

# SALVIA NEWS

Number 48



Official Newsletter of the

**Victorian Salvia Study Group**

Winter 2012

**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](http://www.salvias.org.au)**

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**COPY DEADLINE SALVIA NEWS 2012**

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**SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS**  
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**DEADLINE for SPRING ISSUE is Sat 11 August 2012**



# SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

**W**elcome to your Winter edition of Salvia News.

I've been watching the Eastern Spinebills enjoy our Salvias outside our bedroom window for several weeks now. I love how they hover while diving into the flowers. They are small birds and very delicate, ideal, I guess, for such delicate flowers, and a joy to watch. Winter adds deep colour to the garden. I know we lose leaves and trees look bare, but for the rest of the garden the greens seem so much greener, the flowers seem to be fuller and richer in colour, and the earth beautifully dark and rich. And if you have lots of windows, as I have in my home, you can enjoy your garden from the comfort and warmth inside your house. I hope that you get to enjoy winter too.



Don't forget the Calendar of Events is updated regularly on the website for your information.  
[www.salvias.org.au](http://www.salvias.org.au).

Feel free to email any queries or comments direct to Beth.

Enjoy your gardens! *Kathie*

## Attention Subscribers

There are many subscribers out there that we don't know. We wouldn't know that you exist except that your names are on our database.

You obviously enjoy growing and collecting Salvias and want more; otherwise you wouldn't be a subscriber.

Please let us know that you exist by putting pen to paper (handwritten or email), just a few lines or a whole page if the urge takes you about the Salvias in your garden – photos would be nice.

Why you like Salvias – Are they constantly in flower? Do they bring the birds and plenty of bees to your garden?

Perhaps a possum story – do possums bother your Salvias? (They will eat the flowers but generally leave the leaves).

Garden Visits – As subscribers, you are all welcome to come along and join in, whether you are brand new or a non active subscriber – you can come and view someone's garden, find out how they garden, perhaps find new and innovative ideas about gardening – come along and join in the fun.

Birds / Bees in your Salvia garden – please a few lines about these delights.

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*Is your email address up to date?*

We periodically get bounced email addresses and want to ensure you don't miss out on any news. Please make sure you let us know when you change your email address.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 16th Sat**      **RHSV Royal Conference 9.30am -**  
Mt Waverley Community Centre, Millers Rd, Mt Waverley Mel:70, E1  
Stephanie Alexander and Dr Greg Moore will be keynote speakers  
Specialist Vendors with a variety of unusual plants on sale.  
Salvias for sale. Bring your list, bring Salvias to be identified
- July 22nd Sun**      **Salvias at Nobelius 12 - 3pm**  
Crighton Rd, Emerald, Nobelius Heritage Park: Mel 127 G4  
under the Packing Shed. The Salvia Display Garden  
Come and obtain all your favourite Salvias beneath the Oaks. All the winter  
flowering Salvias will be in full boom as well as many of the smaller varieties- they  
never stop flowering. Come with a list, and any Salvias that need identifying.
- Sept 1st / 2nd Sat/Sun**      **Pakenham Garden Expo 9am - 2pm**  
Pakenham Racecourse, Racecourse Rd, Pakenham Mel: 317 E8  
Stephan Ryan will be the guest Presenter.  
Variety of plant and other stalls  
Salvias for sale, bring your list, bring Salvias to be identified
- Sept 10th Mon**      **Mornington Garden Club 1.30pm**  
St Mark's Uniting Church Hall, 50Barkly St, Mornington. Mel :104 D12  
Lyndi will be speaking on Salvias  
Salvias for sale, bring plants to be identified
- Sept 16th Sun**      **Wayne Burgess Garden Visit 11am**  
699 Mt Dandenong Rd, Kilsyth. Mel: 51 J6  
Beautiful garden full of Salvias.  
Bring a plate to share a chair and enjoy the garden
- Oct 21st Sun**      **Meryl Waterhouse Garden Visit 11am**  
315 Pakenham Rd, Pakenham Mel: 315 D10  
A beautiful garden, full of Salvias, Roses, arbours and many other interesting plants.  
This garden is often open for the Red Cross.  
Bring a plate to share a chair and enjoy the garden.
- Oct 24th Wed**      **Garden Day at Nobelius, 11 am**  
Crighton Rd, Emerald, under the Packing Shed Mel: 127 G4  
Bring a plate to share, a chair, tools, plastic bags for cuttings  
Great opportunity to identify your Salvias.  
Lots of cuttings to take home, come and join in the fun
- Nov10th/11th Sat/Sun**      **Rose Show, Mt Waverley**  
Community Centre, Millers Crs, Mt Waverley. Mel : 70 E1  
Saturday opening 1pm, Sunday 10am  
Salvias for sale. Bring your list  
Bring Salvias to be identified
- Dec**      **Xmas Party 11am**  
To be announced

Everyone is welcome to come and join in the fun on Garden Days at Nobelius. Come for Salvia Identification, hone up on your Salvia names. Take home loads of cutting material. Come for the social occasion – just bring a plate to share and a chair.

For those who can't come on Weekends, they might be able to help on a Wednesday. There are plenty of dates for everyone. For those who can't come on one day, there are plenty of other dates to choose from.

**Working B on Sundays:**

May 20<sup>th</sup>  
July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Sept 9<sup>th</sup>  
Nov 18<sup>th</sup>

**Working B on Wednesdays:**

June 20<sup>th</sup>  
Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Oct 24<sup>th</sup>

## Ferny Creek Rare Plant Expo

...Lyndi Garnett

Two weeks after our wonderful Spectacular, we were involved with setting up for the Ferny Creek Rare Plant Expo.

