

SALVIA NEWS

NUMBER 42



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

THE VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

A Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria inc.

THE AIMS OF THE SALVIA STUDY GROUP ARE:

1. *To grow and collect salvias to study their growth habits.*
2. **To identify and name plants correctly.**
3. **To propagate new and existing Salvias**
4. **To promote the qualities of Salvias to the general public**
5. **To exchange information, seeds and cuttings with other Salvia enthusiasts.**

The group is not a profit making organization. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and maintenance and planting of our GPCAA registered garden collections.

LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEB ADDRESS

WWW.SALVIAS.ORG

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SALVIA NEWS

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This year we have all grieved with Irene Robinson at the loss of her lovely daughter. Kandall was a young mother much loved by all who knew her. Some of us were able to go to the funeral and learnt much about Kandall and her work for Cambodia. The atmosphere of love from the large amount of people present and the feeling of sorrow and support for her children, husband and mother and sister was heartfelt.

I have been on sick leave in SEQ. for six weeks. Wheelchaired on and off planes, (Virgin Blue are terrific). Met by caring children and grandchildren, cosseted, waited on hand and foot and chauffeured off to Doctors and Physio. A beautiful tropical garden to look at and over 50 books from Buderim's brilliant library to read. Had one visit to Barb Wickes garden for a Salvia meeting but I had to lie on the couch during the garden walk. Very aggravating. If any of you feel an odd snap in your shoulder don't ignore it. I am still suffering from the torn tendon, spur and bursas. I was bandaged up like a footballer .

We had several family gatherings before the clan scatters a little more. SEQ has had a lot of rain and then more rain while I was there. Lush colourful plant growth. Then when I came home my garden stunned me. Even the weeds looked great. Rain is wonderful stuff.

I am so sorry I missed the marvellous Xmas Gathering. It was my third son's fiftieth birthday party. Two of his siblings flew down from Queensland as a surprise. It was quite wonderful. Starry sky, spit roasts and people I had last seen at his twenty first. We got home to Selby at 2.30am!!

Happy Xmas to you all and best wishes for the New Year. Happy Gardening.

I have had another bout of pain and this Salvia News has been waiting for me to get moving again. And now on 1/11/2011 I have found a co-editor!!!! She is an enthusiastic gardener on a large block over the fence beside my garden. While I was away she collected my mail and cared for my garden. On New Year's Day we were wandering around my garden when suddenly I asked her if she would like to edit Salvia News and she said she would love to. How wonderful.. Such gifts come from my garden. Otherwise I would have had to resign and now I feel able to cope with her help. We will be co-editors. Her name is Kathie Thomas and she is someone who knows a great deal about computers and editing. I apologise to all of you who are worried and wondering if you will ever see another Salvia News. There will be a rapid catch up and some very good articles. Please write and send your articles as soon as you can. The next edition will have a Financial Statement from 1st July to 31st December 2010.

CALENDAR OF OF EVENTS 2011

- March 12th Saturday
13th Sunday** **Ferny Creek Annual Plant Collectors Sale
And Garden Expo**
9am-4:30 : 100 Hilton Rd. Sassafras, Mel 66 E12
Salvias for sale. Bring your list and be early to get those bargains
- March 19th Saturday
20th Sunday** **Tessalaar's Gardening & Rare Plants Expo**
9am-4pm : 357 Monbulk Rd. Silvan, Mel 123 B5
Salvias for sale Bring your lists and be early.
- March 28th Monday** **Ringwood Garden Club, 8:00 pm**
Ringwood East Community Hall
Ringwood East, Mel 50 B8
Lyndi will be speaking on Salvias
Plants for sale.
Bring plants to be identified
- April 17th Sunday** **Garden Visit Terry Ashton 11:00 am**
5 Lily St. Glen Waverley, Mel 70 K1
Phone 98028550
Beautiful garden. Bring a chair and lunch to share
Bring Salvias to be identified
- May 18th Wednesday** **Mt Macedon Horticultural Society, 1:00pm**
583 Mt Macedon Rd, Mt Macedon
Mel 658 A1-6 Pg 909 F10
Lyndi will be speaking on Salvias.
Salvias for sale. Bring plants to be identified.
- June 19th Sunday** **Garden Visit Heather Lucas 11:00am**
5 Bligh Crt, Heathmont, Mel 63 J1
Phone 98795365
Interesting Salvia garden. Bring a chair and lunch to share.
Bring salvias to be identified

Nobelius Saga 2010

The new year opened up bright, sunny and full of promise after all the work that was put in to get it ready for the open day in November 09.

