

SALVIA NEWS

Number 46



Official Newsletter of the

Victorian Salvia Study Group

December 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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The views expressed by the contributors of this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of this Society. While every effort is made to publish reliable information, the use of that information is at the discretion of the individual. The Herb Society of Victoria Inc takes no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed and it does not offer treatment or advice.

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**Deadline for the Autumn issue is 4th March 2012.
Please send copy to Kathie via email or post.**

SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP



Welcome to your latest edition. I hope you've been enjoying the change in the weather. Summer is on its way and it's wonderful to see all the colour in our gardens. Article submissions for the next issue are due by **4th March 2012** and should be sent to my email address below please.

You might like to know that Trudi is recovering well from her recent operation and is walking around again, much to her delight. Thank you to those who have sent their best wishes to her – they have been passed on. She is at home and able to take calls again too now.

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

Approximately two years ago, I visited a garden and was given a piece of Salvia Hotlips that I admired together with a year of back issues of Salvia News to read. I was impressed and wanted more information regarding these plants and sent away for my own subscription. I had planted a Salvia Heatwave Flare a year earlier and it was rarely without flowers. Not long after receiving my first copy of the Salvia News, I visited Tesselaar's and bought several salvias from who I now know to be The Victoria Salvia Study Group. Today I already have a couple of dozen in my small garden and enjoying adding to my collection. I am a person with a disability and use no dig gardening principles. The more I learn about these wonderful plants, the more hooked I have become.

I have put my hand up to work with the production of Salvia News. Kathie, Lyndi and Jillian will help me on my way. Because of my disability, I understand that I may sound cross or upset, especially on the telephone, even when I am not. Please just ignore. I may lose my voice eventually, some will say that's a blessing! I can always be contacted via email beth.c@bigpond.com. Don't forget the dot between beth and c. In the meantime, laugh with me while we enjoy the pleasure of gardening, especially the growing of Salvias. Hope to meet you at the Christmas Lunch.

Happy Gardening,
Beth Clisby

Editor's Note

As Trudi is no longer Editor of the Salvia News, please send all articles to Kathie Thomas, our lovely co-editor on kathie@vadirectory.net

Please Note

If you accidentally misplace your copy of the Salvia News or have lent it some else or you are waiting for your copy to come in the post and you want to find out what is happening on our Calendar of Events, please go to our website www.salvias.org.au and check the Calendar of Events, as this is always up-to-date.

2011 Calendar of Events

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 information.

Nov 27th Sun

Salvias at Nobelius, 12am - 3pm

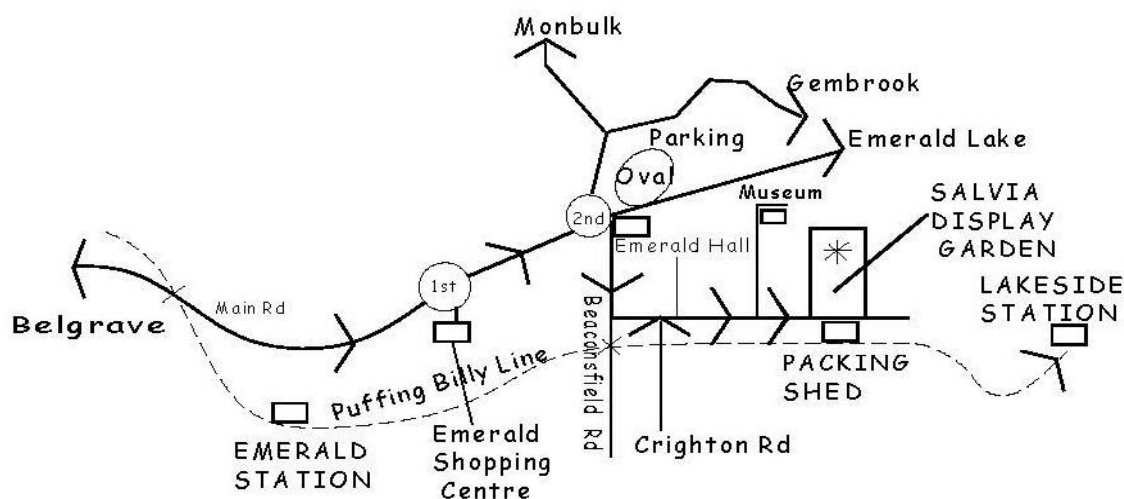
Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald Mel: 127 G4

beneath the Packing Shed : *see map below*

Come and visit the display garden and find the Salvias you're wanting

Bring a list and a hat.