Unlike the hot weather for our Spectacular, the weather was perfect and we were thinking that the public was Salvia'd out, but to our great surprise they still came in their busloads, heading straight for the Salvia marquee to get those early bargains. May be the Spectacular gave the public a taste for Salvias, many only just beginning to appreciate their qualities. In fact the only people who were Salvia'd out was us!!!!

All the left over display plants put us in good stead for this weekend and Tesselaar's Market Garden Weekend.

The Ferny Creek Committee were very pleased at the turn out of the public and of the number of stall holders.

For those who have never been to this Rare Plant Expo before, it is a pleasant way to spend a day or even weekend. Lots of discerning garden public would come in their droves know what they are looking for and know a good plant/ bargain when they see one.

Inside the hall were a fascinating array of stalls, from Fresh flowers ( all collected from the garden and which just walked out the door), a huge Rock & Crystal stall, two resident Botanical Artists actually showing us just how they create such beautiful masterpieces. A wonderful gift shop full interesting surprises, loads of book stalls, new and preloved editions.

Outside, among the plant stalls was the wonderful wood working stall, showing just how these creations are formed. Among some of their creations were a series of toadstools made from various woods, all exquisitely formed, all having their own character.

## Tesselaar's Garden Market

...Lyndi Garnett

Just one week after the Ferny Creek Rare Plant Expo, saw us setting up for another Salvia selling / promoting weekend. We again thought we had brought up enough plants for the weekend when we set up on Friday – how wrong we were!!!

The public came in their droves, it was hard for Jillian and I to keep up with the sales on Saturday. We were run off our feet, asking friends who appeared to buy us coffee (just across the lawn), some lunch (whatever they could find) and again coffee/ tea in the afternoon.

I think Jillian & I sat down only once the whole day – what bliss for a moment!

The public were so good on Saturday that we almost sold out and had to go home to find some more plants. Thankfully Meg and others donated the variety of Salvias that we needed for the Sunday Public. We were not alone; apparently most of the stall holders had a very good day on Saturday, with most having to restock their stalls.

Just down the path from our marquee, Tesselaars had a magnificent clump of *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'*, and *S. guarantica ' Argentine Skies '*. Of course everyone wanted a plant.

It was lucky that we had quite a few left over from our Spectacular, so the Group did very well from that weekend, putting money in our coffers, which was sorely needed after the Spectacular. This influx of money is needed to allow the Group to function well with the busy Calendar of Events coming up for the year.

All in all it was a good 2 weekends but now we are busy propagating more Salvias as we are rather depleted and need to increase our stocks, so we have the variety and the numbers of stock.

## First detection of myrtle rust in Victoria

(Adapted from a press release by The Department of Primary Industries, Victoria, January 2012)

...Graham Ellis

The destructive plant disease **Myrtle Rust** has been found in Victoria for the first time, at a retail nursery on the Mornington Peninsula. The disease poses a threat to Victoria's nursery and forestry industries, as well as to public parks, gardens and native forests. The climate along the coasts of East Gippsland, South Gippsland and the Otway Ranges makes these the most susceptible areas to myrtle rust in Victoria.



Myrtle Rust on Melaleuca

Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) Incident Controller, Gordon Berg, said a report of suspected Myrtle Rust was made by nursery staff and later confirmed by DPI diagnostic tests. "Since the first Australian detection in New South Wales in early 2010, it has spread to far north Queensland and has been found on over 150 different plant species. "The tiny spores of Myrtle Rust are easily spread on contaminated plant material, equipment, vehicles, clothing and shoes, as well as by animals, wind and water."

Mr Berg said it was not known how the disease reached Victoria but, given its current widespread distribution in New South Wales and Queensland, it will not be possible to eradicate it. Mr Berg said Myrtle Rust posed a threat to the nursery industry mainly through trade restrictions, but it could also affect the forestry industry, public parks and gardens and native forests. "Under the right conditions, it could slow regeneration of Victoria's native forests after harvesting or bushfire and even change forest biodiversity," he said. "DPI should be notified immediately of any plants in Victoria suspected of being infected with myrtle rust."

All members of the Myrtaceae plant family are potential hosts of myrtle rust. It attacks young, soft, actively growing leaves, shoot tips and young stems, as well as the fruits and flowers of susceptible plants. Plants at risk include gum trees, bottlebrush, tea tree, lilly pilly, paperbark, Myrtle, Guava, midyim, Rose Apple, Brush Box and New Zealand Christmas Bush. Mr Berg said sites where myrtle rust may be found include commercial plant nurseries, public gardens, parks, streetscapes and bushland. "The first signs of Myrtle Rust infection are tiny raised spots that are brown to grey, often with red-purple haloes. Up to 14 days after infection, the spots produce masses of distinctive yellow or orange spores."

Reports of suspected Myrtle Rust can be made by calling DPI on 1800 084 881, or by emailing photos of the suspect material, together with a contact phone number and the plant's location, to [plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:plant.protection@dpi.vic.gov.au). *To avoid spreading the disease, do not touch, move or collect samples of the suspect plant.*

Further information about myrtle rust can be found on the DPI website.  
<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/forestry/pests-diseases-weeds/diseases/myrtle-rust>

Fortunately few herbs are members of the Myrtaceae family although Common Myrtle is. Food plants potentially affected include Feijoa and Strawberry Guava and of course we will be disappointed if many of our native plants suffer from this fungus.

