

Salvia News

NUMBER 51



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

Autumn 2013

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

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 WEBSITE; www.salvias.org.au

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***COPY DEADLINE for next issue is 31 March 2013**



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Hope you enjoyed the New Year and that it is a happy and healthy one for you all. It seems so long ago, we are already into the next season. I think Autumn is my favourite season, long warm days but with cooler nights allowing a good nights sleep in preparation for whatever the new day brings. The garden is full of colour, deciduous trees and plants colour up before losing their leaves, plants are much happier than in the dry heat.

We have endured extremes throughout the country; very high temperatures, floods in Tasmania, Gippsland Vic, Queensland and NSW and bushfires in several States too. It is hoped that you and yours are all safe and for those who have endured damages it is also hoped they may be rectified as quickly as is possible. Our thoughts are with you.

If you are interested in purchasing bulk fertiliser, Pakenham Garden Club has outlined a great offer on page 14 of this edition of Salvia News. Have you thought of collecting Salvia Seeds, there is a great article on pages 5-7 written by Pat Anderson that you will want to read.

Salvia News is pleased to advise that subscriptions may now be paid via Direct Deposit as well as by cheque or money order. There is a Subscription Form for new subscriptions in this issue with details. For renewals, your subscription form will be sent to you when due.

We have included a Letters page. If you have a comment or a query, we would enjoy hearing from you.

Once again it's a full edition which I hope you will enjoy. Your comments are always welcome.

Happy Gardening, *Beth*

GARDEN OF FRIENDSHIP

Author Unknown

When I feel a bit lonely, or just a bit low
To lighten my spirits out gardening I go.
It's a garden of friendships, each plant that I tend
Reminds me of someone and each one a friend..
When I gaze on the beauty, friend's faces I see
And I think of the plants they have given to me.
The bulbs and the seedlings, the cuttings and all
If it wasn't for friends I'd have no flowers at all.
In my garden of friendship, midst colour and scent
My friends are all with me and I am content.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 9th/10th Sat/Sun Ferny Creek Plant Collectors Expo**
100 Hilton Rd, Sassafras / Ferny Creek Mel: 66 E12
9 - 4pm Sat and 10 - 4.00pm Sun
Salvias plants, seed and books for sale
Bring your list.
- March 20th Wed Springvale Garden Club 8pm**
The Senior Citizens Hall, The Crescent, Springvale Mel: 79K11
Lyndi will be speaking.
Bring plants to be identified.
Plants, Salvia books and seeds for sale.
- April 6th/7th Sat/Sun Tesselaar Gardening and Plant Expo**
357 Monbulk Rd, Silvan Mel : 123: B5
9am - 4pm Saturday and Sunday
Salvia plants, seeds and books for sale
Bring your list. Bring plants to be identified.
- April 20th Sun Glenda and Wendy's Garden Visit 11am**
Glenda Sellenger: 39 Lockhart Dve, Rosebud. Mel: 170 C5, C6
Wendy Smith: 9 Cleek Crs, Rosebud: 170 D8
Absolutely 2 beautiful gardens to enjoy walking around.
(As Wendy's property is up for sale, if sold, we will just be visiting Glenda)
Bring a chair and a plate to share and a camera.
- May 19th Sun Russel Cheal Garden Visit 11am**
30 Charles Smith Drive, Wonga Park. Mel: 36 F7
A magnificent garden full of interesting plants.
Bring a chair, and a plate to share
- June 15th Sat RHS Conference**
- June 23rd Sun Plant I.D Day with Lyndi Garnett 11am**
844 Highbury Rd, Glen Waverley, Mel: 62 J10
Identification of different Salvias.
Plants, seed and Salvia books for sale
Bring a plate to share and a chair
- September 7 Sat Pakenham Garden Club Garden Expo**
Pakenham Race Course, Racecourse Rd, Pakenham Mel: 317 E8 (undercover)
Guest Speaker: Tino Carnevale (Gardening Australia's Tasmanian presenter)
Variety of plants and other stalls.
Salvias for sale. Bring your list.
Enquiries Meryl Waterhouse 5941 1306

Note: Don't forget to check the website www.salvias.org.au on a regular basis for any changes and of course new events added. You will also find a load of information on the website that may be of interest.

All subscribers of Salvia News and Herb Society of Victoria members are invited to attend our events, meet other gardeners and enjoy new friendships. We look forward to catching up with you.

The Ins and Outs of Collecting Salvia Seeds

- Pat Anderson, January 2013

There are a number of reasons why it might be important to collect seeds of some, at least, of the specimens in our Salvia collections. These include the replacement of annuals, the ability to replace rare perennial species that might otherwise be lost to us, propagation of plants to share with friends, and, last but not least, there is always the possibility when propagating by seed, of finding an exciting new hybrid. So, if seeds are to be harvested, stored and germinated, it is important to do this in the correct manner and at the correct time in order to increase the chances of success with subsequent germination. It is also important to be aware of potential problems, especially the potential for hybridization within various groups of species.