Of course when coming back to the garden, there is a mountain of work to be done, such as pruning and weeding. In fact that's all we seem to have been doing all year is pruning and the weeds were surprisingly few compared to previous years.

Well as we all know, we have had lots and lots of rain!!! and most Salvias have benefited from that soaking rain allowing them to burst forth into leaf and flowers. Of course with all that growth, it all has to be pruned down to make each plant sustainable.

Autumn saw us start the winter pruning of the small Salvias, (pruning back to good buds), to get them to put on new compact growth before the cold winter winds come.

The Autumn flowering began with *S. mexicana* 'Limelight', *involuta* (tall), 'Pink Icicles', 'Romantic Rose' and many other beautiful Autumn/ Winter flowering Salvias following.

The Winter unfortunately proved to be very cold and was too cold for some. We found that quite a few large leaf Salvias lost their leaves and became dormant, amongst these were 'Black Knight', the *mexicana* varieties, *tubiflora*, 'Purple Majesty', 'Violet Eyes'. These we didn't touch at all, they were just a bunch of dead sticks standing there looking very unsightly – we were tempted many times to take them down, but we just bit our lips and left them. Most of these either didn't come back again or took a long time to put out one or two shoots.

It may be that these varieties may have to be replaced regularly every 2 yrs, or they may need to be more sheltered by other plants around them. The other disappointing plants were "Costa Rican Blue" and 'Omaha Gold', they just haven't got going up there in that microclimate. We only have 1 good plant of 'Costa Rican Blue', the others are slow and sickly, so we have planted better plants beside them, hoping that they put on good new growth, especially with all that rain we've just had.

This rain has given some Salvias that were on their death bed (due to a lack of water) a new breath of life, they are producing new leaf growth and copious amounts of flowers.

I'm please to note that most if not all the herbaceous Salvias have come up and responded to all this moisture with great growth and good flower stems. Unfortunately when we were putting in our beautiful new labels, many of the old labels were pulled out, without a little push in label next to the plant, so that when we took out all the labels, we didn't know what some of the Salvias were – it has taken a lot of investigating to correctly identify some of those herbaceous Salvias. By getting Lambley's to send a few photo's and descriptions over, we have been able to find out what we do have and what we don't have.

The oxalis has been rampant this year as we haven't had the people power to help spread mulch thickly enough to stop the Oxalis from coming up, so next year we will spend a lot of time getting rid of those oxalis bulbs. I know that we could spray or use

a few remedies, but when the oxalis is coming up in the middle or very close to the salvia that you don't want to take chances, but rather hand weed around the problem.

Next year - what we will be doing at Nobelius : -

We need to take out a few Salvias – you can't have red Salvias on the pink side

Lots of hand weeding – lots of good fun – for the knees!

Prune everything back to a manageable size

Plant more purple/blue Salvias, keeping everything crammed in to one another, this helps to protect each plant.

Take out some Salvias that have spread – lots of cutting material to take home.

Fill in areas with the new varieties that constantly keep coming on to the scene.

If anyone has a few hours to spare on a Wednesday to come and help develop the garden please give me a call on Ph 98034534

Thank you to all the helpers this year, you all were a great help in maintaining this wonderful garden.

Lyndi Garnett

LESSONS FROM NOBELIUS

Very obviously many of the Salvias - particularly the large leaved tall growers -have benefited from surface protection either from base plantings or heavy mulching. It's been most disappointing to find we have 'lost' some labels (surely far too large for the average garden!) and in fact an instance of the metal frame displaying the name also 'walking'. But of much distress was the actual removal of entire plants, either dug up or ripped up. With our prices so very reasonable, one does wonder. Then again, at the recent day in November there were many new salvia gardeners all interested in purchasing plants and learning of the plants needs. This was very rewarding. We heard many stories of 'this is the favourite dog walk', or 'we find strolling very refreshing especially when there's a lingering perfume from a plant we've managed to brush against'. May the numbers of strollers and dog walkers increase!!