Parking available. NO parking for buses in the park.



Dec 4th Sun

Christmas Luncheon, Jillian Barkell's Garden 11am

6 Halcyon Ave, The Patch Mel : 124 D4

Join us to celebrate Xmas in the beautiful setting of Jillian's garden

Bring a chair and a plate of Christmas fare to share.

RSVP Jillian Ph: 9756 6361

2012

Feb 25/26th Sat & Sun **Salvia Spectacular at Ferny Creek Horticultural Hall 10am - 4pm**
Hilton Rd, Ferny Creek Mel: 66 E12
Featuring Salvias for your Garden & Robyn Powell from Tulepo Nursery S.A.
Plant Sales, Informative Displays, Landscape Display, Identification of Salvias
Refreshments available, easy Parking. Bus groups welcome
Entry \$5.00. Bring your friends, come and enjoy the day.
More information Ph Lyndi 98034534. Meg 59649372

March 10/11 **Ferny Creek Horticultural Society's Plant Collector's Sale & Garden Expo**
Sat & Sun
100 Hilton Rd, Sassafras Mel: 66, F12
10 – 4pm both days
Salvias for sale – bring your list

March 17/18 **Pat & John Anderson Open Garden 10 am - 4.30 pm**
Sat & Sun
98 Bradleys Lane, Warrandyte, Mel: 23. C 12
Beautiful garden with large Salvia Collection and other interesting plants
Refreshments and live music from 11am both days
Plants will be for sale

March 17/18 **Tesselaar Gardener's Market**
Sat & Sun
357 Monbulk Rd, Silvan Mel :123, B5
9 – 4pm
Salvias for sale - bring your list

Salvia Spectacular

As the Salvia Spectacular will be held on **February 25th & 26th 2012**, we are going to need lots of helpers. You don't have to be an expert or know much about Salvias to volunteer your services; you may just want to help,

Do you want to be involved? If so please phone Meg: Ph 59649372, or Lyndi: Ph 98034534, there are lots of areas where you can help. We will be having a few meetings closer to that date so if you can phone in and leave a name and number, then we can contact you and bring you up to date as to what is going on.

Christmas Luncheon

This event will take place at Jillian Barkell's Garden @11am, Sunday 4th December.

6 Halcyon Ave, The Patch Mel: 124 D4



Please join us to celebrate Christmas in the beautiful setting of Jillian's garden, bring a chair and a plate of Christmas fare to share.

RSVP Jillian Ph 9756 6361 so she knows how many are coming for the purpose of tables and chairs.

Trudi Fry: Editor Extraordinaire

On page 3 of the last issue of *Salvia News*, it was reported that Trudi had resigned from the editorship of *Salvia News* due to ill health and an imminent operation. *Salvia News* will continue, thanks to Beth..... responding to the subsequent plea for help, and will be ably assisted by Kathie Thomas. However, after contemplating the dates, I realised that Trudi had undertaken this enjoyable, but very onerous task for 10 years, a milestone that deserves some reflection.

As Trudi reported, the newsletter grew out of a meeting of 7 or 8 active *Salvia* enthusiasts who had been collecting and researching these wonderful plants since the early 90s. It was agreed that the group should circulate a newsletter to its growing number of members, and who better to produce this than Trudi? After all, she had just acquired a computer (a present from her family) and the fact that she didn't know yet how to use it was irrelevant. As Trudi said in the last issue, it was her 4 year-old grand son who showed her how to turn it on, and thus began a steep learning curve.

The first issue, with 5 A4 pages, appeared in May 2001, together with a scanned, red *Salvia microphylla* on the front, followed by an 8-pager two months later. Editing the newsletter wasn't just a matter of checking and putting together some articles of interest which could then be magically printed and circulated. For Trudi, it meant doing the lot – cajoling people into writing, and if articles were not forthcoming, it meant writing most of it herself. It meant typing, checking, laying out, printing, and posting it off, although I understand that Donna was also very helpful at this stage. And so began a vital means of communicating the growing wealth of knowledge about *salvias* to the growing band of enthusiasts, including lists of plants in members' collections, new introductions, news from different parts of the state and further afield, shared wisdom on propagation, pruning and general maintenance, accumulated knowledge from overseas via internet discussion groups etc. Early in 2003, it sensibly became a quarterly newsletter and as more people began to contribute, the winter issue of 2004 was a 15-pager. The next issue had a special coloured front page and from summer 2008 the newsletter was produced on folded, stapled A3 paper, a format that made the "centre fold" of issue number 40 (photographs of the grand opening of the new display garden at Nobelius) look very grand.