When to collect seed

Basically, seeds need to be fully mature before they are collected and they should be free of mildew and insects/pests. As flowering time varies from species to species, this could be any time between spring and autumn, here in Victoria.

Sadly, winter flowering species don't appear to set seed in Victoria. This is presumably because of the absence of suitable pollinators during the colder weather. I wonder if we should be attempting artificial pollination of some of the rarer species?

The species that flower early in spring, such as the annual *S. algeriensis*, and the perennials, *S. eigii*, *indica*, *judaica*, *munzii*, *myriantha* and *bowleyana*, for example, will therefore be setting seed at the time of year when it might be cool and damp, so care must be taken to choose a dry day for collection, preferably during the afternoon, and to store them in a dry place.

There are species that flower over a long period of time, such as the various forms of *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla*, and others such as *S. miniata* and *S. chiapensis*, and there are species that will flower in spring and again in

autumn if cut back early enough. With all of these, collection is easier in the warmer months. The peak season for seed collecting in Victoria is December to May.

How to collect seed

Because it is important to wait until seeds are fully mature before collecting, a common general method of collection involves securing a bag or a piece of terylene curtaining or old pantyhose over the dried inflorescence. But for salvias, many of which flower and therefore mature progressively from the bottom to the top of a long stem, this is not practical. One solution is to remove the whole stem once seeds are ripening and to place this in a labeled paper bag in a warm, dry place until the seeds fall out. Another method requires continuous vigilance, removing the individual, dried calyces when mature seeds can be seen within, and placing these in a labeled container, again in a warm, dry place. Whatever method is used, it is essential that you record the species and the date(s) of collection on the bag or in the container.

My observations of the quirks of some individual Salvia species

***S. argentea*:** These seeds appear to form very slowly. I have sometimes chopped off and discarded dried flower stems because I can't feel any developing seed within. I've noticed this year, however, that by leaving the stems for long enough, the seeds will eventually form. So patience is required!

***S. barrelieri*:** I had a spectacular flowering of this species in early December and I anticipated a huge crop of seed. Recent inspections have shown that by the time an individual calyx has turned brown, the seeds have fallen out. So I have been vigilant since this discovery, visiting the clump every other day, checking all the stems and carefully nipping off individual calyces when I can see black seeds within.

(continued on page 6)

The Ins and Outs of Collecting Salvia Seeds...

(continued from page 5)

S. taraxacifolia: A lovely plant when conditions allow the formation of tall stems of palest pink flowers. With this species, mature seeds are not exposed, but stay hidden behind a sheath of hairs. So it's worth checking a dry-looking calyx to see if it contains black seeds, and if so, then to nip off the stem, store in a dry place for some days and then to break open each calyx to retrieve the seeds.

S. columbariae: A profuse seed generator, as it is an annual, but proceed with care. This seed head is prickly, so cut off the head when it turns brown and the individual 'pockets' are opening, and store in a container in a warm place until the seeds fall out.

Perennial species that die if left to seed:

Many of the European species fall into this category. *S. sclarea* is typical and is generally referred to as a biennial. In my experience, if the flower stem is removed before seeds are allowed to form, it will re-grow. So, if you want to collect seeds, it's worth having more than one plant and keeping one just for seeds. *S. aethiopsis*, *S. indica*, *S. barrelieri*, *S. palaestina* and *S. candelabrum* all tend to fall into this category.

There are some *Salvia* species from which it is almost obligatory to collect seeds. These are ones that are rare, ones that are winter dormant and ones that tend to behave as annuals, even though they are perennial in their natural habitat.

Species that are rare

I have read that *S. penstemonoides* is rare even in its native habitat so I was very proud of the plant I had from Sue. I had it in a great location, where the flowers intermingled with a white *Mimulus*. But, these plants were also close to a climbing rose and a *Clematis* and year by year the *Salvia* dwindled. I had no success with vegetative propagation, but generally managed to harvest a few seed late in the season. Foolishly, all the plants I grew went elsewhere and I learnt a hard lesson about keeping back ups when my own plant

died after surrendering no seeds that season! The moral: always keep a back up. *S. caymanensis* is reputed to be rare also, but apart from being a collector's *salvia* rather than a garden-worthy one, this seems to set seed profusely.

Species that are winter dormant here

There is always a risk with these that they won't re-emerge in spring, generally because of rotting of roots or tubers in the wet conditions. If you leave propagating back ups by cuttings to late in the season, you will fail miserably because your new little plants won't be robust enough to survive and re-emerge. So, seed collecting is essential. Plants in this category include *S. patens*, *S. jurisicii*, *S. 'El Cielo Blue'*, *S. clinopodioides* (NB don't despair. This one re-emerges very late in the season), *S. cardiophylla*, as well as some of the Asian species.