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## Some new *Salvias* worth noting

...Lyndi Garnett

From the *Salvia Spectacular*, there appeared quite a few new varieties of *Salvias*, these mainly appearing to be forms of *microphylla*, *greggii x microphylla* and *greggii*. Such forms in pink include:

- Angel Wings      A small shrubby plant to 40cm with rounded *microphylla* leaves and soft pink flowers.  
Originated Qld via Vic
- Sweet Laura      A small shrubby plant to 40cm, (*mic.*) leaves, flowers being a 2 toned pink with a hint of mauve. The hood being a darker pink, the bottom lobes being a soft pale pink.  
Originated Qld via Vic
- Icing Sugar      A small compact shrub to 40 -60 cm, with small 2 toned light flowers, the lower lip being a raspberry colour – very attractive.  
Origin unknown, can be ordered in from your local Nursery
- Penny's Smile    A good upright plant, 60-80cm, derived from *S. darcyi* with similar qualities as *S. 'Silkes Dream'*. Flowers are a large pink on good flower stems, leaves triangular and tough – very, very attractive.  
Originated UK, via Qld, can be ordered in from your local Nursery
- Sweet Lips      A small compact shrub to 40cm with pale pink flowers, looking similar Heatwave 'Flare', but with *greggii* type leaves.  
Origin unknown, can be ordered from your local Nursery
- Pink Zapper      An open clumping plant to 60cm, a possible form of *S. cyclamen*, but much more vibrant electric pink with a hint of purple.  
Originated S.A
- Jane's Delight    An upright bushy plant (*mic.*) with strong growth and small triangular leaves growing to 60cm. Flowers are a dark crimson with a hint of purple in a pyramidal formation.  
Originated Vic

### Reds / Corals:

- Firebright      A small bushy x up to 40 cm, a progeny of 'Sierra Red'. The flower has a hint of coral in the red, but no white in the throat. The flower head has a good formation (pyramid formation). Flowering all year.  
Originated Vic
- Miss Scarlett    A bushy shrub 60 -80 cm with very small leaves, looking very similar to 'Baby Sage', but bigger flowers that turn scarlet in full sun and growing a lot taller. The stem also has the *microphylla* stripe. This makes a good dense shrub for hedging, but needs trimming to keep its shape.  
Originated N.S.W.
- Desert Sunset    A small open shrubby x growing to 40cm. Leaves are a *greggii* type  
Flowers are corally pink with a hint of orange, flowering for a long period.  
Originated Qld

A-lo-ha A small x with *greggii* lvs, growing to 40cm, with a spreading, sprawling habit. Flowers are a coral, a hint of pink and a cream throat – flowers most of the year.  
Originated Vic

#### Yellows:

x *jamensis* Yellow (*syn greggii* Yellow), a small sprawling x that has been around for a number of years. Flowers are a very pale creamy yellow with a hint of pink on the tube - (very difficult to photograph correctly). Very easy to propagate and grow. This is a x, not a true *greggii*, so should be known as *x jamensis* Yellow.

#### Oranges:

Wensley Apricot (*syn greggii* Apricot), again this has been around for a number years. We thought we'd lost this plant but thankfully, two growers had been able to keep this variety. This plant was thankfully resurrected and propagated in South Australia. A good plant to propagate. Flowers are a pale apricot and flower all year.

#### Purples:

Purple Warrior A dense sprawling plant to 60 - 80 cm. Leaves are a rounded shape  
Flowers are a purple/ mauve that flower for long periods. This does  
Need space to develop – excellent down a bank or wall – very attractive.  
Originated Vic

Nancy's Blush An open shrubby plant, originating from 'Christine Yeo', but the flowers have a pink / purple toning, growing to 60cm.  
Originating SA

## **Beware! Don't get caught out**

...Lyndi Garnett

We seem to be flooded with a whole host of new varieties of Salvias, most of which are microphylla / *greggii* combinations. They seem to be popping up everywhere, so I'll try and guide you through this maze of new Salvia names.

We have also recently noticed that some large Nurseries are not recognising well established Salvia species or have the habit of placing Cultivar names on the end of species to help with the marketing of that particular Salvia.

Balls Australia have for some time not recognised the '*greggii*' group of Salvias, instead they have incorporated all of the '*greggii*'s' under the banner of their broad 'Navajo' Assorted range of Salvias.

Now it seems that Balls Aust. are actually naming individual '*greggii*'s' in the 'Navajo'

range. This is what you might find in your Bunnings store or your local nursery:

S. Navajo 'White' = *S. greggii* 'Alba'

S. Navajo 'Rose' = *S. greggii* 'Raspberry Royale'

S. Navajo 'Pink' = *S. greggii* 'Sierra Pink' (PGA)

The original Navajo series were: S. 'Navajo Red', S. 'Navajo Cream', and S. 'Navajo Purple'

Haars Aust. were also marketing some Salvias a few years ago under their banner of "Garden Jewels". but they seem to have disappeared. It was here we found a Salvia that = *S. greggii* 'Cerise Jewel'. We have propagated this variety for the last 5 years, the variety coming originally from Qld.

Under this banner of Navajo Assorted was a beautiful new mauve Salvia (unnamed) which we named S. 'Navajo Dusky Mauve'. It turns out, that this lovely mauve Salvia is actually one of the 'Mesa Range', promoted by 'Natural Selections' - confused?

Unfortunately Bunnings in their unfailing wisdom lumped all these small growers together on the stand with Balls Aust. – so naturally we and many others thought this mauve Salvia was part of the 'Navajo' range, hence the name, but this Salvia should be S. 'Mesa Azure'

Just to recap:

From the Natural Selection brand there is the Mesa Range (USA) of Salvias which includes 'Mesa Scarlet', 'Mesa Rose', 'Mesa Azure' and 'Mesa Purple'

(the purple isn't readily available as yet, but they hope to promote it next season). These are small shrubs that are fairly non-descript, except for the mauve. 'Mesa Scarlet' looks extremely like 'Navajo Red' but with different leaves. 'Mesa Rose's flowers and leaves looking similar to other microphylla varieties already available. So, beware of new cultivar names, observe what you have in your garden, and check your labels.