All this from someone who began the first issue without knowing how to use a computer but who has gone on, throughout her 70s, to embrace the technology, learnt how to use various programs to

manage templates and layouts, text boxes, digital photographs, email and mail merge. Each issue has had some editorial note at the beginning – always some keen observation, sympathy for those suffering the ravages of bush fire or flood or warm reflection on happier events.

Trudi, thank you for your contribution, for all your effort and determination and for establishing a tradition that will continue to grow with the group to be enjoyed by the many salvia enthusiasts in Victoria, together with readers as far away as New Zealand, Japan and the UK. We wish you a speedy recovery from your surgery.

Pat Anderson

Why we need Salvia names

The main reason for naming Salvias or any other plant is to discern which Salvia you are referring to.

Salvias like every plant in the plant world have 2 names. Salvia is the Genus and has a species name which is a description of that particular plant. Occasionally Salvias may be giving a third name such as a hybrid or cultivar name.

Salvia gesneriiflora has large red flowers with green calyxes, S. 'Tequila has large red flowers but with very dark purple/ black calyxes, it also has a different growth habit from the parent, S. 'Red Rambler' has large red flowers and brownish calyxes and a more sentinel growth habit.

So we have 3 different plants coming from the one parent, all similar but showing different coloured calyxes and different growth habits, hence the need for each plant to be named so you know which plant you are referring to. By giving names to hybrids especially if they are similar, this separates each plant, it then has its own identity with its own special features and allows for any other hybrids that may be found at a later time.

We all know that *Salvia microphylla* is a large group with many hybrids. It is a very promiscuous group, mating within themselves and other Salvias.

Many of those hybrids are very similar in colour and form so without each one being given its own special name; it would be extremely confusing trying to work out which plant we are talking about.

There are a number of Salvias that have different forms that are already in existence but have not been named and are causing a lot of confusion due to the fact that one person knows that plant as that form, while another person knows that plant as another form etc, etc.... These groups of Salvias are slowly being sorted out by groups of knowledgeable Salvia people who will publish their results in the Salvia News, on the Website and forward those results to other like minded Salvia groups around Australia.

Some of these forms can be either colour forms or growth habit forms, e.g. Salvia abc Red form, green or blue form. Having colour forms can cause problems as not everyone sees the same colour, some people are colour blind and what you call red, some one else may think it's orange or brown or green or blue with white stripes. If you have a Salvia efg lax form/ decumbent form or an upright form, these can also cause problems as those plants may grow in a lax habit for you but might grow upright in another situation and vice versa. These names are easily forgotten by the public, especially when cuttings are passed on, so these names are only temporary until a better more appropriate descriptive name can be found.

There are those that think that too many names are given to plants willy nilly, they may be right, but the idea is to discern between two or more similar plants so we know exactly which plant we are talking about. Some may think that because a plant has a name that it's going to be propagated and promoted – not always so.

A plant can be with in a group of similar plants that has been sorted and has been given a name to separate it from the others in the group. This plant may not be very special and can stay in your garden or a display garden for many months or years with out much notice being taken, BUT if that name crops up in a conversation some time later or some one has come across this plant with this name, then everyone will know exactly which plant they are talking about, even if it is referred to us, we will know which plant they are referring to.

Someone may want cuttings of that particular plant, you will know exactly which plant they are referring to, so a label with that name goes with the cuttings and this is passed on down the track.

A scenario of why we ourselves have names. Way back in ancient times, Harry had 4 daughters, who all looked similar, were all beautiful, dark haired and tall, all were known as the daughters of Harry as they often did in those days.

Two people were talking in the street, one person was talking about one of these daughters extolling the virtues of this one daughter, but the other person asked, which daughter are you talking about, they all have those virtues, so which one are you talking about ???

More on names in the next issue.....