Species that behave like annuals here, even though perennial in their natural habitat

Compared to growers in northern Europe, we are relatively lucky in this regard. Nevertheless, plants of mine that appear to die after they flower include *S. amethystina* subsp *ampellophylla*, *S. striata*, *S. trijuga*, and *S. exserta*, so again, it is important to keep replacements, preferably by vegetative propagation, but at least the first two species set seed.

Groups of Salvias that hybridise readily

Species that are closely related may be cross pollinated. This occurs in a number of groups of *Salvias*, so it is most important to keep records when seeds are collected and it is important to observe the outcomes of germination and to not make assumptions. Similarly, if seeds are collected from a cross or cultivar, such as *S. 'Sweet Laura'*, these should only be for experimental purposes as the resulting plants are unlikely to be the same as the parent, and the same name cannot be given to the progeny. Groups that readily hybridise are:

- N. European species of *S. sylvestris*, *S. superba*, *S. nemerosa* and *S. pratensis* – hence all the cultivar names
- Chinese species: *S. subpalmatinervis*, *S. dolicantha*, *S. evansiana*, *S. przwalskii* (do we have any of these in the correct form here?) and *S. flava*, *S. megalantha*, *S. castanea*, *S. campanulata*, *S. digitaloides*.
- Californian species. These apparently hybridise readily in their natural environment – ie the group that includes *S. leucophylla*, *S. clevelandii*, -resulting in many forms. Two of these, *S.* ‘Celestial Blue’ and *S.* ‘Bees Bliss’ are excellent crosses that have been imported here.
- Forms of *S. microphylla* and *S. greggii*. These have hybridized both here and overseas, intentionally and accidentally, to the point of being ridiculous, with new forms continually appearing in the nurseries, almost identical to forms that have been around for years.
- South African species. Again some excellent results have occurred, such as *S.* ‘Finn Grove’ and *S.* ‘African Sky’

Storage of seeds: where and for how long?

Before storing, the seeds must be cleaned up – that is all non-seed material and wildlife must be removed. After doing this, seeds should be kept dry and cool. Some people use mini snap-lock bags or jars. My preference is for mini manila envelopes (available from stationers, but generally you need to order a whole box). Or you can make mini envelopes from recycled larger ones. You should write the species or parent name, location and date of collection in pencil so that you can re-use the envelope later. I store these paper envelopes with some silica gel in plastic containers by season (eg Oct 2011 – May 2012) in the fridge.

When can the seeds be sown?

This is a tricky one to answer. Many people

talk about seeds needing to be fresh, but equally, some need time for after-ripening and others are programmed to remain dormant until the right conditions occur for germination. The overriding factor is probably the natural environment of the particular species. Plants from xerophytic areas (hot, dry summers as in Turkey, the Mediterranean, Southern California, and parts of Mexico and S. Africa) generally get their flowering and reproductive cycle over before the heat of summer and remain semi-dormant throughout the hottest time of year. Seeds from these plants will probably germinate readily during the following autumn.

Plants from day neutral areas – ie low latitudes with little seasonal variation in day length – will probably germinate immediately, if conditions are suitable. I have read that this is so for eg *S. guaranitica* but I haven’t tried it.

There would be no point in trying to germinate seeds from plants from areas of cold, wet winters as soon as they are collected unless you are prepared to emulate these winter conditions by stratifying your seeds – ie sowing, wetting, covering and placing in the fridge for several weeks.

Certainly *Salvia* seeds do not remain viable for many years. They are not like hard-coated *Acacia* seeds that will stay viable until heated (by fire or artificial means). There is plenty of scope for discovery in this area.

In summary, as *Salvia* collectors we have an obligation to collect seed of certain species and we should collect others with caution and yet others, merely with a view to experimentation. Whatever the reason, it is essential that seeds are properly mature, that they are labelled accurately, stored appropriately and the outcomes recorded.

Happy seed collecting.

Glenrowan Ramblings

Jess Kay. Glenrowan. North East Victoria.

Guilt has caught up with me!! It is time to submit some thoughts. Last year I considered not renewing my membership as the *Salvia* newsletter seemed to be for the 'experts' and 'purists', not for the "Love that one, I'll take it home" attitude many of us have. However the Spring & Summer editions renewed my interest with the basic, easy to read article by Lyndi on when to prune and when to take cuttings. That is one of the first questions most will ask when visiting a garden. The *Microphylla* details were also interesting.

Summer – how unpleasant. On the 23rd. December, the day after the summer solstice I always say "we are on our way to winter, whoopee." Alas, with the temperatures in the mid 40 degrees for such an extended period, my garden has been turned to a crisp. The Tallow Tree, London Plane tree, Forest Pansy plus others have just dumped their leaves with a whoosh. Blueberry vine over a trellis which has provided shade has shrivelled back to the stem. My *Salvias* – most are dried sticks, except for the *Canariensis*, *Chamaedryoides*, Anthony Parker and Pink Velour which struggle on valiantly. I recall Trudi saying that she was surprised how hers had recovered when temperatures dropped and rain came after a similar summer.

