

SALVIA NEWS

Number 45



Official Newsletter of the

Victorian Salvia Study Group

September 2011

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 a not for profit organization. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and for the planting and maintenance of our GPCAA registered garden collection.

LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEB ADDRESS www.salvias.org.au

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Deadline for the Summer issue is 5th November 2011. Please send copy to Kathie.



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Welcome to your latest edition. I've been meeting some of you over the past couple of months and that's been great putting faces to names. Hopefully I'll get to meet more of you before too long.

You may be aware that Trudi is currently experiencing some health challenges so please feel free to email me direct so I can look after your articles for the next edition. Or via Lyndi at highcon@hotmail.com.

Kathie Thomas: e: kathie@vadirectory.net ph: 9754 8310

Trudi's Farewell:

I edited wrote and published our first Salvia News . All five pages of it, with a red salvia flower, leaf and buds on the first page dated April/May 2001. It looks like *Salvia microphylla*.

The next publication was July/August 2001 with eight pages, several interesting writers and this time a scanned flower of *Salvia africana*. My old computer did everything for years and I have a lot to thank Donna for as well as you wonderful writers.

Now we are up to number 45. I've learnt a lot, made such good friends and had glimpses of warm and wonderful people united by a general love of gardens and salvias in particular. My Doctor says that six months sick leave is necessary so I decided that resigning was a good idea to give someone else a chance to edit with Kathie's generous help. I will be here and will keep in touch. Do jump in like I did knowing nothing. My 4 year old grandson gave me my first computer lesson. He showed me how to turn it on!! Honestly.

Love to you all and may your families and gardens thrive.

Trudi Fry

We need your help

Trudi has resigned from the editorship of the Salvia news due to ill health and an operation that is needed. We need a person who has computer skills, loves playing with words, and lives in Victoria. You can live in the inner or outer suburbs or even in regional Victoria.

You will be supported with our editorial staff; both Kathie and Jillian have said they will remain to help the new editor.

Please we need your help for the next issue of the Salvia News. If you are interested in helping, please ring Lyndi on 98034534 or email on highcon@hotmail.com

Thank you

2011 Calendar of Events

- Sept 3rd Sat** **Pakenham garden Expo 9am**
Pakenham Racecourse, Mel : 317 G8
Stephen Ryan will be guest speaker.
Be early, bring a list
Plants for sale. Plants to be identified.
- Sept 5th Mon** **Emerald U3A Gardening Group 1pm**
Gemco in Kilvington Dve, Emerald Mel:127 G4
Ray Boatman will be guest speaker.
- Sept 29th Thurs** **Mansfield Garden Club 7pm**
Autistic Centre, Highett St, Mansfield,
Goulburn Valley Hwy, Mel: Reg Map, Pg 922, B11
Meg Bentley will be speaking. Bring plants to identified
Plants for sale.
- Oct 11th Tues** **Croydon Horticultural Society & Garden Club 8pm**
Croydon Senior Citizens Hall, cnr Mt Dandenong Rd, & Civic Place
Croydon, opposite Arndale Shopping Centre.
Lyndi will be speaking, plants for sale.
- Oct 16th Sun** **Garden Visit Sue Elliot's beautiful Cottage Garden 11am**
78 A'Beckett Rd, Narre Warren North, Mel : 108 J5
(off Hallam Belgrave Rd)
Enjoy a walk around a beautiful cottage garden in spring
Bring a plate to share and a chair.
- Oct 23rd Sun** **Garden Day at Nobelius , 11am**
Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald. Mel: 127 G4 beneath the Packing Shed
Come and join the fun, lots of cutting material to be had
Bring a plate to share and a chair.
Bring tools, gloves, hat and Sunscreen.
Anyone interested can join the fun of Salvias
- Nov 5th&6th Sat/Sun** **Rose Show of Victoria, Sat 12 -4pm, Sun 9 -4pm**
Mt Waverley Community Centre. Mel: 61 E2
Millers Crs, Mt Waverley (opposite Railway st, off Stephenson's Rd,
Plants for sale
- Nov 5&6th Sat/Sun** **5 Gardeners' Gardens in Mt Eliza & Tyabb 10 am - 4 pm**
Lyn & Bevan Whelan, 313 Coolart Rd, Tyabb. Mel: 147 J7
Visit these beautiful Spring Gardens, full of life after the rains, full of
colour and ideas, each one to delight your senses
Refreshments, sausage sizzle, pottery and gift stalls
Entry \$5.00for 1 garden only, \$20.00 for all five.
Further information Ph 97753301
- Nov 20th Sun** **4 Gardens to visit in Sale. 11 am**
Flo Taylor, 1 Hickeys Rd, Wurruk Mel
Reg: 928 F/G 6/7 : Vic Country Roads: 344 H5
Now the rains have arrived, 4 beautiful Salvia gardens have emerged
Bring a plate to share and a chair. Tea & Coffee will be provided.
Maps are provided, ring Lyndi Ph 98034534 for maps and more
information.

Nobelius 2011

What a difference a little rain makes, it's been amazing, so many Salvias that were really struggling over the last few years during that dry period, have really blossomed, putting on good new growth and flowers, Salvias we thought we were going to lose included *S. greggii* 'Coral', 'Purple Majesty', 'Violet Eyes', some 'Black Knights' and few others. Now we have the problem of getting through the cold damp/ wet winters. Some like the *mexicanas* don't appreciate the long cold periods so have to be replanted every few years. I think that may be the same for 'Black Knight', as it took a long time to come back after last winter.

