

# Salvia News

NUMBER 52



Official Newsletter of the  
**Victorian Salvia Study Group**

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

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**\*COPY DEADLINE for next issue is 30 June 2013**



# SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

**W**elcome to the latest edition of Salvia News. Its another full edition with hopefully items of interest for everyone. Your opinions, news and views are welcome and appreciated so hopefully I will hear from you soon.

Around the country we have endured hotter, drier or wetter conditions, one, two or all of the above. Don't forget to drop us a line to share your gardening with salvias experience. On page 9, read about Death of a Salvia, can you relate to this one? Both Queensland and NSW have endured a wetter season than usual. Learn more, 'News from Werri Beach' on page 13 and Autumn '13 News from Queensland page 15/16. There is a great article on Salvias grown by seed written by Meg Bentley on page 6/7. Do you know what Cleistogamy and Chasmogamy is all about, a truly interesting subject and worth a read. Learn more including photos and drawings on pages 11-13.

We are urgently in need of a new Treasurer preferably with book keeping experience. Please telephone Lyndi Garnett on 9803 4534. Unfortunately Irene Robinson has had to step down for health and family reasons. Our best wishes go to Irene and thank her for her past support. We are also looking for someone who is proficient in typing and has some spare time to assist with historical records of VSSG. For further information, please contact Lyndi Garnett on 9803 4534.

Subscriptions renewal date for most subscribers is 1 June. Therefore many will receive their renewal notice with this issue. If you have renewed within the last six months, or are a new subscriber, your renewal will not be until 1 June 2014. Any queries, contact our Subscription Secretary Meg Gadd .

*Until next time; Happy Gardening, Beth*

**Salvia Display Garden  
Nobelius Heritage Park's new sign**

**THESE GARDENS ARE NOW  
UNDER SURVEILLANCE.**

**IF YOU WANT ANY SALVIAS,  
PLEASE PHONE 9803 4534**

**PLEASE REPORT ANY  
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES AND  
ANY THEFTS TO THE  
EMERALD POLICE STATION  
PHONE 59684422 OR 000**

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Don't forget to check the website [www.salvias.org.au](http://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

**May 19<sup>th</sup> Sun**

## **Russell Cheal Garden Visit**

Wonga Park Mel: 36 F7

A beautifully maintained garden with a wonderful array of plants, including Salvias.

Bring a plate to share and a chair and enjoy a beautiful garden

**June 15<sup>th</sup> Sat**

## **RHS Conference**

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

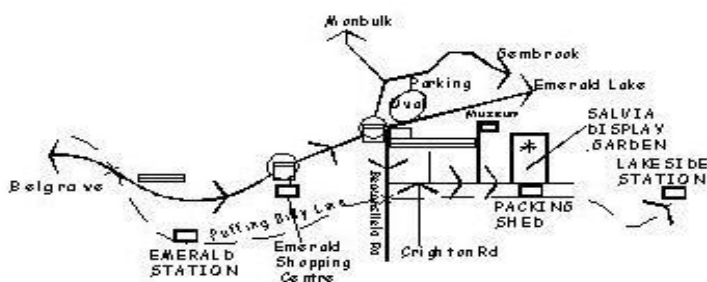
Salvias for sale. Bring your list.

Enquiries Meryl Waterhouse 5941 1306

## SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN

VSSG Salvia Display Garden is at Nobelius Heritage Garden, Crighton Road, Emerald, under the packing shed. Melway 127.G4 There is *free* parking and no entry fee. See approximately 100 different salvias grown in the display gardens that survive on rain water only after the initial watering at planting.

You are invited to visit at your leisure. Additionally, don't forget there are also Working Bees and Salvia events. Check your Calendar of Events regularly for details.



## Bits ‘n’ pieces from Lyndi, VSSG co-ordinator

### Salvia Display at the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show

Four of us went in to the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show to set up a Salvia display on the RHS stand – with Ferny Creek, the Bonsai Society, the RHS and the Society for growing native plants.

Although the photo isn't great and the light is shining on our banner, the display looked good and we were happy with it all.

Thank you to Pat Anderson, Meg and Jillian for donating so many plants for the display. Patrick and Gordon came in to help set up.



#### Salvia Name Change

Salvia *greggii* bicolour pale = ‘Pink Pearl’

In the Salvia News Summer edition 2012, we shared how we intended spending our hard earned dollars. We have achieved all we set out for this year with our spending of the money gained from the Spectacular last year.

- to replace the edging at Nobelius, which was done in February, only the rear is left to do which can be completed during the year;
- an upgrade in the website, which now is a work in progress;
- a pull up Salvia banner – which was used with our display at the Flower show in March.