Lyndi Garnett

The Long Lost *Salvia Aurea* Treasures of Trudi's Garden

Finally we have found and named the long lost *Salvia aureas* from Trudi's garden. After being closeted for so long, she has finally given up her secrets about all the wonderful forms of *Salvia aurea* that have been growing in and about her garden for the past 20 years!!

What we found was 4 distinct forms which Meg and I named with Trudi's approval and one form which is still being investigated, which if the colour form proves to be sustainable, will be added to the list at a later date.

These forms are:

S. aurea – the original form , a dense spreading shrub approx 2 x 2-3m, large round leaves, green / greenish grey / grey. Flowers are huge, a lovely bright terracotta colour with the base of the stamens being a bluish colour. The calyx is vase shaped and very colourful, the lips can seem almost black in some lights, but a mainly dark burgundy/ brown colour.

S aurea 'BookLeaf' – a very compact shrub, approx 80 x 80cm – 1m. the leaves are smaller, slightly wavy with a tight formation of growth and grey / green in colour. Flowers are smaller but still large and have a softer terracotta colour. Calyx is greenish with coloured lips, almost looking like a pair of lips.

S. aurea ' Green Ginger' – a more open upright shrub, approx 80 -1m x 80cm -1m. Leaves are small oval to round, greenish / grey and cloth the stems well. Flowers are large and a bright terracotta colour. The calyx is the main feature for this shrub, being a vivid bright green, making a wonderful contrast with the terracotta colour of the flowers. The calyx remain that colour for some time after the flower has dropped.

S. aurea 'Silver Lady' – a dense shrub with horizontal layering branches, approx 1.2 x 1.2 – 1.5m. Silver leaves are the main attraction, with pointed ends and lots of new growth along the stems. Flowers are a dark terracotta colour, contrasting beautifully with the silver leaves, making quite a spectacle. The calyx is coloured green and brown.

Another *S. aurea* which is available is the prostrate form, known as *S. aurea* prostrate. This possibly originated from the 'Silver Lady' form having silver leaves but only grows to approx 30 x 40 -50 cms

All the forms of *S. aurea* that have been growing in Trudi's garden have been closely monitored during those years.

Meg first started tagging these forms in 2002, finally all that close work has finally come to fruition
Lyndi Garnett

WHAT PERSON ARE YOU.....?

A compulsive pruner, constantly snipping away at plants to make things neat and tidy? What do you do with the cuttings?

The sort of person who can't throw away any prunings and must pot them up? Because you constantly pot up prunings that have rooted you now find that you have too many pots around the garden?

Do you have Salvias that grown a little wild, that really need pruning back, that need to be dug out or are in the wrong position and are no longer wanted, or those Salvias that have grown too large?

If you find yourself in any one of the above situations, Help Is On Hand
Don't throw away those prunings or that Salvia that has grown too large or those bits that were growing outside the allotted garden bed. Pot up them up!. Someone else may find pleasure in the plants that you discard.

Phone us and we can take those excess potted plants away, either we can pick them up or you can drop them off when passing.

As the Spectacular is only a few months away, we are going to need your excess Salvia plants for the displays and sales table.

Contact :

Jillian 97566361 or
Meg 59649372 for the Dandenong Ranges areas
Bevan 59778104 for the Mornington Peninsular regions
Lyndi 98034534 for the plains and all other suburbs

Salvia News from Southeast Queensland

This year we have experienced a very mild spring resulting in our gardens looking wonderful. We can get hot dry weather in October but this year the temperatures have been unusually low and although dry at times, overnight showers have been received. Our salvia group met in our garden on Friday and everyone commented on how good the garden is looking. We usually open with Open Gardens Australia (previously AOGS) in the autumn however I have decided we will open this time next year when there will be a good showcase of salvias and roses.



Last November our garden tour visited Nobelius and departed with a lovely assortment of salvias. These were shared amongst the salvia group and on Friday we discussed the various results over the 12 month period. There were a few salvias that we tried again having lost them in the past and again we have lost them so have now been put on the 'not to grow in SEQ list'! *Dentata*, *dombeyii*, *jamensis* 'La Luna', *rubescens* and *spathacea*. I recall growing *spathacea* in our Brisbane garden 15 or so years ago and it lived a year or so and then the wet humid weather saw its demise! It is the most beautiful plant but we have finally agreed it's not for us. Perhaps in the drier less humid areas west of the range it would survive.