Larkman's Nursery often place cultivar names after the species name, e.g. *coahulensis* 'Electric Blue' or *S. flocculosa* 'Kathe', the name 'Kathe' is now a synonym, so the correct name is just *S. flocculosa*.

*S. guaranitica* 'Plum' = 'Desley' - not a *guaranitica* at all, instead originating from '*splendens*'

*S. chamaedryfolia* (I hope a typo), *S. chamaedryoides argentea*, *S. chamaedryoides* 'Marine Blue', they All = *S. chamaedryoides* NO extra names

*S. chamaedryoides* and *S. chamaedryoides* 'Marine Blue', both = *S. 'Marine Blue'*

Although 'Marine Blue' may have originally come from *S. chamaedryoides*, they are both completely different plants and should not be confused with each other – look at the leaves, the colour of the flowers and their growth habit.

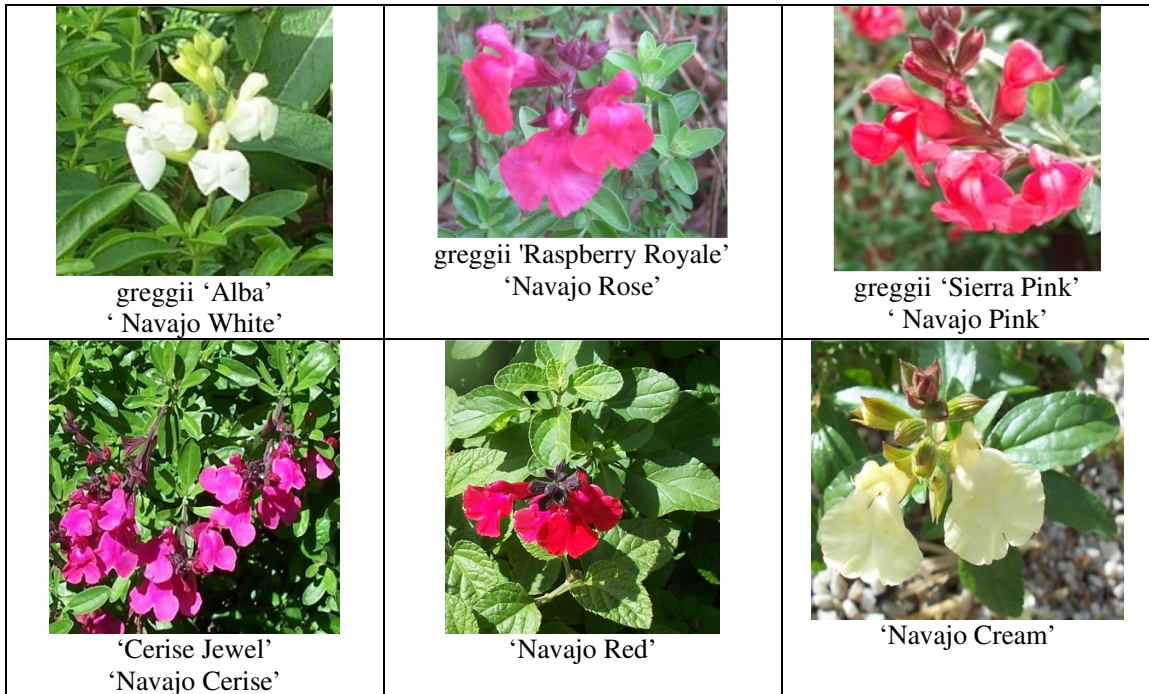
They have also followed Balls Aust. with placing the '*greggii*' group of Salvias under the '*Navajo*' banner, which is very disappointing.

You will find 'Navajo White' and further down *S. greggii* 'Alba' = the same plant

So beware!! Don't get confused with all these names and plants. So often people buy these plants, believing them to be new, different from what they already have, only to be misled and disappointed to find they have exactly the same plant at home under a different name.

Get to know your Salvias, observe your plant, observe the leaves, see if they are a *greggii* type of leaf or a microphylla leaf or a X between the two. Look at the colour of the flower stem and the colour of the calyx, if it is coloured or green. Above all, keep the label next to the plant (don't put the label in a draw or tin or box – so often you cannot remember which label belongs to what plant!!) even if you bury the label, you can always check if you think you already have this new plant.

Do your homework. Go and check what you already have in the garden before you buy. If you are unsure, write the name down on a piece of paper so you can check when you get home.



To answer Jane Lee's query about trying to find small blue/ purple shrubby microphylla or similar type Salvias, there are only a few blue Salvias that we know about at this stage, namely: *S.* 'Cookie', a small shrub, about 40 x 60cm with electric blue / purple flowers (depending on the light), small leaves with a compact shrubby habit – often difficult to propagate.

The other small shrub is *S.* 'Mesa Azure', this is a beautiful small compact shrub to approx 40cm with rounded leaves and clusters of dusky mauve flowers. Once established, this will flower for long periods.



Both plants make a good contrast to white or yellow flowering plants, lovely with pale pinks, both need a sunny position in the front of the bed. They do beautifully if planted by them selves, or as a border in the front of a bed.

Most other purple / violet flowering Salvias are either ground covers or clumping perennials e.g. *S. muelleri*, *S. coahuilensis* and *S.* Navajo 'Purple', *S.* 'Superior Purple', 'Purple Warrior' and 'Christine Yeo'.