Would anyone like to be more involved with Salvias? Perhaps on a regular basis?, someone with a bit of free time who likes to be in the garden everyday, loves Salvias and wants something to do. Ring me on 98034534.

#### ***Salvia clevelandii and munzii***

##### **clevelandii:**

Leaves are always grey/ green, slender and more lanceolate and can be longer

Leaves always have that sweet smell – the same as ‘Celestial Blue’.

Flowers are a more intense blue and \* \* the stamens are well exerted beyond the corolla – look like they have little blue spikes

Calyxes are coloured and the main stems are a dark colour – which is very noticeable as they contrast well with the grey / green leaves.

##### **munzii:**

Leaves are always green, shorter and wider towards the apex, they have a finer edge and a finer texture. Leaves do have a scent but not the sweet smell of ‘clevelandii’

Flowers are a lighter blue, can be almost white and slightly smaller. NO stamens exerted

Calyxes can be either green or coloured. Whilst the flower stem is coloured, the main stems are green or even yellow.

They both grow approx the same height. Apparently ‘mellifera’ is associated with ‘munzii’ and is often confused with – possibly by the green leaves.

# Notes from Gruyere – Salvias from Seed

*Meg Bentley March 2013*

As I sit and write this article, outside mind you since it is such a glorious Autumn morning, there are abundant birds at my feet and on the path nearby. Red-browed finches, Crimson rosellas, Blue wrens and Yellow robins and what a treat to have the yellow robin come and perch right beside you as you sit there quietly observing the goings on! Marvelous how many insects emerge after a little bit of rain thus keeping the birdlife happy and well fed. Added to this is the wonderful fragrance of the Ginger lilies and heavy perfume of the Murraya as it drifts by on the breeze.

The bright summer sun is slowly moving back towards its winter mode, autumn is upon us and longer shadows appear which gives respite to the poor plants that suffered through those long harsh summer days.

Some shrubs and trees have gone into early leaf drop (deciduous), others may not come back and this includes some of the salvias.

We will all have lost many plants this past summer but that is part of gardening isn't it. Plants sort themselves out and we as gardeners have to move along with them.

What we lose in the garden will sometimes leave a place for something else to try, a case of nature not standing still and we have to move along to keep up.

Our Newsletter is not only about scientific information regarding salvias it is a newsletter for all gardeners including salvia growers to share their experiences about growing plants in varying climates and circumstances, how your plants survived over the long hot summer and your tips and ideas of how you managed! Distance can be a main factor in our inability to get together, to talk and discuss our plants and gardens and we all like to know how others get along! When we can't get together then writing about our gardens and sharing our achievements and failures is the next best thing. We would all love to hear from you.

Seed growing is one of the main things on my

gardening agenda at the moment, that is, apart from propagating from cuttings now that the weather is cooling down. There is time for seeds to shoot and start growing and cuttings to take root before winter. Whilst I have always been wary about growing cultivars from seed due to the risk of more cultivars coming onto the market, I am testing out 'species' to see if they will come 'true' and also growing some newer Chinese species of salvia.

If one is propagating from cuttings (vegetatively) you know that it will come true but with seeds one doesn't know who the pollinator was and what other plants were visited before the final 'seed-set'. So while growing salvias from seed has an element of 'guess-work' one also needs to maintain a certain degree of careful planning and order. That means the seed you want to collect needs to be growing well away from other cultivars or 'cross-pollinated' salvias or if they are species, keep to the one type in a certain area. The only way one can achieve this is by covering the actual flower head while it is still in bud before the bees or other pollinators get to it and this needs to be done before the flower opens. To maintain the health of the flower the covering needs to be open enough to let in the air, sunlight and moisture but not allow insects to get in or the seeds to fall out through the bottom of the covering.

Growing salvias from seed can be a time consuming job especially if you need to ensure that the plant is going to be 'true' to the parent plant and that means watching it grow and waiting for it to flower. Then, if the growth pattern, leaves and flowers are the image of the parent, your plant will be a true replica but with any variation of these findings then your plant will be either a 'form' or a 'cultivar' of the parent plant.