The Heatwave series described so well by Lynn McCallister, will recover and be very showy. With almost constant winds and heat, our tank water is saved for our domestic use and fire emergencies. Come autumn, when the first yellow crocus bulbs start to flower, and the leaves sprout again, I will stop being a "Grumpy Old Woman" and get into the recovery stage. The Holly Kerr Forsyth article on Barbara Wicks' Garden was very descriptive. She is the ultimate wordsmith. I also had the privilege of Holly visiting and writing about our garden, her main enthusiasm was for the *salvias*. Her book *Country Gardens, Country Hospitality* was launched by the Benalla Garden Club in November last year as part of the Benalla Festival. Holly had been a guest speaker at one of our annual Seminars which host 140 gardening enthusiasts from north east Victoria. In the book she features some of our members' gardens from this area, also recipes which she enjoyed while visiting. Most would be aware Holly has some ongoing health problems, but is always so optimistic.

Our Benalla Garden Club will be celebrating its 60th Birthday in October this year. There are always in excess of 65 members attending the monthly meeting, where we have a trading table (plants brought in by members), a swap table (Bring a plant, take home a plant), but the main drawcard is the varied range of guest speakers; Peony growers, bulb specialists, vegetable growers, a pumpkin seed company from Myrtleford who are the only grower and processor of pure pumpkin seed oil in Australia. They sell chilli pumpkin seed and chocolate covered Australian coffee beans. And of course we have had Trudi & Jillian, and Wendy Smith... the best of the best. Each month there is a garden outing to 3 or more private gardens in different areas. These are arranged by our Committee and members. It is always a very social day.

Enough rambling from me for another two years. Life's Good, summer will end soon, plus "we are on the green side of the grass".

Copy deadline for Winter Edition of Salvia News is 31 March 2013

Please email your articles, comments or queries to

beth.c@bigpond.com (don't forget the dot between 'beth' and 'c')

or post to *Salvia News* c/- Beth Clisby, 3 Creekbank View, Pakenham . Vic 3810

Pakenham Garden Club Tasmania Tour

10th-18th November 2012

Meryl Waterhouse, Pakenham Vic

46 passengers left Melbourne on the Spirit of Tasmania to commence a fabulous 8 days of gardens fine food and friendship.

Arriving in Devonport at 6.30 am on Sunday morning we proceeded to our motel for breakfast then set off to Bev's garden in Devonport. Situated on a battleaxe block, the driveway was a mass of Rhodos, perennials and Peonies which opened out to 5 acres of superb garden. Bev does all of the gardening herself and it has to be seen to be believed.

We then went on to the Chocolate Factory for an indulgent morning tea then to the Axemen's Hall of Fame where we found a Sunday market too! After a tour of the Hall of Fame and lunch we went on to Helen's garden. Another delightful garden around a restored 1880's home, the highlights here were the Foxgloves and Russell Lupins which do so well in Tasmania.

Monday saw us travelling to Burnie to visit Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden for a guided tour following which we went on to Kaydale Gardens at Neitta. Amalia and Lesley, the two daughters of the house, have made this huge farm garden (and still growing). Their specialty is Peonies and Bulbs. They had built waterfalls, paved areas, gazebos (including pouring concrete columns) with some assistance from dad who is a farmer and mum who runs a B&B. This is a garden which shouldn't be missed when in Tassie. From here we journeyed to Fuchsia Fantasy, a nursery with over 1000 fuchsias to choose from!

Tuesday morning we visited the mural township of Sheffield and Todd Miles' Clematis Cottage Nursery and garden, then over the mountains to Mole Creek and "Whychwood", a well known and beautifully laid out garden owned by Peter a landscape gardener/architect and his wife Karen who is also a fabulous cook providing morning tea. From here, after lunch in the Mole Creek Pub, we went on to Deloraine to the Silk Embroidery Museum.



A visit to a nursery and garden in Launceston completed the day.

Wednesday morning commenced with a boat cruise on the Tamar River into Cataract Gorge then on by our coach to Woolmers National Rose Garden and historic Homestead for lunch. On our return to Launceston we took the chairlift to the other end of Cataract Gorge for the garden and afternoon tea.

Thursday morning we made our way toward Hobart, stopping at Perth to visit "Jolly Farmer" the garden of Michael McWilliams (artist and antique dealer) Beautifully laid out with many deciduous trees and plants he has collected over many years around another old homestead. We then continued on to the Tasmanian Gourmet Sauce Company & Topiary Garden & Nursery. Lunch was in Campbelltown before continuing on to Oatlands and the working Flour Mill complete with the largest windmill in Australia.

