that way.

Furthermore, the plant *S. 'Lassie'*, which has been awaiting a species name, **is in fact *S. keerlii***. *S. lasiantha* is not yet available in Australia as far as we know.

S. oresbia

This one is truly political! Apparently the botanist James Compton was shown this plant on a collection expedition in 1988. He subsequently described it, naming it *S. darcyi* in honour of fellow British botanist William d'Arcy. He evidently ignored the fact that this plant had been known by the name 'oresbia' for some time, according to some, and also by the name '*Schafnerii*' according to others. It appears that '*darcyi*' is the accepted name in the UK (Robin's website, Christine Yeo's book), in France (Christian Froissart's new book) and in the USA (Betsy Clebsch). Sue Templeton has always used this name in Australia too.

S. praeclara

Christian notes that recent research in Bolivia by the German botanist, Petra Wester, has established that *S. exserta* is the correct name for this species. The name well describes the extremely long and exserted stamens.

S. 'Chiapas species'

At last it appears there is a proper name for this one. It is *S. univerticillata*, a name that describes the single verticil (whorl) of flowers. The plant originated in the Chiapas region of Mexico – hence the name that it was temporarily given in Australia. Overseas, it had been sold incorrectly under the name '*pulchella*' but Christian's investigations into herbarium specimens proved this to be wrong. Finally it transpired that this plant had been named *S. univerticillata* by Ramamoorthy in 2007, but that his description had not been published.

S. 'Kathe'/S. cruikshanksii

Christian's description of *S. cruikshanksii* (p. 106) is of a plant that forms a loose cushion of about 25cm high and 30cm wide. Our *S. 'Kathe'* clearly grows much taller than this and is closer in description to *S. flocculosa* on p 132 of his book.

S. 'Michoacan' (Blue)

This plant from the Michoacan region of Mexico, known in the UK as *S. 'Michoacan Blue'* has been determined to be the species *S. clinopodioides*. (indicating similarity with another Genus, *Clinopodium* in the Lamiaceae family) This is an interesting plant with lovely blue flowers compressed tightly into persistent bracts. It dies down to tuberous roots in the winter and then emerges quite late, producing numerous shoots in early summer.

S. 'Red Dragon'

This is more complicated and by no means certain. The name '**Red Dragon**' is a nursery name from New Zealand. Cait Hoogenbosch sent photos to Richard Dufresne, a *Salvia* specialist in the USA, who in turn provided the original description by Frenald. Richard believes this plant is a stable form of *Salvia cardinalis*. However, on Richard's own website, he has a photo of a form of *Salvia fulgens* which, he says, is newer than the *Salvia cardinalis* form. He goes on to say that most of the herbarium specimens of these two species (*S. fulgens* and *S. cardinalis*) look alike and that his *Salvia fulgens* plant is not dissimilar to *Salvia gesneriiflora*. *Salvia fulgens* and *Salvia gesneriiflora* flower here at different times of the year, the former in summer and the latter mainly in winter. Both have variable calyx colour. Christian, however, demonstrates the difference between the 2 species. The corolla tube of *S. fulgens* has 2 papillae at the base (as per Epling's description of Section Fulgentes) as well as 2 tiny staminodes. *S. gesneriiflora* has no papillae (although it does have staminodes) and the inside of the corolla tube has clear, parallel striations. Also, the calyx of *S. gesneriiflora* is

longer (20mm cf 15mm with *S. fulgens*). However, the main difference is the bracts. In *S. gesneriiflora*, these are half the size of the calyx and fall off quickly and in *S. fulgens*, these are twice the size of the calyx.

Reference:

Froissart, C. "La Connaissance des Sauges", 2008, Edisud, Aix-en-Provence

Pat Anderson 5: 1:0

A FURTHER LOOK AT SALVIA NEWS

I consider the last issue of *Salvia News* No. 35, the best one I have seen to date. In attempting to verify this, I want to go through it and highlight what impressed me the most. Having just purchased a lap-top, I was interested in VSSG having secured a new *Salvia* Website. I do thank Lyndi for this, but I don't have the skill as yet to see how colourful it is.