## **How to grow your salvias from seed**

I liken this to getting ready to make a cake and following the recipe. Get all the equipment ready including wash and sterilize

the pots or trays, get seed packets and written labels on hand including the seed-raising mix. This can be bought as an ideal ready mixed medium or you can sieve potting mix and add some washed river sand or propagating sand just to keep it free draining. Some seeds can be soaked in water for an hour or two which I find best with larger seeds like *Salvia spathacea*, egg cups are ideal for this. Smaller seed need only be scattered over the top surface followed by a sprinkling of soil to cover. Where possible do each batch on a separate piece of newspaper, this way if any seed falls beside the pots it won't be mixed with a different batch and do make sure you label the seed pots as you go. I find it pays to dampen the soil mix before planting the seed, this way the seeds settle in much better and makes it easier for the soil to absorb the water when misting overhead.

Watering is another area where one needs to be diligent, for example if you place all the newly planted seed pots together and water them all over-head there is a chance that some seed can 'splash' into the pot beside it, this can and does happen. What I do is stand the pot into a low tray containing a minimum amount water and let it draw up the liquid. I must add that if the mix is very dry this method can have a devastating effect and soil and seeds can float out of the seed tray, this is why I recommend damping the seed-mix beforehand. I have also used a fine mist spray to help keep the top moist, each pot done separately so there is no chance of splashing seeds. I then place the seed trays / pots in a shady, protected spot where there is no chance of other plants including salvias self-sowing into these pots. There are times where a foreign seed will come up in the batch of seeds and people ask 'how come this plant had come up here'? If one has been diligent with sowing the seed then the only other answer that I can give is that the seed was mixed in with it right at the beginning when it was collected. Some calyces have sticky hairs and un-be-known to you a stray seed has been caught and mixed with the seeds when collected, this can happen with plants growing next to each other.

Salvia seeds come up with two seed leaves (dicotyledons) they are too young yet to disturb but when their next set of leaves appear and growing, then it is time to 'prick' out the seedlings and pot them up into individual pots using a reputable potting mix. As your seedlings start growing bigger they should all be uniform in shape and leaf structure, this is usually the time when one notices any difference in variation and easier to tell if a 'stray or foreign' seed has been added. Best to remove this one and label it as 'came up in such and such pot', keeping an eye on it until it flowers to help with identification. Some seeds are fast to come up while others can be quite slow and it is at this time that one can be fooled into thinking the seeds are not viable but in fact they may have sprouted and slugs or snails have had a feast before you got there. Another point is if you are waiting too long there is a chance that some other stray seed has got in and starts growing, how can this be you wonder. Well, have you noticed how sticky calyces attach themselves to your sleeve and how easy the seeds fall out, this can happen as you lean over the pots while attending to plants in the nursery. So, taking all these factors into account, growing salvias from seed should be a breeze, good luck and have fun, I know I will!

## **WANTED NEW VSSG TREASURER**

**Volunteer Treasurer Needed**  
Book keeping experience an advantage  
**Please contact Lyndi Garnett**  
VSSG Co-ordinator on  
**Telephone 9803 4534**

*It is with regret that we say goodbye to Irene Robinson as VSSG Treasurer. Because of family commitments and health issues she is no longer able to continue. We thank her most sincerely for her work with VSSG. It has been much appreciated.*

# Salvia News

The Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria inc.

## NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS ONLY

NOT FOR RENEWALS

Any queries, phone Meg Gadd – see details below

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# Death of a Salvia

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Vic - March 2013

*Salvia melissodora*. The common name is Grape-scented Sage, but the scientific name literally means “sage that smells of honey”. Either way, it is a lovely plant. Or, in my case, it WAS a lovely plant.

I had had *S. melissodora* in my Salvia garden for about ten years. I saw a beautiful specimen in Sue Templeton’s garden, by a window, years ago and had to have it. Our climate is not as harsh as that of Sue’s, so I was able to plant it out in my “New World” area, where it stood proudly, next to a tree stump, and much taller. I looked up at it every time I walked past because it seemed to flower for months, with lovely clusters of pale blue flowers. The more so if I took the trouble to dead head it. Each spring it was pruned and it would get a trim in January to keep it looking good for the rest of its flowering season.

Then, in January this year, I noticed a few curled up leaves towards the top and this seemed to spread through the whole branch. The rest of the shrub looked fine, so I dashed for the pruning saw and took the woody stem off right down to the ground. A couple of weeks later, a second stem went the same way, and received the same treatment.

Phew. All seemed to be well. The sun shone and the rain stopped and the wind blew and it was a bad summer for gardening, but we were able to keep the garden looking fairly good as we are blessed with plenty of tank water for the purpose, and even had the river pump as a back up this year if all else failed. The worst of summer passed and now we are into autumn.....

Imagine my horror when only two days ago, I walked past *S. melissodora* on the way to the compost bin and saw that the only remaining woody stem has gone the same way. Now every remaining leaf is grey and curled up and the remaining flowers are turning from blue to grey and trying their best to stay looking nice, but losing the battle.