Christmas at Hoddles Creek

As we have munched our way through copious quantities of raspberries during the week, we have been asking ourselves, “Where else could you find such a wonderful venue for the end-of-year celebration for our Salvia Group?” For some the journey might have been a long one – past Woori Yallock on the Warburton Highway, then along the road to Hoddles Creek, then along another road until you reach its end at Nerrigundah Berries – but it was worth it. The long driveway gave a hint of the garden to come and ended with plenty of shady parking and

a welcoming outdoor area where Karen Meeuwissen had arranged numerous tables (with embroidered tablecloths) and chairs under attractive covered structures where numerous salvia enthusiasts had gathered. Some long-standing members were sadly absent due to other family commitments but it was great to see Ray Boatman back and many other friendly faces.

After our sumptuous spread, including copious quantities of raspberries and loganberries, provided by our wonderful hosts, we set off to view Karen's magnificent garden of several acres – truly a garden in which to sit and ogle, or meditate or just get lost! Karen is a collector of plants, heritage roses being her first love. While some of these were past their best, there was still plenty of colour and interest. Interconnecting paths rambled endlessly through well-chosen plantings of trees, shrubs, roses and, of course, salvias. Karen has a wonderful eye for colour, as well as immense energy, drive, vision and carpentry skills. Outstanding features were the pond (? Lake), gravel garden, the steps from which there is a tantalising view and the many rose-covered arbours with seats. All round the garden, we would come across fellow salviaphiles, seated in ones and twos in the shade of one of these.

Being the end of Karen's gardening season (they are well into berry picking and distribution now), Karen was very generous with cuttings and plastic bags and to cap off the day, some of us also returned with large quantities of berry fruit at bargain prices.

Truly a day to remember. Thank you Karen.

Pat Anderson

Notes from Gruyere.

Spring is the time for the garden to really take off and unfortunately so do the weeds. Beautiful rains have brought about new growth in abundance throughout all the gardens here in Gruyere. Not only are the salvias taking off but I am blessed with buds on all my roses.

I thought if I let the possums have their own way with the glorious maple outside the lounge window they will in turn leave my roses alone. So far this has worked but oh dear, the maple is looking bereft of leaves throughout the centre of the tree and up the branches.

All but two of the rose bushes are covered with buds and blooms, the two that were eaten off were eaten by rabbits, not possums. This winter/spring I have planted out 12 new roses, the tall ones to climb up and around the duck pen and the lower ones to grow amongst special salvias which help compliment each other. I do love the fragrance of Old World, Heritage and David Austin roses, in fact I don't like to buy a rose if it doesn't have a perfume, although one I did buy to grow near my *Salvia aurea* (Syn. *S. africana aurea*) to compliment the brown/rust colours was *R. 'Edith Holden'*. This combination looks quite good with the white flowers of *S. canariensis* alba, a few blue flowering salvias *S. 'Blue Ribbon'* and *'Indigo Spires'* and a few large clumps of the tall *Limonium perezii* with its bright blue and white flowers. The rose tally now is around 75 although that doesn't compare to the number of salvias throughout the gardens.

There is a new salvia flowering at the moment, *Salvia bowleyana*, standing tall and stately in part shade. At a distance it looks very much like a tall form of *S. plectranthoides* at about 80cm but on closer observation the leaves are much larger, wider apart and the flowering stems are much taller. Calyces are green, tinged brown on the upper side and the corolla hood is a buff colour covered in fine short purple hairs. The lower lip is purple with a fringed central lobe that curves upwards, altogether an attractive looking plant. Another salvia putting

on a glorious display is *S.* 'Southern Belle' with large lilac-pink blooms. This cultivar is a wonderful addition to our collections from Geoff Genge in Invercargill, N.Z.