Hobart on Friday was a beautiful day with wonderful views of Mt Wellington. Our first visit was to "Corinda" a magnificent restored home and gardens to make us all ooh and aah. Wilmar and Michael have been working on the garden for 20 years, unbelievable plants and layout! From here we journeyed to Sally Johansons nursery and garden where the poppies and peonies were a delight. Next was
(continued on page 10)

Salvias in Summer

Geoff Crowhurst, Thornbury Vic

Well, we are having an old-fashioned hot and dry summer. I haven't noticed nature-strips looking yellow and brown for a few years now, apart from the odd one with kikuyu grass. The prevailing conditions sort out the men from the boys in the salvia clan. Of my more recent acquisitions, *Salvia dominica* is doing very nicely. It is a seed grown plant from Craig Irving at Sunnymeade, and after being rather floppy to begin with, now has woody lower stems, and is more shapely as a result. Betsy Clebsch says it has 'a lovely fragrance, though Olivier Filippi in *The Dry Gardening Handbook* rather unkindly reports a plant lecturer referring to its smell being 'like the armpit of a boxer after a difficult fight'! I will go with Betsy on this one. The whitish flowers are nothing to write home about, but the foliage is very decorative.



Salvia splendens

The other recent salvia is what I presume to be a species *S. splendens*, grown from Seedhunt seed last summer. It didn't flower much last autumn, but has now flowered from mid spring, with salmon pink 'Van Houttei' like spikes of bloom. As it needs regular

water, I have it in a large pot in semi-shade. Although it has set seed, I imagine it would strike very readily from cuttings. The flower colour looks particularly good against a dark background.

Out the front on the nature-strip, conditions are certainly tough. With poor light soil over clay, it seems the only salvias to manage alright are those willing to get their roots down into the clay. The African species plus 'African Skies' survive well, though *S. somolensis* has been a disappointment. After growing strongly for a few years, it gradually petered out (and the same happened in much better soil in the back garden). *S. 'Cookie'* is okay, as are 'Hot Lips' and 'Huntington Red', though 'San Carlos Festival' and 'Maraschino' of the microphylla types do need extra water to keep going. I will have to do some re-arranging after this summer. Even the catmint border looks rather poor, so I may try *S. taraxicifolia* in one part instead. This grows very readily from seed. It is very tough little plant that spreads to form a mat.

To all those passionate gardeners trying to keep things going in adverse conditions, good luck.

Pakenham Garden Club Tassie Tour *(continued from page 9)*

"Inverawe" native gardens at Margate before having the afternoon with Tino Carnevale (Gardening Australia) in the Hobart Botanic Gardens. Tino joined us for dinner that night and is to be our guest at our 2013 Garden Expo on September 7th. He is a delightful young fellow with such knowledge and enthusiasm for gardening.

Saturday saw us all at Salamanca Market before going to Richmond Bridge and "Villaret Gardens" at Moltema then a drive through Railton to check out the Topiary before boarding the Spirit for our return to Melbourne on Sunday morning.

Salvia Group Christmas party 2012

Patrick Hogan

Meryl Waterhouse kindly allowed the Victorian Salvia Study Group to host the end of year Christmas party at her beautiful Pakenham road property. As on the previous visit the sun shone and Meryl's garden was in good condition and provided a very nice backdrop for the Christmas get together.

Perhaps it was the article written in the previous "Salvia Newsletter" that attracted such a great crowd (56). The food and the atmosphere were a delight and with lots of cuttings and free plants – everybody came away contented.

Thank you Meryl and Keith for once again hosting the Victorian Salvia Study Group. Some photographs of the day are attached below. What a wonderful way to finish up the year.



Salvia News

The Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria inc.

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Salvia Group Working Bee starts the year off

Patrick Hogan

The weather was overcast as the group of volunteers arrived for the first working bee of 2013 at the Salvia Display garden at Emerald. After the customary cup of coffee the assembled team of 15 people commenced removing the old timber edging around the beds. With the treated pine edging on the bon fire the assembly and installation of the Aluminium edging began. With string lines laid out and several parties working together it was not long before the project was well underway. After a well deserved lunch break under the shade of the Pin Oaks and a beautiful salad lunch prepared by Jillian



Barkell, we set out with enthusiasm for the afternoon session, by which time the sun shone brightly. Lyndi ensured that the troops were wearing hats and sunscreen and proceeded to distribute drinks of water to everybody as the day got hotter. A total of 15 volunteers ensured that the project was completed in one day and the finished result (aside from a few small edge pieces) can be seen below.

A very big “Thank you” to everyone who turned up and the completed project should last for many years.



Lyndi Garnet

We had a wonderful turn out for our working bee to put in the new edging. Fifteen people turned up and got stuck into the business of taking out the old and putting in the new. The whole team did a wonderful job and with the mulch, it looks a million dollars – amazing how mulch helps to lift a garden. We didn't finish until 5pm! We all went home exhausted from the fresh air, the hot sun and

hard work. It was good to catch up with so many good friends.