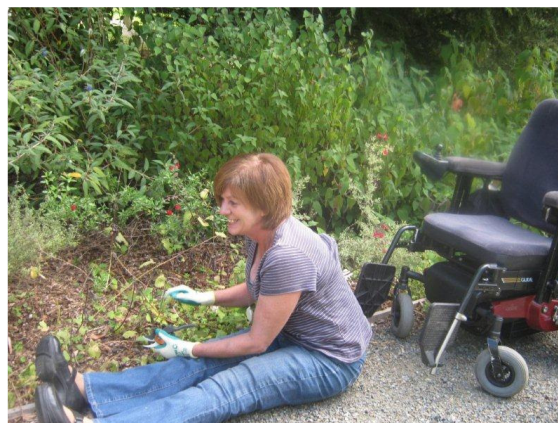
# Gardening Day at Nobelius

...Beth Clisby

Photos taken by Patrick Hogan



Meryl, Lyndi and Keith



Beth Clisby



Jillian, Meryl and Lyndi



Keith Waterhouse

There were only four of us this time, Meryl and Keith Waterhouse, Patrick Hogan and I, who joined Lyndi and Jillian to work in the Salvia garden at Nobelius Heritage Park on Sunday 1 April. It was a perfect Autumn day, just right for gardening. After a quick cuppa and directions as to what was required, we set to work. We each brought our tools with us. There was weeding, cutting and shaping, feeding and a general tidy needed. Each salvia group has different maintenance needs and we were shown as we went along. As we worked, visitors made their way through the garden. Of course Jillian and Lyndi were on hand to answer their questions. Patrick works at Nobelius Heritage Park and was able to give a brief history of the park and the Salvia garden. Sitting quietly on the ground nearby, I unashamedly listened too and enjoyed a learning curve while working. We stopped for a shared lunch set up next to the garden before returning to work a little longer. By this time it was very clear where we had been and a pleasure to see the results of our labouring. Next we enjoyed another cuppa and sorted name spikes to be placed with each salvia in the garden for easy identification.

We started to pack up soon after 3pm and soon were waved off home. Jillian, Lyndi and Patrick hadn't yet finished for the day and would go back to it as we departed. Both Jillian and Lyndi would return to the site probably the following week or so to plant more salvias where the tidy had left gaps. They attend Nobelius every few weeks to ensure the Salvia garden is always at its best for visitors to enjoy. The open gardening days are just to top up the work they do regularly. It was not only an enjoyable day with good company, learning more about this species of plant as we worked, but good company, lots of laughs, a fun and easy learning venue – definitely a very

pleasant time had by all. Hope the next gardening day, you too will join us. Look forward to seeing you there.

## Anderson's Open Garden in March

...Beth Clisby

I had heard that I was in for a treat by visiting the garden of Pat and John Anderson in Warrandyte and that was understated. Our visit was on the Sunday, the second day of the Open Gardens Australia viewing of this spectacular garden. We arrived early and to ensure we had a good choice of plants we visited the nursery on arrival and left our purchases in care while we enjoyed the garden. At this time we weren't aware that on Saturday there had been 3500 plants on offer and thus there was still an excellent choice available, each variety displayed with photo and details and Pat and others to help with any questions.



Pat giving talk on Salvias

Natives, exotics, clematis, perennials and annuals, hydrangeas, hellebores, mandevilla, justiceas, camellias, roses, westringes, salvias, succulents, trees many deciduous, even a citrus grove are just some of the landscape that adorn this garden amid the bush setting. There are many garden rooms, some with intended colour schemes, gardens in full sun and shade gardens too. The glasshouse and potting shed Pat calls 'the nerve centres' of the garden where seedlings, cuttings, potted vegetables are seen to ready for later planting.

We were told that there are currently approximately 400 salvias in this garden. The

front garden includes four beds that equate roughly to the continent of origin of the salvia species planted. There are more garden beds with salvias in the back garden too. Seeing salvias in these numbers in garden beds of their own and others with complimenting plants lends ideas for those enjoying the sight.

Down a steep embankment is a magnificent and very large vege patch not far from the banks of the Yarra River. A hairy ride in an electric wheelchair for a first time because I travelled across the hill and feared I may tip sideways, wasn't going to stop me. Travelling back was easy in the motorised chair. I had access to almost the whole garden and enjoyed the visit immensely. We enjoyed morning tea with a choice of freshly made cakes afterwards before joining an informative Talk on Salvias by Pat in the front garden.

As a result of this Open Garden, we have since learned that there was a donation of \$11,200 to the North Warrandyte CFA and \$1,000 to the Warrandyte Mechanics Institute Hall renovation. (The Warrandyte mechanics Institute and Arts Association is an amalgamated association that maintains the hall and promotes the arts in Warrandyte). Pat advises that in total over three openings of their garden, there has been a total of in excess of \$37,000 to the CFA – brilliant effort Pat and John!

Thank you Pat and John, we enjoyed a very special morning!

## Salvias for hanging baskets

...Pat Anderson

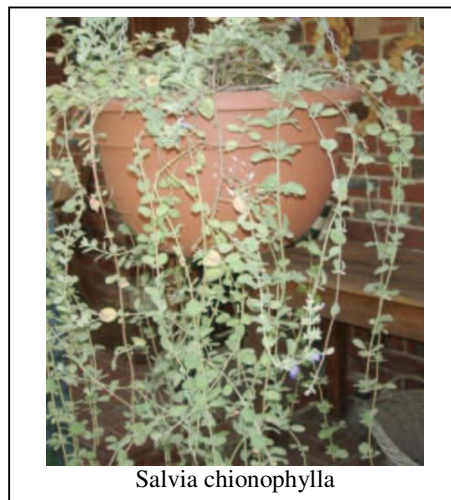
Some years ago, when Arja Toivanen still had her Herb & Cottage Plant Nursery in Hurstbridge, where she sold a large selection of Salvias, I saw a *Salvia chionophylla* cascading from a half pot on the back wall of her sales building. At the time I had a plant of this species in the garden, trailing over the brick edging of a garden bed, but, inspired by Arja's plant, I decided to try one in a hanging basket too. I had never had much luck with the wire and coir matting sort of baskets,

so I used a self-watering, plastic one for this planting. With only one plant, it took a while to get to a stage of looking good, but after a few years I am thrilled with it.