I am eagerly awaiting the flowering of several new cultivars. Since the gardens have been changed around and hopefully they too will be colour coordinated with the roses and other perennials nearby. It is a good time to get busy taking cuttings of many salvias (and any other plants in the garden) while the weather is cool with a few lingering showers. The larger species and cultivars like *S.wagneriana*, *S. involucrata*, *S.* 'Pink Icicles', *S.* 'Timboon' and *Salvia karwinskii* are ideal and I have also been taking some of the *S.greggii* and *S. microphylla* cultivars. New shoots are appearing on *S.* 'Anthony Parker' and *S.* 'Meigans Magic' but beware, these two cultivars are very similar in looks at this stage so label the cuttings well and keep separated so that there is no confusion. It is also a good time to put in salvia seed or pot up your seedlings.

Meg Bentley

THE RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Getting the best place in the garden for a particular salvia, or any other plant for that matter, is what we gardeners strive for. But allowing for the micro-climates in our garden, we still have to face the fact that we live in a Mediterranean climate which is unpredictable. This year we have had a cool, very wet spring, but we are just as likely to have a dry, hot summer, when only the toughest plants look really good.

Knowing the growing conditions of a plant in its native habitat can help, though obtaining this information is not always easy. I have tried to make a virtue of my lack of space by trying a few of the gray leaved salvias in terracotta pots, so far, successfully. *Salvia cyanescens* came from Lambley Nursery as a replacement for a mis-named salvia. According to Betsy Clebsch's *The New Book of Salvias*, *S. cyanescens* comes from rocky slopes or dry rocky streambeds. So I incorporated coarse sand in the potting mix, and also covered the pot with a mulch of sand. Now in its second year my plant is putting out five stout flowering spikes.

Younger plants of *S. canescens* (from seed) and *S. jurisicii* (courtesy of Pat Anderson) are also doing well with the latter putting out flower shoots. Both come from mountainous regions, and very good drainage is recommended. As neither may appreciate the hottest of our weather, I have the option of shifting the pots to a place in semi-shade.

Recently in Queensland for a week or so, I was surprised to see cultivars of *S. splendens* nearly a metre high. There was a mauve one and a cream one, both very healthy and luxuriant. I know we can sometimes get seedlings in similar colours down here from commercial nurseries, but I hadn't thought they could grow so high. According to Betsy Clebsch, *S. splendens* comes from a year-round warm and humid climate in Brazil where the species grows to about 4 ft. tall. We would need a heated glass house, with shading for summer, to replicate those conditions. The Belgian cultivar 'Van Houttei' is appreciated here, though it really only grows well in summer/autumn in a semi-shaded spot.

Fortunately, many garden worthy salvias will grow quite well in conditions different from their native habitat. *S. chiapensis* comes from ‘cloud forests’ in Mexico, but does well in all the but harshest positions in southern Australia. Winter blooming salvias like *S. wagneriana* and *S. karwinskii* come from Central America where they grow in moderately elevated forest areas that are both moist and warm. Under these conditions they can grow into very large shrubs. They will do quite well for us, however, if we have enough room and a protected area, and tolerate a surprising amount of cold. For many species, it is a matter of trial and error.

Among the more difficult species seem to be those from China and Japan, where winters may be cold but not wet, and summers moderate but rainy. As I have observed in SW China, spring is usually a beautiful time of year – mild, fairly dry and without much wind, so just perfect for delicate flowers like pæonies, and salvias as well!

Ordinary gardeners are fortunate to have available to them an increasing number of resilient hybrid salvias, like ‘Indigo Spires’, ‘Waverly’ and ‘Wendy’s Wish’. In the plant world, as in other living species, hybrids often seem to combine the best qualities of the parents, providing both vigour and hardiness. I stuck ‘Indigo Spires’ out on the nature strip where the soil is poor and it gets next to no water. It managed to survive the dry years and is now doing well. ‘Wendy’s Wish’ surprises even the least experienced gardener with its ability to grow under different conditions and flower for ages. All of these salvias are dead easy to grow from cuttings. What more could one ask for?