Just to think that it was raining at 8am this morning!! Up there we stripped off very quickly in that sun. We all had a wonderful lunch (of course) chicken, salad and chocolates!!

We haven't finished yet, so the next effort will be a while in coming, we'll see how this edging settles before finishing the back of the beds.

GREAT FERTILISER OFFER

Pakenham Garden Club is offering Salvia News subscribers the chance to purchase bulk fertiliser at great prices.

Orders taken until Tuesday 2 April , 2013 . Phone Meryl Waterhouse on 5941 1306

Delivered to 315 Pakenham Road Pakenham

Orders to be picked up on Tuesday 30 April, 2013 – all day

Nitrophoska	25kg	\$30.00
Bounce Back (dynamic lifter)	40kg	\$28.00
Sudden Impact	20kg	\$42.00
Rapid Raiser	40kg	\$28.00
Seamungus	40kg	\$32.00
Blood and Bone	25kg	\$31.00
Sulphate of Potash	25kg	\$31.00
Dolomite	25kg	\$ 9.00
Lime	25kg	\$ 6.00

New product...

Gyganic, mix of bounce back extra fertiliser, seaweed and organic humic acid 20kg bag \$26.00

All prices include GST.

The New Book of Salvias for every Garden Betsy Glebsch

Special discounted price of \$15 per copy plus Postage is only while stocks last

Book @ \$15 each x copies \$

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Glen Waverley. Vic 3150

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News from Southeast Queensland

Ellie / Tamborine Mountain, Qld

January 2013

Did I tell you about my beautiful gentle *S dorisiana* last winter? Well, it became a thing of beauty in what I poetically called my 'Woodland'. The apple green foliage and the lolly pink flowers were lovely and under them grew the lovely little lavender blue iris flowering profusely. Then came summer and the tall canes were starting to dry off and my 'Woodland' became an untamed jungle. A massive clean up was necessary.

Why do we think that in a subtropical place we can afford to ignore signs of wanton growth!

Fortunately, a lovely man with a trailer heard me telling a volunteer friend at the 'Botanic Gardens' that I was in a bit of a bind with piles of cut material and he came around to help. With his two trailer loads and one of mine we managed to clear the area very well. Already the clumps have become promises of another 'Woodland' for next winter but this time I will be more careful about giving them free range.

My *S gravis* is doing well and I am finding a few seedlings coming up here and there, but I

find that they are not happy in this dry and need some extra water every other day. Most of the microphylla's have flowered very well and I noticed some fresh growth on my *S mellisadora* with lots of flowers. This plant is now quite tall coming up to 2m.

I am sitting at the computer bathed in perspiration and only half of the grass cut. When it cools down I will bring in the big gun and do the wide grass area and the verge. It looks lovely when it is cut and now that my *Eucalyptus grandis* has finished dropping large pieces of bark (another two trailer loads) it will be nice for longer.

Cheers and Good Gardening in 2013

Editor: Barb Wickes of Queensland advises; 'Elwyn wrote this some weeks ago - things have changed now though - the drought is over! We have had at least 20 inches of rain in days and plants are hanging their heads as the sun has come out and the heat is extreme! Next issue we will have some reports on how our salvias survive.' Thank you Ellie and Barb for keeping us updated

Plants under the weather, give them aspirin

Give them aspirin water. We have all heard this advice given but this time it's for your plants. That's the anecdote one of our subscribers found on the internet and is currently trying.

The article on the website says that there should be no surprise to learn that the aspirin ingredient salicylic acid is being used as an Earth friendly first aid for warding off plant diseases. It goes on to introduce Martha McBurney the gardener in charge of the garden at the University of Rhode Island. In 2005 aspirin water was tested on tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, basil and other plants with amazing results after reading about it in the *Avant Gardener*, a New York publication. It explained that aspirin is an activator of Systemic Acquired Resistance (SAR). Plants produce this naturally but are slow to produce salicylic acid when under stress and without high quantities become easy target for bugs

and diseases. Giving the plants aspirin water builds the plant immune system.

The dosage used is 1.5 (uncoated aspirin) to 2 gallons of water, adding 2 tablespoons of yucca extract (or substituted with a mild liquid soap) to ensure the mixture sticks to the leaves, and spray every 3 weeks.

The results are healthy plants with extra strong growth and no insects. It also claims to improve seed germination.

For more information check out the following site:

www.plantea.com/plant-aspirin.htm

If this interests you to seek further information from the website and to give it a try in your own garden, we would love to hear about it. Don't forget to include your name, suburb or town and state for publication and a photo too if possible, and post or email to *Salvia News*.

A New Garden in Ballarat

Laurelle Willis/ Ballarat Vic

From a garden built on clay in Boronia, Melbourne, to a garden in Ballarat managing beautifully on what may well have been a 'slag' heap!!!! Of course the very clement weather has also helped, often light drizzles, but plenty of sunshine too. The recent damaging winds caused almost all to be stripped to bare sticks, most distressing, yet just these few weeks later there's such growth everywhere it's very heartening. Care has had to be taken with the regular western winds though.