*Salvia chionophylla* is not a prolific flowerer, but it certainly grows fast. When pruned the new growth seems to stick out at right angles to the stem. In a basket, when the cascading stems are pruned (and they need pruning often otherwise they would quickly reach the ground), the new growth looks awkward as it sticks out sideways, but it quickly re-adjusts with the aid of gravity. *Salvia chionophylla* is reputed to be fairly dry tolerant, but even in a self-watering basket it needs regular watering. Being just outside our back door, the teapot is emptied over it regularly to satisfy its requirements for water.

In another area of our garden, where I have all my Asiatic salvias in a relatively protected position, I also have a *Salvia koyamae* in a hanging basket. This species also performs well in this situation and I was pleased to see one like it at the Salvia Spectacular in February this year. This got me wondering about other species that might be suitable for hanging pots, so I looked around among my collection for others to try.

*Salvia hirtella* for me has always been an “iffy” plant. I have lost it during the cold weather on numerous occasions so I always keep a back-up in a pot in a protected place over winter. In its pot, it looked floppy so I decided to give this one a try in a basket and I am delighted with the result. Within one month, stems have cascaded all round, while also putting up short, vertical growth, giving it an attractive appearance. It hasn’t flowered yet in this position and I will have to remember to move it under the verandah in the winter.



*Salvia chionophylla*

So, what else might be suitable for a hanging basket and what would be the criteria? Suitable species need to be floppy in habit, not too tall in the stem and spreading. *Salvia scutellarioides* comes to mind and I discussed this with Meg who had already tried it. As a plant that spreads by rooting from nodes on the stems where they come in contact with the ground, it would need a bit of work to push the nodes back into the soil in the basket to get a consolidated amount of growth within the basket. Retrospectively, this is what I did with my *Salvia chionophylla* until there was adequate growth as a source of cascading stems.

I think *Salvia stolonifera*, one of the newer species here, would also be excellent. My pot plant is performing better than the one in the ground, although this may be the specific location of the latter. Right now, my pot plant is flowering on stems that are no more than 25cm, but there is an abundance of lateral growth of attractive dark green leaves, a definite possibility for a basket.

Other possibilities are *Salvia coahuilensis* and *Salvia chamaedryoides*, both low growers that spread by suckers as well as flowering for months. Similarly, *Salvia glechomifolia*, and *Salvia setulosa* have the right characteristics, as do various *Salvia microphylla* forms. So too has *Salvia nana*, with its attractive foliage, although its flowering period is shorter. I think *Salvia cacaliifolia* would be excellent, as well as being tough, and possibly the floppy, spreading forms of *Salvia disermas* as well as *Salvia repens*, and *Salvia aurita* var *aurita*. One that I will definitely try is *Salvia littae*. Its floppy nature (my plant at any rate) makes it a nuisance in a crowded garden bed. Then what about *Salvia spathacea*? It is a tough plant, but might need some assistance to get enough growth within the pot, but I’m not sure how well the cascading bit might go. *Salvia discolor* also comes to mind. This is reputed to be a climbing plant to several meters in Peru, mainly due to its stickiness I presume, but my fifteen-year-old plant is floppy and only looks like a 1.5m shrub because I am constantly tying it up. This would definitely be worth a try as it flowers for a long period also. *Salvia lycioides* has the right form but is too temperamental, as well as being winter-dormant.

I would love to hear which other Salvias people have tried in hanging baskets/pots. I am rapidly running out of garden bed space and need to find other places in which to keep my burgeoning collection.

## Visit to Pat and John Anderson's garden

The Pakenham girls (the cooks from the Spectacular) visit to Pat and John Anderson's garden.

On a glorious Autumn Sunday we left Pakenham via Monash Freeway and Eastlink to Ringwood and then to Warrandyte.

We were greeted by friendly CFA volunteers and as we had Beth's trolley they directed us to the driveway. We were oohing and aahing about the plants in the nursery on our left, then around the roundabout to unload, then more oohing about the plants we were seeing in the garden.

Of course we had to do the nursery first; the four of us left a box of plants in the crèche.

Then off we went smelling and pointing, just amazed at the collection and variety of plants. Passing the food (for the moment) and on down the back to the vegie patch. We were in awe of the Bean Walk (Jack would have been proud of them!)

Capsicums, Chilli, Artichokes, Corn, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Zucchini, Pumpkin and who know how many varieties of Potatoes, not to mention the Herbs!

## News from Southeast Queensland

I will admit up front that I am writing this well and truly in advance (early April) as the next few months are very busy for us. Not only are we preparing for 'Open Garden' but we will then be going on our 'once in a lifetime'... a 6 week overseas holiday (garden orientated, of course) visiting Floriade in Holland, Switzerland, Germany and France and ending with 3 weeks in England including a visit to the Chelsea Flower Show. The hardest part will be looking at all of these beautiful yet unfamiliar plants and flowers and knowing that we can't get or grow them at home.

For the second year running we have had a very wet start to the year receiving in the month of January alone almost half of our annual rainfall. But I am really not complaining as there are so many who are much worse off. I recently had lunch with garden friends whose home went under 2m of water in last January's floods. As we walked around the property with a cuppa it was hard to imagine that only 12 months earlier it was a place of complete and utter devastation. What a riot of colour it was with the brightness of cosmos fighting to overpower the more sedate sweep of *belamcanda* (Leopard lily) and the salvias were beyond belief. Enormous stands of *S. madrensis* not yet showing bud (ours are in full bloom), *S. 'Purple Majesty'* loaded in its bright blue flowers and of course the ever faithful *S. involucrata* setting its fat buds for an amazing

...Meryl Waterhouse

It was very exciting getting Beth's trolley down the bottom but more so going back up. Well, it was exciting for us! I'm not sure about the passenger but we had a few laughs. Back to the morning tea area where we indulged ourselves with drinks and beautiful cakes again made by volunteers.