Because of all the rain we've had, the large leaved Salvias in the Pink bed that Jillian pruned down have gone crazy, really reaching for the sky. 'Romantic Rose' has grown taller than the Cherry trees up to 4-5m H.I hope the winds don't come and ruin them too much.

Jillian and I have been going up most Wednesdays and just pruning. Jillian the larger Salvias and I prune the small Salvias in the front, as I can bend down a little easier. It's constant. As soon as we've finished one bed, we have to start all over again!!

The storms of late Feb / March wrought a lot of damage to our path, leaving large rills all the way down the path.

We've since had a load of toppings delivered with a little cement dust incorporated which will help it to last longer. Patrick very bravely volunteered to tamper it all down. He did a magnificent job, the path looks great and so very clean, Thankyou Patrick.

During the Autumn months, Nobelius was looking magnificent, with all the Autumn/ winter flowering Salvias in full flower. With the sun shining, the little Eastern Spinebill flitting through the Salvias, the garden really was beautiful and those people walking through were amazed at the variety of Salvias and how tall some of them grew.

Now the dreary winter months are here, the garden is looking a bit ordinary, the winds have played havoc with all the tall Salvias, so Jillian is having to prune them right down again, even though some are still flowering – don't worry, there are plenty of others waiting to burst into flower. When one Salvia finishes, another takes it's place, so you have some things flowering all times of the year.

With the effort of a few volunteers to prune and stake, cultivate around each plant, fertilize and mulch each bed, it won't be long before the garden is in full flower and breathtaking again.

We are at that stage where we can start taking out some of the Salvias we duplicated to fill in spaces and begin planting others that have recently come on to the scene.

It's always a struggle to place the right Salvia in the right position for it to flourish and not be over bearing to the next plant.

Some Salvias have really taken advantage of that rain and decided to spread their wings and go walk about! We've had to hack back such Salvias as *S. elegans* (Pineapple Sage), *S.'Honeymelon'*, *corrugata*, *chamaelagnea* and remove pups from *S.gesneriiflora* and 'Red Rambler'.

There is always plenty of cutting material at the end of the day for those who come up and help.

We hope to do a lot of planting in the next few months of some of the new salvias that have come our way.

Many Garden Clubs have been visiting Nobelius as a Day out for the club, so we've been able to help them identify those Salvias they have in their own gardens.

With a few more working B's , the garden should be looking good in preparation for our annual Salvia Day in late November.

5 Gardeners' Gardens - Open 5 & 6 November

This Spring, you are invited to visit the Tyabb garden of the Salvia News' Subscription Secretary, Bevan Whelan & his wife Lyn. In 2009 when they first opened their garden for this event, their garden had suffered through years of drought. This year the garden has had an excess of rainfall (and an excess of growth) so it is interesting to note that while some salvias have flourished, others have succumbed in the changed conditions. Enjoy wandering around the Whelan's separate display garden of over 200 salvias or admire the 300 roses and a great range of banksias. Salvias and other plants will be for sale here.

Along with one other repeat at 50 Old Mornington Rd. Mt Eliza, this year there are three new gardens to visit. Although the gardens vary in size, scope and variety, each one provides fresh ideas and inspiration for any true garden lover. On a gently sloping suburban block is a garden to delight the senses with its detailed plantings giving colour and diversity throughout the year. In another, there are sound sustainability principles on display, with the extended growing of herbs, fruit, vegetables and flowers in a garden using a robust composting system. Further delights for the visitor include a fern gully, liriopelawn, massed camellias, beautiful clematis, hellebores and magnolias.

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 November 2011. Open from 10.00am – 4.00pm

\$5 per garden or \$20 to visit all five gardens. Children free.

Morning and afternoon teas, a sausage sizzle, plant, pottery, produce and gift stalls.

Ticket from any garden gate lasts all weekend (& includes directions to 5th garden).

313 Coolart Rd

TYABB 3913

Melway Map147 J7

2 Penny Lane

MT ELIZA 3930

Melway Map 101 F12

57 Fulton Rd

MT ELIZA 3930

Melway Map 105 K1

15 Batman Ave

MT ELIZA 3930

Melway Map105 J6

**Supporting The Anglican Parish of Mt Eliza Pioneer Hall Redevelopment Appeal Enquiries
9775 3301**

Involucrata and Karwinskii

This article was instigated by my talk on identifying Winter Flowering Salvias. Both *S. involucrata* and *S. karwinskii* are tall growing Salvias from South America, both grow extremely well here in Melbourne.

S. involucrata can reach 4-5 m H, but has the growth habit of its branches "coming out to greet you". It begins to flower in late Autumn, and lasts till early Spring. The flowers are cerise and dense along the flowering stem. Whilst beginning as a small clump, they can expand to a length of 20 cm, approx 10 inch long, all facing upwards on one side of the stem. It has a small involucre – hence the name (a lot of bracts holding more flowers). The calyxes are a lovely pink, they also face upwards.

The leaves are a cordate shape, dark, smooth, little veinage and quite pointed at the apex. The leaf stems are often pink.

S. involucrata prefers a sheltered position to grow, whilst it will grow in a sunny position, it grows better if given a shady sheltered position.

S. karwinskii also grows tall about 3.5 – 4m H, not quite as high as *S. involucrata*, but grows more into a shrub and enjoys a lot more sun. It has a more upright habit, which makes it a large shrub and a good strong grower.