Amongst the 'mysteries' I have a simply beautiful, well foliated, soft lilac coloured *Salvia* yet to be identified. Very much a frost tender item as I thought it had succumbed during early Spring but a few weeks later new shoots, so I'll be taking care next year when the frosts descend.

This very small patch which I would have wished larger, has proven to be almost as much as can currently be handled.

Disappointing but that's what depleted energy offers these days. It sure doesn't mean the area isn't full to overflowing with all manner of treasures I brought up here with me. The Spring bulbs are well gone and have now been 'sorted' into colour themes as with three small patches I've chosen to have a yellow, a red and a pink theme. I might also add, there's plenty of blue and white with self sown Queen Anne's Lace, Forget-me-nots, Cornflowers and Love-in-a-mist! Height

will eventually come with roses, "Kathleen Harrop", "Mutabilis" and "General Gallieni" absolute favourites despite only one having perfume, "Kathleen Harrop", but with continuous pruning all will flower for nearly 12 months, precisely what I want.

Height will also eventually come with 'annual' Clematis flowers, *C. flammula* a particular favourite even though an absolute thug wanting to take over everything and with beautifully perfumed white *Mandevilla suaveolens*, they're both quite happy to be cut back into a manageable size after flowering.

The front 'garden' is of necessity potted. *Salvia discolor*, *Salvia semiatrata*, *Salvia mexicana* "Limelight", *Salvia* "Marine Blue" and *Salvia chiapensis* have all had their 'day in the sun' so to speak and have been much admired. I've just planted *Salvia corrugata* in the remaining enormous pot so with a background of the beautifully perfumed *Luma apiculata* with tiny white flowers and the statement of purple *Echium* it will eventually be both a forest and a delight with flowering covering a good portion of the year. May just have to get a watering system organised although have always considered individual plants respond better to a watchful eye and judicious watering when absolutely essential.

And so, that's a ten minute stroll around my new garden and believe me, five minutes is sufficient if the viewer is a casual observer and not a gardener.

Vandals hit Salvia Display Garden

Just prior to Christmas the *Salvia* Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald was vandalised and plants were dug up and stolen.

Although its not the first time the Garden has been vandalised, it is disappointing and quite distressing. A couple of months earlier it was noticed that some plants had been pulled up and taken.

Most weeks both Lyndi and Jillian spend time at the Garden to keep it to the high standard that is so admired by all who visit. There are regular working bees too where others join them to assist with maintenance. All plants in the garden are named, regular pruning and weeding keeps them busy. New plants are often added and the occasional plant has to be replaced.

Thirteen plants were taken this time and others were damaged. Whoever took the plants left behind the labels. This incident has been reported to both the Police and Cardinia Council

LETTERS

Railway Station Garden in Sunbury



Sunbury Garden Club has taken over the Railway Station Garden in Sunbury after our old garden was demolished due to the Electrification Project. We have planted *Salvia microphylla* "Heatwave Glitter" which on the label says is tolerant of dry conditions which is just as well because we don't have a watering system installed. I have noticed the plants are quite fragile at the base and many are broken. They were planted in October 2012. I would like to know the best way to look after them. Is it ok to cut them by half in February and when else? The label also says to fertilise them once only in Spring. Any suggestions for other salvias that would grow amongst the Heatwave Glitter plants – there are two shades of pink. We don't want them to grow too big or be invasive. We also have climbing roses growing amongst the salvias. I love reading the *Salvia News* and find it very interesting.

Regards Cheryl Schembri
President Sunbury Garden Club. Vic
4/01/2013

Cheryl,
Thankyou for contacting *Salvia News* and forwarding the photos of your wonderful

garden at the Railway Station. I'm pleased that you chose Salvias to plant in that area as they should do well.

As to their maintenance – cut them back when they look too straggly, shabby or when there are too many spent flower spikes. Don't worry about cutting them back when there are still flowers, cut the stems back to a bud about ½ to promote good healthy dense growth. The flowers will be back in about 4 weeks.

Other pink Salvias that you might like to consider in the Heatwave series are 'Flare' and 'Sizzler', 'Blaze' has a vibrant dark crimson flower. If you want more of a mauve colour, there is a new one that PGA has just put out that is very similar to 'Glitter' called 'Radiance' and another crimson 'Brilliance'. All of these Salvias grow 40cm – 60 cm high and should be cut back at least twice a year to keep them compact.

Keep up the good work, I'm so pleased that you were able to use Salvias in the Station's garden.

If you want any other information, feel free to ask.

Thankyou
Lyndi Garnett

Managed to weed the *Salvia* Display Garden at Nobelius, although the ground was so hard in places that it was impossible to get out all the *Oxalis* bulbs- will go up once a month to do a bit of maintenance in the ever ending quest to get rid of the stuff.