Geoff Crowhurst

News from Hobart – Spring

It is mid-October. This morning started with snow flurries on a blustery, cold southerly yet with the shining warmth of the spring sun. Yesterday, overcast and still, it rained lightly all day but became colder as the day progressed, preceded the day before by the perfection of a day of sun with bird song; the delightful daily, even hourly, vagaries of spring in the southern latitudes!

At the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the salvia blooming most impressively in the collection is *Salvia gesneraeflora*. Pruned in the first week of January, with up to two metres of the old flowered stems removed, it started to flower on the resulting growth in early July. With a northerly aspect and growing mostly vertically at the base of a wall, this plant has reached over three metres in height and is so full of red flowers on lateral inflorescences that the foliage, at this time, is insignificant. In contrast, the profusion of larger leaves of its cultivar, *S. ‘Tequila’*, with less protection and more horizontal growth, currently predominates at this early stage of its flowering, which is mostly at the tips of its stems.

Other vertically growing specimens are *Salvia fallax* and *S. sprucei*. The former, with a northerly aspect, is most impressive at present and started flowering in early July and is now displaying a mass of inflorescences, up to 30cm in length, covering the entire small-leaved bush, from its base to the top at two metres with a similar width. The small blue flowers are an early morning attraction to bees. A high altitude species from Ecuador,

Salvia sprucei has dark green, large aromatic leaves and is similarly woody. Its sparse corollas are noticeable for their colour, cerise with white central nectar lines on the cupped lower lip and on the two small horizontal lobes above. The stigma and anthers are also distinctly exerted beyond the hood of the closed upper lip. It started flowering in early September and is over two metres tall following a reduction prune of a metre in early March to control its height. The shrubs of this species have spread through wind-damaged stems layering and also a few self-sown seed germinating.

The two other salvias at the peak of their blooming now are *S. dolomitica* and *S. fruticosa* ‘Greek Skies’. Having beautiful mauve flowers with a large lower lip, *S. dolomitica* has a lax form with stems a metre long that arch with the weight of the dense inflorescences. The first of its flowers appeared in early June. New stems are already emerging through the centre of the shrubs stimulated by the light exposure to the crown from the bowing flowering stems. It also spreads relatively slowly by stems that slowly grow horizontally to emerge a short distance from the base. The pale grey-green leaves have a pleasant pine scent. *Salvia fruticosa* ‘Greek Skies’ has a denser form and is less vigorous and woodier. So full of blue flowers, the aromatic grey leaves of this low growing shrub cannot be seen at present.

I welcome comments by members on the observations above and their particular experiences with these species.

John Daniels

john-daniels@bigpond.com

NEWS FROM SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND

The spring rains have finally abated, leaving most of us here in SEQ with deeply moist soil, ripe and ready for planting. We had phenomenal rainfalls – my rain gauge just couldn’t keep up the pace, and I lost count after about 18 inches. For a time of year when we are usually plagued by drying westerlies, this was almost a shock for us! Most of us have, during drought times, sworn that we would never complain about rain again, but really, it is so nice to see some sunshine.

Usually when that amount of rain falls, we would expect huge plant losses due to damping off and various fungal invasions, but the humidity stayed down, and that seems to be more the issue than actual moisture. I haven’t lost many salvias at all. Plenty of flowers were damaged by the heavier falls, but the plants themselves have survived well. I do live on a steep hillside, so perhaps I’m luckier with drainage than some. I did lose cuttings, but they are easily regathered, thanks to generous friends.

There are a few pretty patches in my garden just now. A favourite is a welcoming patchwork of colour just near my driveway – *Salvia leucantha* ‘Midnight’, *S.* ‘Blaze’, *S.* ‘Pink Velour’, *S.* ‘Heatwave Glitter’, underplanted with splashes of yellow sedum. Yes,

it does sound tasteless, but its all closely planted (a bad habit of mine), and intermingles charmingly. Don't they say "beauty is in the eyes" etc.