The flowers are a watermelon colour, set in 3 tiers in dense whorls around the stem, so when one tier is finishing, another is just beginning, hence the long flowering time.

S. karwinskii comes into flower later than many others around about July and goes until early Summer, Nov/ Dec.

The flowers have a brownish look about them, which are all the coloured hairs on the calyxes, bracts and flower stem. It also retains the flower bracts for a long time, these are curled at the ends, giving the appearance of a small lip.

The leaves are an elongated cordate shape, grey, hairy and the veins are very clear. The underneath is paler with white hairs as well as down the leaf stem and often along the new growth stems.

Both of these plants are very promiscuous and have sired plenty of cultivars.

Among the tall cultivars are:

‘Romantic Rose’ a cultivar that has been around for the past 20 yrs.

‘Timboon’ a cultivar found by Meg in Timboon

‘Floss’ an early cultivar that brought to our attention by Sue, but hasn’t been promoted till now

‘Pink Icicles’, a pale pink cultivar

karwinskii Red Form – yet to be named

karwinskii cyclamen form - yet to be named.

‘Romantic Rose’ is a very vigorous, robust Salvia, growing 4-5mH As it has been around for so long, most people will be familiar with the fact that it is so robust, many people have taken it out because of this trait. It also has watermelon coloured flowers on stems that “come out to greet you”. The corollas are fatter. Although the flower is larger than *S. karwinskii*, it is less dense than both parents. The one distinguishing feature is that its knob elongates, making the flowers very attractive. The leaves are elongated heart shape, large, mid green and mildly hairy and thin.

‘Timboon’ is often called ‘Timboon Red’, only because we know it’s not green , blue or yellow , but it should be referred to as only ‘Timboon’. This is another robust grower but not as much as ‘Romantic Rose’. It grows only 3-4mH with stems that “come out to greet you”.

Karwinskii shows as the dominant parent with the leaves also being mildly hairy, darker green but thicker, similar to *karwinskii*. The flower is a dense brush of a dark cerise/ crimson, showing only a small knob.

‘Timboon’ flowers slightly late than ‘Romantic Rose’, coming out in late June/ July and lasting longer than the former Salvia. A very handsome shrub, a must for any back ground shrubbery.

‘Floss’ looks just like a slender form of *S. karwinskii* . Although it has weaker stems, it can grow about 3mH with a lax but upright habit , which can form into a large dense shrub. The flowers along the flower stem are sparse and slender, with only two tiers of flowers to the whorls. The colour of the hairs are more crimson, but the flowers are still a watermelon colour, they also have the little curling lip on the bract around the flower, giving it an elfish look. Although slender, it produces an abundance of flowers during the season, coming into flower about the same time as its parent. The leaves are a broad cordate shape, a light green and coarse. In winter, they colour up

beautifully with crimson and brown blotches. A good specimen is to be seen in the Geelong Botanical Gardens.

'Pink Icicles' is a very pale form with just a possibility that a gene from *S. wagneriana* may have something to do with the pale colouring. This very attractive plant grows approx 3mH but with a more angular habit of branching. The stems are straight and smooth. Flowers are a lovely pale, pale pink, with a large knob which elongates as it grows, the calyxes are a pale pink and face upright all in one direction along the flower stem which can reach 15-20 cm. Leaves are a cordate shape, smooth, dark green and pointed at the apex. This likes a sheltered position in the garden and makes a wonderful splash of soft pink in the late Autumn/Winter months

S. karwinskii (Red Form) is just like its parent in its strong upright growth form, growing to at least 3mH, it has greyish leaves but much redder flowers. The flowering stem isn't as dense as its parent, but produces copious number of these red flowers.

S. karwinskii (Cyclamen Form). This is a very attractive form of *karwinskii*, growing to approx 3mH and forming a bushy habit of growth. It has greyish leaves and beautiful long slender cerise flower stems. Another good find, yet to be named.

To be continued in the next issue with the Dwarf forms of *Involucrata* and *karwinskii*...

Lyndi Garnett

The Poppy Group News from members after the floods (cont. from last ed.)

From Barb Wickes, Buderim

On the Sunshine Coast we were very lucky to escape the fury of the floods. At the bottom of our garden a creek running through met with the dam and with the deluge we had, flooded the lower parts of the garden more so than ever in the past. Some areas have always had a drainage problem so over the past weeks we have been bringing in loads of sand to dig into the beds and raise them. Drainage also is on the list of things to do in the pathways. I figured we may as well do the job properly and hope that it solves the problem and have now chosen not to plant many salvias in these areas. Plants sat for weeks in soggy soil and the main losses were microphylla's and heliotrope. It surprised me how the old-fashioned Tea roses thrived in the wet soil though! Zephyranthes (storm crocus) just loved the weather conditions. In the higher parts of the garden most salvias have not looked back. *Salvia chiapensis* in wet areas has just survived and in other spots doing well. *Salvia chamelaeagnea* was looking very sad so it was moved to higher ground and is hanging in there.

Salvia 'Wendy's Wish' succumbed in the lower areas but is quite happy in a semi-shaded area in the higher gardens. The 'Heatwave' range suffered even in the higher parts of the garden.