Those of you who receive the SAA newsletter will be aware that I have mentioned my concern over the number of *greggii*/*microphylla* type seedlings circulating throughout the country. We have a number up here also that are being sold. I feel we should trial these seedlings for a good 12 months and document their growth habit, flowering etc, in a brief article in either the Vic Study Group newsletter or SAA newsletter. There are certainly some beautiful salvias coming through but they need to have some special features. Confusion can occur with naming also and this could be avoided by communications between the groups before going on the market. For example we have 'Coconut Ice' (*microphylla* type) and 'Coconut Ice' (*involucrata* type).

A new plant I purchased earlier this year at a nursery in Warwick is Silas Dyson – according to the internet it is named after William Dyson's second son and is a perennial salvia with erect spikes of dark red flowers from summer into autumn. It has flowered continually since being planted and looks like being a great addition. William Dyson is the Curator at Great Comp Garden at Sevenoaks, Kent, UK; he also runs his own nursery specialising in salvias which is situated within the garden. Website: www.greatcomparden.co.uk

Some news of salvias in our garden: I pruned 'Timboon' hard earlier in the year and to date it hasn't flowered which is strange as last season it was a covered in flowers for months. Other winter flowerers seem to be going on and on though – *Salvia iodantha* is still producing flowers as is *Salvia gesneriiflora* 'Red Rambler'.

Carol Kerkin reports that *S.* 'Blue Abyss' is doing well and flowers a lot longer than *S.* 'Anthony Parker'. Also Carol has given me a *S. candelabrum* she has grown from seed to trial and I have taken Meg's advice and planted it in filtered light. I have also taken Meg's advice on where to plant *S. bowleyana* - it is doing well but no sign of a flower yet – I do recall seeing this in flower in November in Glenda Sellenger's garden last year. *S. ionalyx* is another new arrival and Mick Nanka has grown it for a few of us – I plan to keep it in a pot as I suspect it may not like our humidity. *S. carnea* is doing well in a sheltered position – a very quick grower that looks like it will suit our climate. *S. miahuataliensis* (?*pulchella*) looks like a strong grower – I am waiting for the flower. *S. ombrophila* is looking very healthy and has a bud on it – strange as Meg's book suggests it is a winter flowerer. I will report to Meg on its progress. *S. sagittata x macrophylla* is flowering – I will keep a close watch on this in case it is as much a seeder as *S. macrophylla* which is popping

up all over the garden from some distance!

Something we have noticed is the difference in growth with some salvias in SEQ - *S. 'Wendy's Wish'* is a much larger plant here than Victoria. We have planted *S. microphylla* 'Mystique' next to *S. 'Follett's Folly'* (seedling from Deb Follett at Gympie and on the market here for years) and we all agree they are identical.

The forecast is for another wet summer but not as bad as the last so let us hope our salvias cope!

Barb Wickes

News from Hobart

Winter here was the warmest since 2006. Indicative of this in my garden is that I have managed to over-winter plants of *Salvia splendens* in a polystyrene box on my NE facing deck. A couple of these plants already have scarlet calyces beginning to open in the first week in November. In our relatively colder climate, the tropical vibrancy of such a striking colour is most attractive and signals a welcome return of "summer", yet generally, *S. splendens* is undervalued because it is so commonplace with its use in council bedding schemes and easy accessibility. Most of the salvias burnt by the frosts in winter have developed new shoots from last season's growth, even a plant of *S. 'Anthony Parker'* that is normally cut to the crown during winter. *Salvia involucrata x karwinskii* is again flowering at the tips of last season's canes and, in their protected position by the car port, *S. karwinskii*, *S. concolor*, and *S. 'Costa Rican Blue'* have resumed flowering also after the two successive hard frosts of minus three degrees, a month after the solstice damaged their flowering stems.