Elly and Leon joined us and we had more laughs. We were amazed at how quickly the time flew and we soon had to be back out the front for Pat's talk and guided walk of her 400 Salvias. What knowledge of Salvias she has. Then back to the nursery for more plants. We also checked out the glass house, the potting shed and the native area before the time came to depart.

Thank you Pat and John, we know how much work is involved and you have excelled. Congratulations!

We then travelled to Warrenwood Nursery and Café where we had lunch at 1pm. We can recommend this café. We had a wonderful adventure and arrived home at 4pm to plant our many treasures.

...Carol Kerkin – Kingsholme

late autumn/winter display. It goes to show that our belief in salvias being a very forgiving AND giving family of plants is based on fact.

In our own garden there have been some casualties to the over-wet conditions. *S. canariensis* has once again thrown in the towel. I think I will have to resign myself to the fact that it is not meant to be. I will just have to be content with the less startling white form which soldiers along faithfully, never without flower. And quite a few of the greggii and microphylla varieties (mostly newer ones from our 2010 trip to Victoria) *S. greggii* 'yellow', 'Cerise Jewel', 'La Luna' and 'Sensation' have all succumbed.

But in saying this, some of the others have thrived. *S. Sylas Dyson*, *Cerise Velvet* and *Heatwave 'Blaze'* have powered along coming back quickly into flower after each haircut. One of my favorite of the winter flowerers seems to be on its last legs. *S. wagneriana* seems to be always overlooked in amongst all the others until all of a sudden she opens her two-toned flowers with a flourish as if to say 'ta-da...here I am again in all my beauty' I must admit that the plant is probably 8 or 10 years old and really should be replaced with a fresh plant come spring. I'll just wait and see if she gives us a farewell performance. One of the first to flower of the winter salvias is *S. puberula* with its great fat lolly pink buds calling to the winter nectar feeding birds. Whatever made us plant this so close to the path is beyond me as I find it to be amongst one of the smelliest (and I don't mean in a good way) of all the salvias. Who can honestly say that they enjoy the smell of burnt rubber?

*Salvia purpurea* and *iodantha* are also dangling their long waving arms of tiny just-set buds from the back of the garden where in a matter of weeks they will drape their lacy curtain of long lasting flowers like a decorative filmy curtain. I know that I sometimes take for granted those staple salvias such as 'Phyllis Fancy', 'Wendy's Wish', *leucantha* and 'Meigans Magic' because they are always there, dependable, steadfast and non-stop flowering. But at the end of winter/early spring when we hack back our winter show-offs there will be those ever reliable plants adding colour, texture and beauty to what would otherwise be quite a bare denuded garden.

So for the next few weeks, before we head off, I will take a walk daily to check the progress of the plump buds preparing for their magical display and while we may miss the showcase of some...there is always next year to look forward to. We are off on an adventure.

Happy Gardening.

## **An update from South East Queensland**

**...Lynn McAllister**

The last couple of months in SEQ have been quite wet with temperatures staying above average. The March rainfall in my garden came in at 220mm and in April another 160mm... so quite a drenching although not as much as many areas of the SE. Only in the last few weeks have we started to have some cooler nights and one or two chilly mornings...all the way down to 11C! The garden beds here are slightly raised and the residents compete with tree roots from neighbouring Moreton Bay Ash, remnant giants that somehow survived the establishment of suburbia back in the early 1960s.

Salvias in my north facing garden have borne the brunt of the recent wet conditions fairly well with only *Salvia 'Silas Dyson'* and an unnamed apricot *Salvia greggii* cultivar failing to recover. A few recent additions have performed beautifully during the rainy spells. *Salvia discolor*, which I thought a gamble when I planted it as a scrappy looking bit of a twig, has suddenly tripled in size now about 20cm tall and sprawling over half a square metre. Experience tells me that anything with a grey leaf is doomed here so the contrast between the tough grey foliage and gorgeous 'almost black' flowers is a real treat! I planted it at the top of a small retaining wall and facing west in an attempt to provide dryer than usual conditions. It receives a little shade in the afternoon. *Salvia leucantha 'Pink Velour'* is another which I considered a gamble worth taking. So far so good, it has been flowering non-stop for the last 5 months with lazy, trailing

branches nearly 80 cm long. *Salvia* 'Mystique' and *Salvia microphylla* 'Heatwave Blaze' have also been flowering non-stop since they arrived about 6 months ago. Both of these have established quite nicely under a juvenile *Alloxylon flammeum*.

After the vicious pruning most of my tall growing salvias had last year, the response has been heartening indeed. *Salvia coccinea*, *S. madrensis*, *S. iodantha* and *S. involucrata* 'Joan' were pruned by two thirds about 10 months ago and are now back to 2-3.5 metres and bursting with flowers. *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy' faces west, takes the brunt of the hot afternoon sun and never seems to miss a beat here. It is now over 2 metres tall with a spread nearly double that. Another specimen which I received as 'Phyllis Fancy' I think may actually be *Salvia* 'Waverley' as it has only ever reached about 40cm tall with a spread of over 1 square metre. *Salvia* 'Black Knight' is the star performer in my 'not so tall' collection. With rarely a bare stem, it seems to be always in flower and doesn't blink an eye at the wet. *Salvia* 'Purple Majesty' is also a very dependable bloomer and still giving the 'Mickey' birds a place to play.