In the well-drained areas *Salvia azurea* I thought may not like the conditions but is looking good. *Salvia mellisodora* – a very old plant situated in a well-drained spot just died overnight – it was, like Carol's *Salvia leucantha*, in the path of the water that ran like a river through parts of the garden for hours! All the involucrata and karwinskii types, *Salvia* Costa Rican Blue and *Salvia wagneriana* are happy. *Salvia muirii* which has never had a problem with our summers has almost gone – there is one sad stem hanging in there and I have taken cuttings. On the whole though I have been fortunate not to lose many plants. This weather does make us look at what and where we plant. *Salvia dorisiana* looks very sad every summer but manages to come through as it has done again this year – I find it does best in a semi-shaded position. A couple of plants that

have thrived in the wet are angelonia and the ground cover moneywort (*Lysimachia nummularia*). I, like Carol have been reluctant to plant out any of the salvias we acquired on our Victorian tour because March can still bring some extremely hot and humid weather.

From Margaret Hume – The Gap - 2nd March, 2011

My garden is high and on a slight slope so drains really quickly but plants that have thrived in my garden with all the extra rain are:

All my tropical bulbs, hippeastrum, crinum, *Eucomis comosa* etc.

Heliotropium arborescens - I have white variety and all the plants have grown huge and always covered with flowers that smell great.

Justicia carnea - The canes have multiplied rapidly and grown taller. The flowers are plentiful and larger than some drier years.

Pentas lanceolata - I have many varieties, miniature, taller growing and 'Blushing Pearl' which are very tall growing (over 2 metres even though nursery label says .75 metre).

Leucanthemum x superbum 'Shaggy Gem' from Diggers at Dromana and I have a miniature also, they both loved the extra water.

Lobularia 'Snow Princess' from Aussie Winners. I still have the original two plants I bought on the day of our visit and have cut them back really hard many times with the hedge shears, they keep coming back into a lovely mound of large white flowers with grey green foliage. I love this plant and it only cost me \$2 for the two plants on the day of the visit - what a bargain!

In the vegetable garden my sweet potatoes have grown huge, some too large and woody to eat, but my 8 year-old asparagus plants have rotted. I have replanted some new asparagus plants which will take a few years to establish before picking. The raspberry canes have grown taller than usual with the extra water and have produced a lot more berries.

From Lee & Gary Tronc – Mooloolo

We found that, the same as last year, not a lot of the salvias survived the drenching unless they were in well-drained soil. Penstemons were also affected significantly along with geranium. The roses were OK and just continued on as if nothing really happened. A couple of them were

more or less living in water for several weeks and appear to be fine.

We did some underground drainage works where we lost a lot of plants last year and this appears to have helped considerably as only a couple of plants were lost in that area this year. The new garden planted north of the house and down the hill suffered really badly as water flowed continuously out of the hill (where it had not previously) and has continued to do so. Drainage is planned in the area for this winter. A couple of roses in that garden were lost but these were not strong plants to start with and we think the rain helped them decide they didn't like living at our place!

From Lynn McAllister - Lawnton

What survived the wet in my 'Plot'? The 'Plot' is at Lawnton, about halfway between Brisbane and Caboolture and not far from Redcliffe as the crow flies. It is situated on top of a hill, has very heavy clay over shale but is actually quite well drained. There are usually no areas where water remains puddled for more than an hour in even the heaviest rain. Rainfall averages over the last 34 years are significantly less than Brisbane or Caboolture, possibly owing to the proximity of Lake Samsonvale which seems to split summer storms north and south of us. The last 6 months though have brought some very heavy downpours to my gardens but fortunately only minor loss of plants.

The salvias suffered several early casualties with *S. semiatrata* and *S. confertiflora* giving up the ghost after standing in water for nearly a week. However, *Salvia* 'Waverly' is taller and has spread further than ever before. The *Emilia flammula* have spread to near plague proportions so I will certainly have seed to share. The few roses I have are looking very healthy and I can't believe there has been so little blackspot given all the wet. 'Garden Party' has continued flowering, even through the grey patches, as have 'Brindabella Bouquet' and 'French Perfume'. All in all the small perennials have fared quite well. With the few days' hot weather recently, a group of ixoras and gardenias under a big quandong tree have defoliated but do look as though they will come back okay.

The daylilies and a couple of Louisiana iris have been over the moon with joy having been told

for the last couple of years that they need to go without. Interestingly the new 'orchard' hasn't appreciated the water. The lychee, wampee and jaboticaba have stood still during all the wet weather and only last week started to put on some new growth. All in all I think I would rather have the rain than have to go back to bucketing out the bathwater!

From Narelle Richter – Ferny Hills

The only comment I can make is that MOST of my garden grew faster than ever before, but as I have a lot of tropical plants this is understandable. The only things that did not survive were geraniums (pelargonium). Most rotted off and collapsed. I also lost a few succulents, but most survived.

From Nancy Tow - Nambour

All my hydrangeas turned pink from blue! I believe prolonged rain can leach acid from the soil so if I want them blue again I'll have to add dolomite!

From Pam Napier - Nambour

Roses, *Buddleja crispa*, most pentas, camellias, begonias have all survived. My most mourned loss was not unexpected -*Leucadendron argenteum* (Silver tree) from Cape Town South Africa. We must expect a limited life span from Mediterranean type plants.

From Rowena Margetts - Kallangur

What did or did not like the wet - my echiums looked a bit sick for a while but seem to be coming back now. The only other things that I've lost are some annuals (petunias and lobelias) that I recently bought to add some colour because a retirement village group are visiting soon. Several of these have just wilted and died, including one petunia that was a replacement of a previous 'victim'. My mother lost most of the special iris that she brought back from a SA trip a few years ago.