Each time I open a new *Salvia News*, I note that the first article is usually written by John Daniels. I find them well structured, no doubt because he is the Curator of *salvias* located in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. I enjoy his comments on how these plants are progressing in Hobart. We need this information from southern Tasmania.

Many years ago I lived for some time in Thornbury, an inner suburb of Melbourne, and wished to visit Geoff Crowhurst's garden in April. But our visit to this garden was cancelled, probably because of the drought. Also unfortunately I was not able to visit the pre-Christmas Festival at Margaret and Neil's garden, but on this occasion it was because my chauffeur was unable to take me. Trudi made the comment on page eight that, "It was terrific"!

The struggles with growing *salvias* by Maureen Cox on the south coast of NSW were well documented. She had trouble with *S. van houtti*, *patens* and *corrugata*; similarly I did not find these species very easy to grow either in Geelong. Elwyn Paton also had difficulty with the weather on Tamborine Mountain in southern Queensland, in growing *salvias*. Then Barb Wickes commented on the different climatic zones that were evident in Queensland. We are fortunate here in Victoria to get articles from Queensland growers

A Bit of Botany Part two was offered by Pat Anderson, which follows the first part she gave in the Spring 2008 edition of *Salvia News*. I find it very striking how the sexuality of flower production, is so powerfully similar in some ways, to our human species. Aren't we privileged to be able to study and understand how *salvias* can reproduce themselves.

Another highlight in reading this journal was the article by Denise Horchner residing in S.E. Queensland. She says she has a metropolitan garden. I wonder if this is close to Brisbane? She talks of tumultuous weeks of

high temperatures, wearying humidity, five fearsome storms in quick succession, with a huge dumping of rain. When she ventured out, she was relieved to see how resilient the salvias were. She refers to her *S. Indigo Spires* being supported by lots of golden rods. These latter plants are highly invasive herbs, which gave me much difficulty in eradicating them from around my salvias. I was pleased she spoke highly of *S. guaranitica* with its inimitable blue flowers. She did some people call this species a “thug”, and if all “thugs” were as beautiful as them, the world would be a lovely place. Again I agree with her, even though I had much trouble removing the stolons this species produces. She also gives much praise for the cultivator of this species called “Large Form”.

When she said *S. involucrata* sp. was humungous, I stopped reading immediately, and rushed to my two dictionaries for help. But they let me down. I then came back to read further, only to find it was also not in her dictionary. How could Denise inflict that word on us?

Her reference to the adjective “red” which doesn’t do justice to the lovely *S. Josh*, I find “spot on”. With salvias there are so many shades of red that this term doesn’t really high light the salvia. I found her whole article enlightening descriptive and amusing. Give us more Denise!

Meg Bentley’s article in the middle of the journal, discussing the grouping of plants into cameos, where plants complement each other, was extremely interesting. Then of course there was her article near the end of the journal, entitled “Adventitious Roots” which gave me for the first time, a new slant on the growing of cuttings.

Finally the two articles on Nobeliuss show that the Display Garden has come a long way towards fruition, with tremendous help from our members. I am hoping to visit this garden on May 17th, if I can secure the help of my friend, Des Lawrence. Most members of VSSG know that he is the Curator of the wonderful salvia beds in the Geelong Botanical Gardens.

Bill Whitehead

THE SALVIA FANATICS LONG SUFFERING EDITOR

Sometimes we dream dreams in which our imagination gets the better of us.

Late one afternoon, shortly before 6 o’clock, I dreamt that the *Salvia Newsletter* editor had been on the phone. Phew, I thought, after I got the phone down, I got out of that one lightly. You see, not only did the phone call last only 37 minutes but I didn’t get the earful I was expecting concerning the publication of an article I had written previously. Rather, the editor rang to tell me that she needed material for the next *Newsletter* and wouldn’t it be nice if I could “write about the partners of salvia fanatics”.