Then there are the reluctant residents, do they dream of greener pastures? I planted *Salvia univerticillata* as a cutting, almost 18 months ago and although healthy looking it just refused to take root, refused to grow. In the last 2-3months it has finally 'found its feet' and has grown to 30cm tall and about the same spread. No flowers yet but I am quietly hopeful it intends to stay.

Barb Wickes' garden at Buderim, is about an hour north of here and I assume it has a very different microclimate given the salvia behaviour I have seen there! Here are a few words from Barb. Last year Glenda Sellenger and Wendy Smith brought me a plant of *Salvia sagittata x macrophylla*. This is doing very well and has been growing in quite a wet spot throughout the summer. The blue flowers are vibrant and to date it doesn't seem to be seeding wildly as *macrophylla* does.

Another *Salvia* new to me last year is *Salvia greggii* 'Sweet Lips' put out by Australian Perennials at Ballina. It was in the path of a lot of water earlier in the year and was not affected. It has been a mass of bright musk like flowers and a nice compact plant to about 60cm. Well worth trying however it seems to not be freely available in Queensland and I have emailed the distributor who has confirmed that it has a PBR. They will be releasing stock to Southeast Queensland in the spring.

## News from Hobart

With just over three weeks of autumn left, the honeyeaters are making the most of the profusion of summer flowering salvia still available. Either having plants in pots or beds, near a window, gives constant opportunities to observe the periodic consternation of these birds' acrobatic feeding, and territorial disputes.

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...John Daniels

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Early last spring I had a sowing of a few seed collections one of which was *Salvia atrocyanea* with the result of half a dozen seedlings. I potted these up some eight weeks later and the first of these plants had its first blue corolla a month ago. Now, there are a number of laterals, up to 30cm long, which are starting to flower also, on the largest plant that is a single stem of a metre in height. A notable feature of this species apart from the beautiful blue of its corollas is the large pale green, persistent bracts and calyces. At present the primary inflorescence is densely flowered but they are capable of extending to over a half a metre in length and droop as they do so, weighed down with weight of flowers and bird feeding. In my experience this salvia has an herbaceous habit with only a few stems which grow rapidly from mid-spring. They are quite brittle though, particularly the laterals, and this plant requires a protected position from the wind as well as the hot sun of the afternoon and possible staking. By early winter it dies back to swollen roots that provide the basis for its next season of growth.

Another success from that spring sowing was a couple of *Salvia sagittata* seedlings, another soft-stemmed salvia. The most vigorous plant of which, in a pot, has started to flower with delicate, small flowers of dark blue that contrast beautifully with the 'grey' soft leaves. I found this to be quite a vigorous species at the Botanical Gardens that required reduction. An attempt to grow this species in my own garden a few years ago failed due to frost and wet conditions or poor drainage, perhaps.

This morning while lightly pruning some laterals of *S. gesneraeflora* 'Tequila' that were intruding onto the deck from stems tied to the hand rail, I was intrigued when I noticed 1-2mm long 'roots' starting to initiate from a couple of the shoots. These had been twisted in their growth or damaged by the movement and the friction with the wooden surface of the deck caused by wind. While I have noticed this root initiation before on stems trailing on the ground I was surprised to see this occurring two metres above the ground.

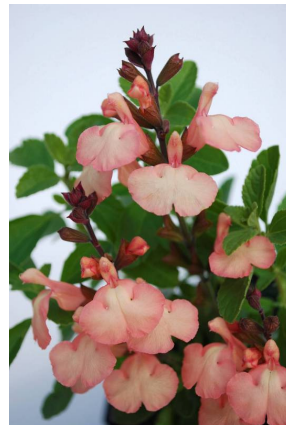
Feedback by members about their experiences in the performance of these salvias would be welcomed.

## New Heatwave Salvias

PGA have bred 2 more Salvias for their Heatwave Series 'Glare', a pure white Salvia with a large lower lip that forms a cup and a narrow hood – very attractive. Leaves are microphylla and quite different from greggii 'Alba' and 'SnowWhite'.



Salvia 'Heatwave Glare'



Salvia 'Heatwave Glow'

'Glow' is a warm coloured Salvia, in between 'Pumpkin' and greggii Bicolor, lovely soft orange / pink / cream – very attractive. Leaves are a microphylla and both Salvias form a compact rounded shrub about 50 – 60 cm. Both have been bred to be hardy in full sun and on a variety of soils.

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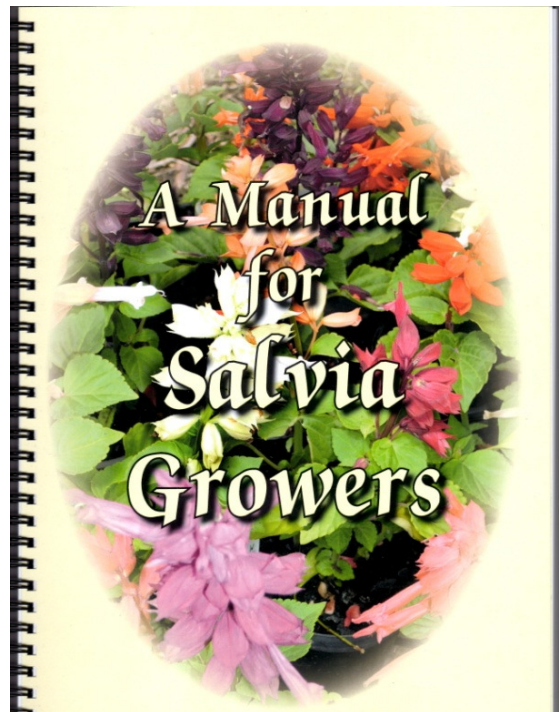
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