From Robyn Edwards – Closeburn

Plants which enjoyed the wet. Orchids, agapanthus, Salvia 'Wendy's Wish', fruit trees, roses, diffenbachia, all rain forest plants, hydrangea, cane begonias, baeckea, cuphea, daylily, dahlia, catmint, *Carphalea kirondron*, chrysanthemum, coleus, clivea, cosmos, hippeastrum, raphiolepis, stenocarpus, portulaca, rosella, rosemary in good drainage, verbena in good drainage, aloe, basil, mint, asparagus, sweet potato, passionfruit, strawberries, lychee, mango, orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime, mandarin.

Those that did not tolerate the wet. Super double gerberas in raised beds, young grevilleas, belladonna lily, carnations and related family, geraniums, native frangipani (several mature trees died), scaevola, small number of large salvias wilted but are recovering, cucumbers.

From Dawn Burke –Kangaroo Point

My geraniums have nearly all died. I think tibouchinas everywhere are looking great, with great depth of colour. Also my 'Wilders White' and 'Ruth Wilcox' hibiscus, which I have grown together as one, have never flowered as well. I have come to the conclusion, gardens need rain to thrive!! I have never watered a lot, as I felt that with the drought, plants needed to be toughened up, but my garden sure jumped with all the rain.

From Susan Myring – Maleny

Aquilegias and geraniums survived the wet surprisingly. Fuschias, heliotrope, all my daisies and some salvias succumbed though. One salvia, I think it is 'Phyllis Fancy', is thriving though.

Do you have Salvias you need identified?
If so, take a photo and email it over to
Lyndi on highcon@hotmail.net.au She will
let you know what you have in your
garden.

Big and Small

At this time of the year most people are "wow'd" by the colours, size and beautiful display of the winter flowering Salvias, they really are spectacular.

But not everyone can accommodate many of these tall growing Salvias in their small suburban gardens, many are perceived as being too large for these small gardens, but have you noticed how accommodating Salvias are?

Many of the tall growing Salvias have a similar smaller version available. For instance: if you can't grow the tall *involutrata spp*, then 'Bethellii' will do just as well as an alternative with the same coloured flowers and a similar flower shape, flowering through summer and autumn and only growing 1m tall.

Other examples can be found in:

- 'Black Knight' 2 - 3m tall, large shrub --- 'Purple Majesty', 1 m tall, very upright and slender with similar violet purple flowers.
- 'Costa Rican Blue' 2 - 3m tall, -- *guaranitica* 'Black n' Blue', has very vibrant dark blue flowers, similar and only, 1m tall.
- 'Bluebird' 3 - 4m tall, erect --- *polystachya* is a smaller version, flowering in Autumn, similar shaped flower and colour, but only 1m tall.
- *iodantha*, 4m tall, erect – *littae* is a much smaller version, a small shrubby salvia, having that same vibrant magenta coloured brush of flowers, but growing only 60 – 80 cms tall.
- Another alternative is *elegans* 'Purple', this is an upright shrub, long spikes of narrow magenta flowers, growing to 1.5m tall, very elegant
- *adenophora*, 3-4m tall, arching habit --- *miniata* is a smaller version with those same bright vermilion red flowers, grows in shade, only 60-80cms tall.
- How accommodating they all are, but we haven't found the equivalent for *pupurea*, *karwinskii*, 'Romantic Rose' or 'Timboon', but we will keep looking.
- So there is the old adage that "there IS a Salvia for every situation in your garden"

Lyndi Garnett

AGHS Conference Profile

Kyleigh Simpson has a background in Art and Education having qualifications in Fine Art, Post Graduate Education and most recently in 2007 post graduate studies in Early Learning. Kyleigh is the author of five children's books, with five more in 2011 and co author with Michael of three gardening books so far.

Her working life has included teaching and respite co ordination for people with special needs where her creativity enabled her passion for art, gardening and education to be utilised.

Kyleigh has built a collectors garden over the last 20 years at "The Shambles" (1901) at Montville which has been open to the public at times since 2001 and lately as part of the Australian Open Gardens Scheme. For her the most important aspect of gardening is creating a sense of permanence by allowing plants to achieve maturity.

Kyleigh and Michael have three grown up children and are now grandparents.

Kyleigh is a member of Heritage Roses in Australia and The Australian Garden History Society and Salvia study Group. Also a member of the Blackall Range Horseless Carriage Club (Vintage Car Club), Kids Club (Church Run After School Care).

Dr Michael Simpson studied Medicine at the University of Queensland after working in the Commonwealth Bank .He works full time as a General Practitioner. With Kyleigh he helped to build a garden at Sandgate around their Century old cottage and for the last twenty years they have constructed a collector's garden at "The Shambles" (1901) the country at Montville. With Kyleigh he is the co author of three books with an emphasis on 'heritage' aspects of gardening in Queensland. The latest book "Australian Gardens Making History." discusses the importance of recording and publishing the catalogue of plants in the garden. Michael is a member of Heritage Roses in Australia and the Australian Garden History Society, Salvia Study Group, Montville Village Association, Blackall Range Horseless Carriage Club (Vintage Car Club) and plays the organ at the Montville Uniting Church.

In 2008 he funded and co coordinated the Heritage Listing of the Montville Memorial Precinct under the *Queensland Heritage Act*.

Kyleigh and Michael also manage the gardens at the Montville Uniting Church (1912) and the Montville Hall (1903).