Now, much as I liked the topic suggested by the editor, I felt that it was not a task I could undertake. I had many reservations. For a start it would have meant writing about myself and my style is to write about other people’s idiosyncrasies and to keep mine to myself. Another problem at that time was that I had met very few partners of salvia fanatics which didn’t give me much scope to write about them. Yet another problem was that, for complex sociological reasons which might have something to do with sampling bottles of red, the partners of the salvia fanatics that I had met at salvia corroborees were invariably male which would mean that I would have been unable to write a properly balanced article concerning both male and female partners. Moreover, as I thought about the matter further, I recognised that I would be unable to write anything complimentary since the few partners (all male) that I had met at salvia functions were nothing more than parasites who gobbled up the food and consumed all the mineral – and also the not-so mineral – liquids that were supplied. I concluded that (male) partners are like trees growing in a salvia patch; the trees consume the water, take up all the nutrients and absorb all the sunlight leaving nothing for the salvias. Which led to me to

muse that this is why trees and men are constantly cut down. I informed the editor about these concerns and I advised her that it would be quite inappropriate for me to write on the topic she had suggested.

For a short time I felt rather pleased at getting myself out of a nasty job. But the editor, always tactful and tenacious (that is why she is editor), replied that my analogy concerning men as trees in a salvia patch was absurd. She explained that the point at issue was not competition between women and men or between salvias and trees, but about support and co-operation between women and men in pursuing the study of salvias. "So", she responded, "that shouldn't stop you pencilling a few lines about your experiences to date and this should spur you to chat to a few very charming female partners of male salvia fanatics at the next salvia function". I was beginning to get alarmed at the prospect of having to write an article after all. I also found myself secretly and begrudgingly admiring the editor's critical analysis of my ramblings and it made me realise that, deep down, I have always been overawed by the incisiveness of editors.

As the pressure from the editor kept mounting I sensed that it was 6 o'clock and it was time to remove the cork from a bottle and sit with glass in hand overlooking the garden with my salvia-fanatic partner. So I tried once again to side-step the editor's request by telling her that the male partners I had met at salvia corroborees were a pack of pot-bellied crumbling old blokes with brains and livers saturated with cabernet-sauvignon. "Yes, I know that is how you portray male partners", said the editor, "but in promulgating this image you do the vast majority of male partners a great disservice. I would like an impartial assessment".

Thankfully at this critical moment I woke up and my partner really had got the cork out of the bottle. Phew, I thought, that was a close shave. As we sampled the wonderful red nectar I recounted my dream to Pat. As I did so, she suggested that it would be nice to record that there really are some male partners of salvia fanatics who are very supportive. She reminded me of the bloke who helped his partner quarry a steep hillside to create a series of terraces which were then walled up magnificently using stones from the massive pile of rocks that they excavated. Pat explained that this bloke actually assisted quite willingly and with a great deal of enthusiasm and that he was not acting under doctors orders to get some exercise. As I took in these remarks it occurred to me that female partners might engage in similarly demanding activities to support their salvia-fanatic men. "That's right" said Pat "and it would be nice if the contributions made by partners of salvia fanatics, and the appreciation of their contributions by salvia fanatics, was recorded". So be it.

As we worked our way through the bottle I thought how lucky I was to wake up and escape from my predicament. And then I thought, heck, all salvia fanatics and, where applicable, their partners should record their appreciation of the work of the editor in publishing the *Salvia Newsletter* in promoting and supporting their activities. Accordingly, we readers and writers would like to record our appreciation of the editor's commitment to the *Salvia Newsletter* and to the publication of peoples' ideas and observations no matter (as in this article) how slender the reference to salvias might be. How nice it is that my ridiculous dream should have such a positive outcome. Well done Trudi.

John Anderson

RELAXED PLANTS

THE VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

(Herb Society of Victoria Inc.)

INVITES YOU

to the

OFFICIAL OPENING

OF THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN

Sunday 15th November 11.30 – 4 p.m.

Crichton Rd, Emerald.

Near the Emerald Lake on the Puffing Billy Line.

Refreshments will be provided in the packing shed.

Attendance Form

I / we will be attending

Address :

Phone No:

RSVP Lyndi Garnett :Ph 9803 4534

844 Highbury Rd, Glen Waverley 3150

Email : highcon@hotkey.net.au

Helpers Needed

Helpers will be needed for various duties to make this a successful day.

I / we can help during the day:.....

Phone No:.....

SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA GROUP

A BRANCH OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

C/- BEVAN WHELAN

313 COOLART RD

SOMERVILLE VIC 3912