Another happy spot is S. 'Mystic Spires', in front of which is *Plectranthus argentatus*, which I keep low and dense in this area. Sidling up to these is a creamy yellow dwarf alstroemeria. This combination just makes my heart glow. It is so satisfying when combinations work. With just a few of these nice little vistas, I can more easily accept the "ordinary" areas in my garden, of which there are plenty.

Speaking of S. 'Mystic Spires', I'd just like to emphasize what a fantastic plant it is. Here in Queensland, it is difficult to grow plants that give that tall purple/blue spire look, so sought after in cottage gardens. 'Mystic Spires' flowers well above the foliage, with strong straight purple spikes that sit on the plant for ages. After 2 seasons, and a hard prune after the first flowering, it has thickened to a strong metre wide clump that couldn't wait to flower again. I love it.

Another stunner performing beautifully for me is S. 'Meigan's Magic'. This flowers all year round, and it really only needed pruning to stop it swamping everything around it. I was quite unprepared for its size and vigour, so I'll move it to a roomier spot to give it its head. The contrast between the white flower and purple calyx is a real highlight, and I'm enjoying the way it combines with its neighbours, S. 'Follett's Folly' and *Grevillea* 'Peaches and 'Cream'.

The summer weather here is predicted to be very wet and humid, even cyclonic, which won't do any gardens here much good, so we'll just have to hope for the best. We certainly live in a climate of extremes. Is there anywhere in the world that receives perfect gardening weather all the time?

Adrienne Starkey

The Perennial Poppies Group Inc

THE VISIT FROM THE SEQ POPPIES GROUP

NOBELIUS – THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN OF THE VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

The much awaited visit to 'Nobelius', the Victorian collection of salvias, was during a very damp afternoon. Undaunted, we set off to see what salvias would be growing in this garden. They were planted on a sloping hillside. A central gravel path led up the hill with long beds either side. At first I thought the plantings were divided into countries of origin, but instead, the colour 'red' dominated on the right side with 'blue' on the left.

It was interesting to note that so many salvias tolerated the climate both here and in Queensland. I couldn't help noticing *Salvia corrugata* was three times the height of mine at Tamborine, but it seems the rich blue flowers were just as sparse. Salvias from Mediterranean areas – Greece, Middle East, Turkey, and northern Africa – as well as California and south to Mexico are often looked at longingly but could be doomed to

failure. I must add that eastern Mexico has some misty mountains, and salvias from there are usually OK for us.

Of course the salvia plant stall was soon descended upon very enthusiastically by our 'Salvia Study Group' and many unfamiliar plants were purchased for trials in our conditions from Buderim south to Tamborine Mountain. We had three very able guides filling in some gaps in our knowledge (which in my case is considerable). They obviously have a great affection for their collection, and we were privileged to visit.

Elwyn Paton The Perennial Poppies Group Inc

NEWS FROM WERRI BEACH NSW SOUTH COAST

Sometimes I manage to get an item for Salvia News in on time and sometimes completely forget, like last time. I blame the passage of time. It just goes too fast and before you know it, springtime again! All is well here at the beach after some horrendous winds, the worst we've had here in 36 years, followed by 7 inches of rain in 24 hours a week or so after that. Luckily the rain helped to revive some plants hit by the salt whipped up by the wind. Unfortunately, it took a few days for some of the damage to become apparent resulting in some blackened leaves on plants not normally affected such as the native *Westringia*.

I only lost one salvia which was blown clean out of the ground. It was the pink one which resembles *S.aurea* (name escapes me), luckily another one had seeded itself only a metre away so I haven't lost it completely. Most of the salvias weren't in the direct path of the wind, *Salvia elegans* 'Purple' lost a few stems but it kept on flowering and . *S.aurea* in the footpath garden was magnificent this year and is still holding the brown calyxes which are another attraction of this plan. *Salvia semi-atrata* is finally bulking up and has been a picture through late winter. In fact all the winter salvias have performed well this year. I have particularly liked *S.involucrata* 'Joan'. It was the first time it flowered and it has become a favourite. It is a sign of the times I think, that I can't give away *S.madrensis*. Too big! they say and 'suckering'. But what magnificent flowers, I say. A lot of people round here don't have or want big gardens.