Thank you, Trudi, for your dedication and application to the cause of communication on salvias through your editorship of *Salvia News*. I remember well how welcoming you were and generous in your sharing and advice at the *Salvia Spectacular* at Ferny Creek in 2004. How beautiful was the display of your pots of *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla* cultivars, truly spectacular, an idea I have endeavoured to repeat! There, I saw, for the first time, many types of salvia, which I had never seen before, so beautifully displayed. One of your recommendations to me was to go to Geelong

Botanic Gardens and see the salvia collection there, advice I have passed on to many visitors and those with an interest in salvias. That visit led to my meeting Des and the expansion of the salvia



collection at the RTBG over the following couple of years. For me, this became a journey of discovery of the many wonders of the salvia world and I was fortunate to have had that opportunity. Your encouragement to me to contribute to *Salvia News* led to my developing observations and a detailed appreciation of the many interesting and varied features of salvias and an enjoyment of the challenge of putting those into words.

My management of the salvia collection at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens has recently come to an end with my 'early' voluntary 'termination', time to treat my aches and pains with more consideration. I certainly regret losing that personal connection to the collection there, as well as the north-easterly aspect and Derwent river view. In my last week, I did some relandscaping of the largest bed of American salvia species and cultivars. It is a bed that regularly forced me to realise that a **salvia jungle** is hard work!

Feedback by members about their experiences in the performance of these salvia species and cultivars and their observations of their response to frost would be welcomed.

John Daniels

email: john-daniels@bigpond.com

Salvia News

THE VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc

www.salvias.org.au

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Salvia Spectacular

Presented by the
Salvia Study Group of Victoria
(Herb Society of Victoria Inc.)

Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th February 2012
10am - 4pm
at the
Ferry Creek Horticultural Society Hall
Hilton Road East, Ferry Creek (Mel: 66 E12)

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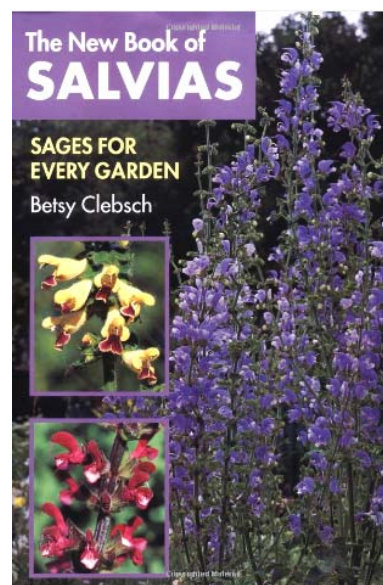
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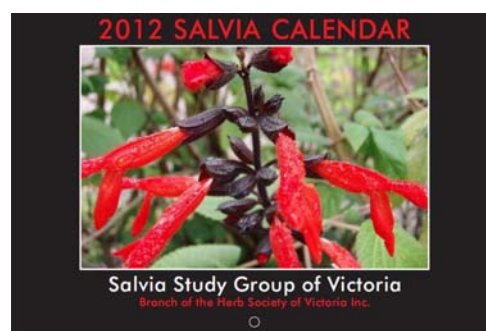
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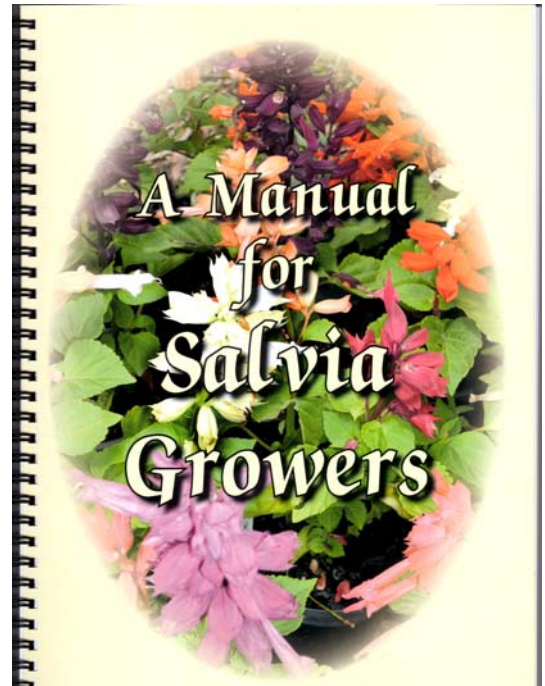
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- As an Accent in the Garden
- Propagating and Pruning
- Colourful Tints of Stressed Leaves
- Pest and Disease
- Where to see Salvia
- Cultivation Notes and Name Changes



The Salvia Manual by Meg Bentley can be ordered from:

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6 Halcyon Avenue, The Patch 3792
Ph: 9756 6361

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