Salvias at Montville, South East Queensland Versatility with vigour

Dr. Michael Simpson, "The Shambles",
Western Avenue Montville.

Ornamental perennial salvias are favourites in our garden but are not as widely used as they could be. Our collection has grown through the cuttings trade with fellow gardeners, church fete acquisitions and from "Ja's Herb farm" at Mapleton which, sadly, has closed down.

Over the last 6 months it has rained or showered almost every day and it has been quite dark and spooky under the cloud cover in our mountain top location. In spite of the weather challenge our collection of ornamental salvias injects cheerful colour throughout the garden.

One of the first salvias we acquired, which happily self seeds throughout is *Salvia coccinea bicolor*. In contrast to this quite low growing pink and white plant *Salvia coccinea* has taller bright red and a pure white variety which are useful donor plants. We don't do well at all with *Salvia greggii* but other smaller flowered salvias such as *Salvia* "Sweet Laura", the pineapple sage *Salvia elegans* have thrived in sun or shade in our conditions. The crushed foliage of the latter makes it an ideal edge of garden plant with herbs like Rosemary,

Rosmarinus officinalis and Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*.

Tall growing plants such as *Salvia iodantha*, *S.involucrata*, *S.madrensis* and varieties such as *Salvia involucrata* "pink icicles", *Salvia x hybrid* "Waverley" have been reliable bedding plants and provide spectacular colour and form even in low light. They stand out like the *Justicia carnea* and *Pachystachys lutea* from a long way off.

Some plants in our garden, while not actually salvias, stand next to established salvias very successfully so that they enhance each other. *Plectranthus ecklonii* in blue, white or as "Hawthorne pink" variety and *Plectranthus saccatus* have salvia like flowers in late summer, are tall and go beautifully with drifts of *Salvia guaranitica* or *Salvia uliginosa*. The mauve flowers of *Hypoestes aristata*, the *Plectranthus* "Mona Lavender" hybrids and the cloud of white flowers on *Iboza* syn.*Tetradenia riparia* complement *Salvia Mexicana*. *Orthosiphon stamineus* (Cat's whiskers) in white compliments *Salvia confertifolia* with its strong orange/red flower spikes.

Throughout our garden *Salvia splendens* in white, variegated white and red, or, white and

mauve are extremely reliable and quite tall in our climate. *Salvia* “Van Houtii” and *Salvia* “Purple Majesty” are also very reliable and in keeping with almost all of our plants strike easily from cutting to be shared around.

One of our favourite salvias *Salvia miniata* has bright red flowers contrasting dramatically with the perfect blue flowers of sticky *Salvia macrophylla*. Another better known plant is *Salvia leucantha* and the variety *S.leucantha* “White velour”. Of course not everything in the garden is perfect and unfortunately we lost *Salvia discolor*, *Salvia* “Huntington red” and *Salvia sclarea* in the unceasing rain.

However, there are other interesting “salvia like” plants which can be rewarding in our climate by having the free flowering and forgiving nature of salvias and being easy to strike from cutting. These include *Pycnostachys urticifolia*, *Lepachina salviae*, *Brillantasia subulugurica* and the lovely lemon scented verbena, *Aloysia triphylla*.

Our salvia collection has been grouped to show off the salvias together but is not separate. The salvias work beautifully to create a colourful foil to our collections of Abutilons, old fashioned roses, our buddlejas, gardenias and large collections of shade loving subtropical plants including the Begonias. They also provide reliable colour in semi-shaded positions under our collections of trees.

Our salvias along with the rest of our plant collection can be read on our website

www.montvillegarden.com and is discussed on our blog <http://montvillegarden.blogspot.com>.

The 1875 Brisbane Botanic Gardens Catalogue mentions *Salvia azurea*, *S. coccinea*, *S. officinalis*, *S. patens*, *S. plebia*, *S. pratensis*, *S. afracanus* and *S. splendens*. Brisbane’s 1885 Botanic and Acclimatization garden’s catalogue included *Salvia azurea*, *S.coccinea*, *S.fulgens*, *S.hoveyi*, *S.officinalis*, *S.patens* and *S.splendens*. Many of the other perennial Salvias in our garden, despite their old fashioned appearance were not mentioned in 19th century catalogues and according to Clebsch (2003) some may not have been widely available to gardeners until the 1980s. Accordingly the 1962 Brisbane Botanical gardens Catalogue only records *Salvia argentea*, *S. azurea*, *S. farinacea*, *S involucrata*, *S. leucantha*, *S. patens* and *Salvia splendens* as well as *S. splendens variegated*.

We have a collectors garden around a century old cottage and in spite of their lack of ‘heritage’ credentials the many ornamental salvias display perfectly as traditional colourful garden plants in that setting. They remain uncommon and sometimes expensive in Queensland retail nurseries which seems unfortunate. Salvias of many kinds are a wonderful easy care addition to modern gardens but have a particular charm in a busy crowded traditional garden especially where there is shade.

Dr Michael Simpson

News from Hobart

Today, the warmth of winter sun after an icy birdbath morning encouraged a male Superb Blue Wren to plunge into a shallow dish and tousle water through its feathers repeatedly.