I've managed to find a new spot for salvias by cutting back a large protea which had become a bit ugly. A nice sunny bed now contains 7 new salvias. *Salvia barellieri*, *S.* 'Desley', *S.judaica*, *S. mexicana* 'Little Limelight', *S.microphylla* 'Maraschino', *S. superb/nemorosa* 'Rubin', *S. verticillata* 'Purple Rain' and in another spot *S.wagneriana*. While they are growing I've underplanted with dwarf cosmos and a couple of grey ground covers to fill out the bed.

In another bed I am trying *S. corrugata* for about the third time. I don't have much luck with one but it is worth another try. Plus a *S. splendens* and a few other salvias I've propagated. I spent the winter attempting to stop three lots of *S.nemorosa* 'Caradonna' from being swamped by other plants which usually happens and I end up losing them. So far so good. I never saw *S.patens* again and I didn't get to propagate it so it has gone. Now I try to pot up a few bits of all new salvias as insurance.

Pat's article on propagation was most useful. Each time I read Salvia News I discover more new plants I must get. Must be the collector in me. Both my husband and I 'collect'. In his case old radios and mine Bakelite kitchen ware amongst other things and of course there is my Salvia Obsession. Maureen Cox

MASS GARDENING

After many weeks away from my garden enjoying the lushness of SEQ I returned to find my garden was lush, boisterous even. Before I left everything was struggling. Most plants leafless sticks and the soil so dry it was water repellent. And now I can't even see the soil. The broad leafed plants have really broad leaves and flowers. I missed the waratah flowering and many others too but the mass of flowers all tangled together supporting each other is a wonder. There are many self sown treasures and many more plants I had given up on have appeared again. Imagine four *Salvia apiana* plants healthy and flowering and some *microphylla/greggii* anonymous flowering in places I would never have put them. The soil under this enthusiastic growth is full of life. Now Nature abhors a vacuum hence a weed will grow in that neat clear space but it is better to have a rampant pretty plant.

A Display Garden needs space around individual plants so they can be 'Displayed' so therefore pruning and weeding as well as mulching is necessary. But the gardener growing plants for delight should focus on enjoyment. When I remove a weed I replace it with a plant. Close planting using rosette and low growing plants in front and cramming in tall growers at the back works for me. There is no room for weeds. I use cuttings I have grown, self sown salvia seedlings, bits of succulents and tuck seed heads in on top of the ground. The plants protect each other.

Just before I left for SEQ I (with help) released a gnarled pot-bound *Salvia melissadora* and put it in a garden with a group of similar invalids. It was more a burial than a planting with a poultice of water jelly. I returned to green leaves and flowers! *S. melissadora* has never liked me. I have never been able to propagate it. Now I have buried its drooping lower branches in potting mix with a pile of stones on top just as my mother treated difficult plants to make them layer. I'm so glad I didn't chop back the dry ugly tall branches when it was transplanted because they are flowery greenery beauties now.

Salvia Identification

If you have Salvias that you want identified just send Lyndi a photo and she will get back to you with the correct name and put you out of your misery.

Lyndi's email: highcon@hotkey.net.au

A Manual for Salvia Growers

by Meg Bentley

There are now approx 370 Species and Cultivars represented

202 Photographs, Illustrations and Index

Contents include:

- Botany of Salvia
- Characteristics of Leaves
- Salvia microphylla & greggii differences
- Salvia karwinskii and cultivars
- Purple Majesty & Black Knight
- Salvia Maintenance
- Hardy Salvias and Shade Lovers
- Containers/Hanging Baskets/Hedges
- As an Accent in the Garden
- Propagating and Pruning
- Colourful Tints of Stressed Leaves
- Pest & Disease
- Where to See Salvias
- Cultivation Notes and Name Changes

The Salvia Manual by Meg Bentley can be ordered from:

HSOV Salvia Study Group
6 Halcyon Ave
The Patch 3792
Ph 97566361

Cost : \$ 45.00 + \$5.00 P/P per copy. CHQ only

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Salvia News

Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria

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