Evident that someone has stolen plants from the garden, which is a real pity, because the passersby that approached me were so impressed with the garden and all the work you have done to make the area such a pleasure to wander through and enjoy.

More than happy to help out with the February activity- just let me know when it is on.

Cheers Wayne Burgess 4/01/2013

Notes from Gruyere: February 2013

Meg Bentley

Haven't we been spoilt with the drought breaking last year but did it really break or was it just that we had some good rain at the time we needed it most? I would have to say that this summer has been the worst for growing plants that I've had since starting a garden and that is a long time. Hopefully there will be some salvias' left growing in the garden by autumn and if the weather is kind enough and it turns cool without the hot sun beating down, there may be a flower or two. If it rains in autumn then the garden will be blessed with a good show of colour from the surviving salvias.

I have always recommended that plants be left alone when they are looking so stressed, wilting badly or even appear to be dying off. Be patient and wait until the weather changes has usually been my advice. If you are not sure whether your plant is dying or just suffering or stressed out then a good tip is to scratch the stem at the base of the plant and if it is still green you know it will survive when the weather changes but if it is brown and wrinkled or dry then it will need to be removed.

This February I have had to cut back and even pull out dead plants to enable the garden in places to look somewhat tidier than a mass of dead sticks that once formed shrubby salvias; especially if one has Garden Groups and visitors coming to see the gardens. Fortunately I have kept most of the 'Mother' plants and 'rarer specials' growing in containers in a shaded area under a large spreading tree. These plants are hand watered and it takes quite a few hours to water hundreds of pots with buckets, watering can and where a hose can reach. Our only water supply is tanks which are getting quite low which means two things: the water warms up as

the tanks get lower and the pressure is then very slow to fill buckets and watering can.

There are some methods we use to help conserve the moisture of potted plants and that is by lining poly boxes with paper, the pots can then re-absorb the moisture after watering instead of losing it on the ground. Repotting has had to be carried out where smaller plants simply cannot cope with the heat and they dry out quickly, these would not make it through the summer months. If a plant looks so stressed and you think it may not make it then take a cutting or two. Place them in a diluted solution of Seasol or Maxicrop even if you have to leave them in it overnight then place the cuttings in a mixture of potting mix with sand added or even some perlite, something that will keep moist but have good drainage too. These pots can then be placed in a tray (cat litter trays are good or even trays from meat packaging) which will hold the moisture as you pour over the rest of the diluted seaweed solution and leave them standing in this overnight. Make sure that the liquid only comes up about ½ to 1 inch around the base of the pots which creates a type of hydroponic effect for the plants.

Sometimes you may see that all the liquid has been absorbed and that the cuttings are standing up fresh and alive. They could stay in the trays with a light misting to help keep them fresh and moist and of course do keep them in the shade at all times. After 3-4 days the pots can be placed in a poly box lined with paper (as mentioned above) watering only as needed. It is best to take the cuttings very early in the morning or evening but not in the heat of the day where the sun has absorbed any moisture from the plant.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Have you a Salvia query or a comment regarding Salvia News? Is there a Salvia in your garden that you don't know the name of? Post or email your queries to Salvia News and include a photo where possible. You will be answered directly and we may also include in the Newsletter.

Deadline for the next newsletter is 31 March 2013

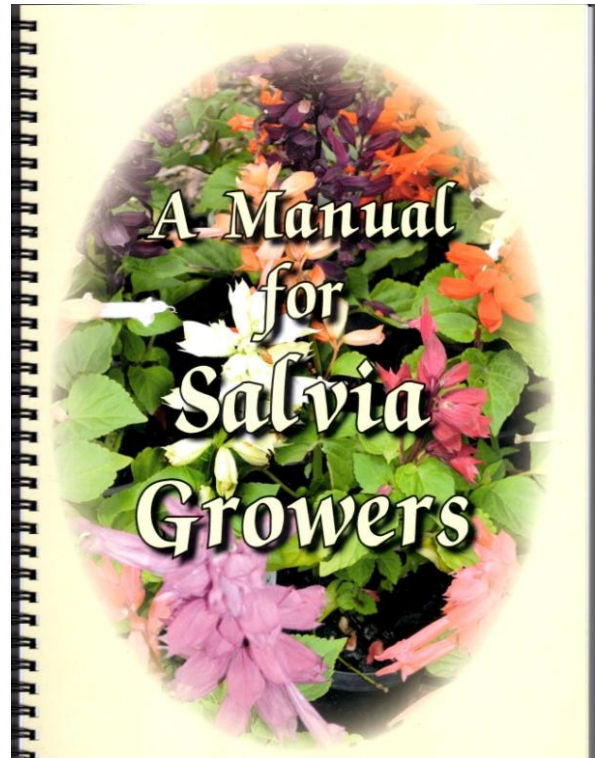
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Salvia News

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