Earlier a couple of New Holland Honeyeaters were enjoying nectar from adjacent cerise corollas on the same bobbing inflorescence of *Salvia involucrata x karwinskii*, the first flowers of which emerged at the beginning of July. This was an usual sight, for these birds to be so close in feeding but also because, invariably, the flowering of this plant is prevented by late autumn and early winter frosts in my home garden. Also unscathed a month after the solstice is *S. gesneriiflora* ‘Tequila’ which has continued to flower with numerous arching inflorescences emerging from all the nodes along a shoot trained horizontally for two metres, north-westerly, along the handrail of the deck from a main stem pruned to 1.5m above the ground. Experience has shown that usually the flowering of this shrub in my garden is inhibited by frost for



the three months of winter, resulting from bud drop. Similarly, *Salvia iodantha* is burnt by frost also but this winter is in full flower, admittedly on a struggling shrub that is a poor representation of its past and the possible vigour and brilliance of this species.

All positioned by the carport with a degree of wind protection, *S. 'Black Night'* and *S. concolor* have flowers still while *S. 'Costa Rican Blue'*, is a perpetual display of innumerable dark blue corollas. Another plant of the last at the bottom of a gentle slope in the garden, though, with shade from trees but less protection from wind or frosts, is devoid of flowers. So far *S. dorisiana* is undamaged from the cold with buds emerging from the bracts and *S. karwinskii* has visible long soft spines at the ends of the bracts on developing prominent terminal buds. The progress of this flowering is surprising given that I have recorded thirty four days with minimums of two degrees and below over the past nine weeks. The minus three degrees recorded this morning, however, the day after the above was written, has countered my hesitant optimism with a reality that will be more apparent tomorrow with blackening leaves and browning buds.

At the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, earlier in the month I saw Eastern Rosellas eating the seeds on *Salvia mexicana* 'Lolly' and noticed for the second successive year the disappearance of most of the flowering stems of *Salvia involucrata x karwinskii* which I suspect can be attributed to the aforementioned feathered friends! A particular highlight of the salvia collection there at present is a plant of *S. dorisiana* which was planted as a division in late September last year from the parent plant which had to be removed for infrastructure works. This division, pruned to a few short stems, was planted beneath the deck of the restaurant that is three metres above the ground but a metre back into the overhanging shade of the north-easterly aspect of this position which has proved a difficult one in which to grow salvias. During the height of summer this salvia would receive most of the morning sun only but as day length has shortened it is exposed to most of the day's sun in winter. The summer's growth of this plant was reduced by half in early March and it has now developed over forty branching inflorescences on an impressive, flowering and compact bush that is only a metre in diameter and height.

Feedback about these observations by members and their experiences in the growing of these salvias in frost prone areas would be particularly interesting.

John Daniels

john-daniels@bigpond.com

Salvia News from Southeast Queensland

At the time of writing (2nd week of August) here in Southeast Queensland we have reached that point that inevitably arrives each year, where each night we listen with bated breath to hear what the weatherman has to say. And then keep our fingers crossed that if the forecast is showers, or even better still rain or storms, that by some miracle they get it right. How ironic after the terrible flooding of only 8 months ago.

I think we are feeling it even more so because of construction happening on the next property which has seen upwards of 50 trucks a day for the last 5 weeks scotching past on the dirt road. Everything is coated in a thick layer of dust which is making even the hardiest of plants look drab and choked.

I have been very remiss with keeping up to the maintenance of my Salvias this year. Some were cut back early, some late and some not at all. But I don't feel that it has been detrimental with our autumn and winter flowerers performing brilliantly as always. *S. purpurea* put on an absolutely amazing display back in May when we had a group of 100 people here for a fund-raising event. With many gasps and oohs and ahhs I handed out cuttings left, right and centre. Probably not an ideal time to be doing it but I do like to share my

plants around.

I had thought that I might miss out on *S.* 'Timboon' flowering this year as the plant had only been in for about 6 months. (The original plant was much too big for its position.) But flower it did with its breathtaking combination of rich dark colours. And my absolute favorite *S. rubignosa* has been a joy for weeks and weeks.

S. radula is growing strongly with lovely healthy foliage. It is the survivor of 2 plants struck from cuttings that grew and flowered very well until last summer's big wet when the second plant dropped dead almost overnight. I have my fingers crossed that considering this remaining plant survived one summer where it is, that it will make it through again this year. I do so like white flowers.

These next few months will be a trial for those new plants purchased on our trip down south last November and then again in April on our short trip out west. We have more than a dozen new (to us) microphylla and greggii salvias that we are patiently keeping an eye on. I am sure once the spring rains come that they will be off and racing.

One new plant that I will be keeping close track of is *S.* 'Blue Abyss'. To me very reminiscent of *S.* 'Anthony Parker' although the tag says 'found under leucantha'. We have planted ours not far from our *S.* 'Anthony Parker' so that it gets the same light, water and conditions and shall keep a close eye on it. Having only been in the ground for 8 months it has performed beautifully so far, growing and flowering strongly and healthily.

We had a fun-filled day a fortnight ago with a visit from salvia enthusiasts Wendy Smith and Glenda Sellenger from Mornington Peninsula. I was so proud to be able to show them my success with seed they had sent me of *S. candelabrum* and *S. bowleana*. I tend to be a bit lazy when it comes to growing from seed and manage to let the pots dry out much too much on a regular basis. Thankfully though I had some luck and shall be able to share some plants around for trial.

I am getting a little impatient, with my fingers itching to get some planting done but common sense (and my hubby) tells me to wait for warmer, moister times and hopefully the yearly disappearance of 'that dratted bandicoot'.

Until spring makes an appearance,
Happy Gardening Carol Kerkin

Pruning and Propagation for Winter

Now is the perfect time to prune large leaf Salvias and take cuttings.

Many of these tall large leaf Salvias may have finished or are almost finished flowering. They may be looking a bit bedraggled from the wind, or Wattle Birds crashing into them, many clumps may have old canes that need taking out.

Have a look at your plant and decide what needs coming out. Old canes can be pruned right down to the base, of course if there are new growths coming from the old canes fairly low down, then prune to those new shoots.

Usually you always prune to a bud or new shoots, but it may not be possible to find new shoots happening on large plants, so you will have to

prune to where you think there should be a bud or prune to a suitable height and wait for that new growth to appear. While you are taking out the big old canes, don't forget to clean out the weak, old, dead or crossing branches, the same principle as pruning a rose bush.

If you are like me and cannot throw away any pruning – (you just have to take all those cuttings), well now is the perfect time. If you find yourself with too many plants to pot up, just give them to a friend or give them to the group to sell – we can always use some more pots of whatever you give us. (just phone and we can organize to pick up)

Don't even think about taking cutting of the small leaf Salvias e.g. greggii's and microphylla's, they will only sit and sulk in this cold weather. They are best taken in the warmer months.

Taking Cuttings

Take tip cuttings, anywhere from 8 – 14cm long, strip off the lower leaves and any flowers and buds. (we want the energy in the cutting to go into producing roots and strong growth – if there are flowers or buds, and then the energy goes into producing that flower and not roots. If the cutting does root with a flower, then it is likely to be weak and may not survive any shocks or stress.) Nip out the top bud of leaves as this promotes bushyness.

As many of these large leaf Salvias can have hollow stems, it is best to take the cutting by cutting through the node, or at least leave a heel.

Dip the cuttings into a rooting gel or powder and put into a pot of ordinary potting mix. Plant the cutting deeply so that there is at least one node below the surface. This all goes to help produce roots. Many people prefer to plant one cutting to one pot – this can take up a lot of space. The idea here is that the cutting will continue to grow in that pot, no repotting and no shock associated with repotting for the plant, but some people don't have a lot of room e.g. me, so I put a number of cuttings in one pot and tease them out and pot up into individual pots when rooted.

Always water the pot of cuttings or potted up plants – this is to settle the soil and to eliminate the air around the cutting stem, so the cutting can then get on with the task of producing roots.

Place the pot/s of cuttings in a sheltered place, out of the wind and if possible a warm area. It is not

necessary to place them in a heated propagating unit at all. Because of the cold weather, these plants don't transpire (lose water) as much as in the warmer weather, so leave them outside in the elements in a sheltered position.

To tell if the cuttings have rooted, you can either see the roots appearing through the bottom of the pot or you can tip up the pot, carefully taking the pot off the soil to see if there are any roots. If there are no roots, carefully place the pot back over the soil and firm the soil around the cuttings again, water again. Another indication that the cuttings have taken is that the cuttings are putting on new growth.

But beware, there are some cuttings that seem to put on new growth, but rather these elongate their stems and leaves, but don't produce any roots.

Once the cutting/s has rooted and you need to pot up, carefully tip up the pot with your hand and fingers carefully positioned through the cuttings and tip out, carefully lay them out and gradually tease them apart, placing a cutting in a half filled pot of soil.

When all the cuttings have been teased out, then proceed to cover the cutting with good potting soil and firming around the stem. Don't forget the label and water in.

Scatter around a little Osmocote and set them aside and watch them grow.

It's that easy, so have a go – you never know, you may have success where other fail, and give them away to someone to brighten their day.

Lyndi Garnett



Details page 18

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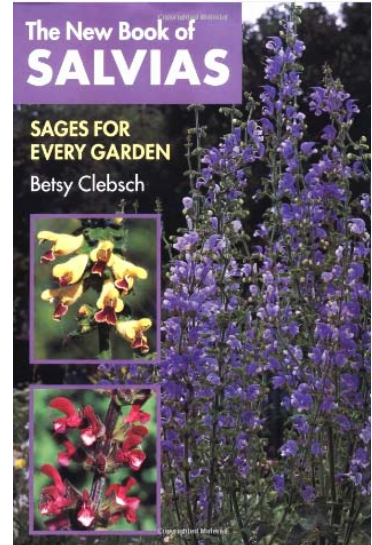
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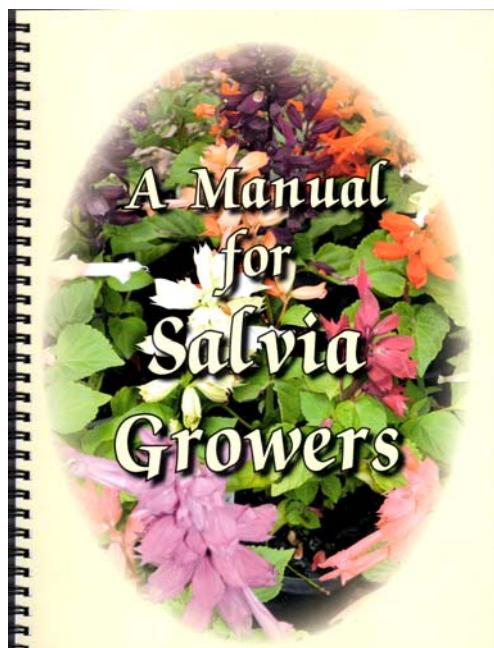
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