I have absolutely no idea why this lovely shrub has died. I will inspect the roots when I dig it out, but in the meantime I can rejoice that I have a decent-sized back up plant in a pot. If there is something nasty in the soil, perhaps it should go in a different spot, but I really want to put it right there. I think I will, and I’ll hang on to yet another back up plant. It is quite hard to propagate, I find, but I have had success with heel cuttings in the spring and I have also propagated it from seed.

## The New Book of SALVIAS

by Betsy Glebsch

Book @ \$15 each x ..... copies \$ .....

Plus P&H \$9 per copy \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to H.S.O.V. Salvia Study Group

Send remittance and completed form to:

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**844 Highbury Road,**  
**Glen Waverley. Vic 3150**

Enquiries phone VSSG Lyndi Garnett 9803 4534

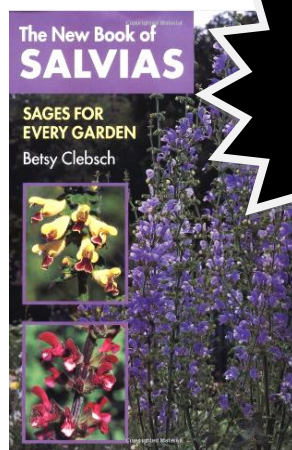
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# NEW SALVIAS FOR THE COMING SPRING

*Lyndi Garnett*

These new Salvia releases won't be available until next spring. Tavistock is growing them and has only just received the stockplants. They will all be PBR'd. We can only promote them, not sell them.

**PGA** Two new Heatwave Salvias 'Radiance' a lovely soft pink 40 x 60cm (unfortunately looks like some of the others), 'Brilliance' is beautiful a good magenta 40 x 60cm. A lot of new Salvias seem to be of a magenta colour, that is the colour of the month. Both are microphyllas

**Australian Perennial Growers** 'Neon', a good bright cerise colour, 40 x 60cm, 'Playa Rosa', a lovely pale bicolor soft pink, 40 x 60cm, 'Telegraph Ave' (what a name!) a good magenta with dark stems and calayces 40 x 60 cm - all microphyllas; and 'Amistad' which is a violet form of 'Black n' Blue'.



Salvia Heatwave radiance



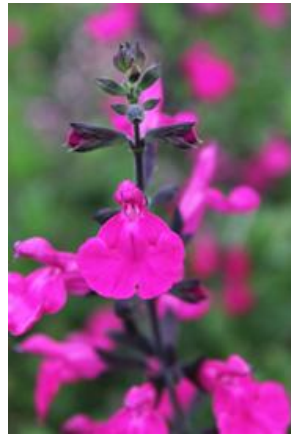
Salvia Embers Wish



Salvia Heatwave Brilliance



Salvia Radiance



Salvia Neon



Salvia Playa Rosa



Salvia Amistad



Salvia Telegraph Ave

# Cleistogamy, Chasmogamy and other dirty words

Pat Anderson - March 2013

We grow our salvias because we love their flowers, don't we? So how annoying is it when they don't flower for us! Sometimes, this is because our plants are too young or because they aren't in the right position in the garden, most often because they are not getting enough sun. But there is one other condition which can prevent the appearance of flowers, a condition called 'cleistogamy'.

The prime reason for a plant to flower in a colourful fashion is to attract a pollinator, whether that is an insect or bird, so that pollen may be transported from the anthers of one flower to the stigma of another for fertilization and the production of seeds to perpetuate the existence of the species.

Within the genus *Salvia* there are a few species that, at certain times of the year, manage to produce seeds without their flowers opening, that is by self-pollination. This condition is called cleistogamy, as opposed to chasmogamy, the more normal condition where flowers open to expose their reproductive parts and allow cross pollination. Three species that demonstrate this are closely related. They are *Salvia henryi* (syn *Salvia davidsonii*), *Salvia summa* and *Salvia roemeriana*. All three flower normally in early summer, but as the season becomes hotter, the flowers tend not to open and yet seed production is more prolific, with the full quota of 4 nutlets to each flower. *Salvia lyrata* also follows this pattern as does the rather weedy *Salvia verbenaca*. In fact a synonymous name for the latter is *Salvia cleistogama*.

*Salvia henryi* is a pretty annual with tubular pink flowers. The following photos were taken in early December, 2009 when my plant flowered and in March this year (the hot one!) when my this-year's plant hasn't shown a single pink flower and yet I have collected seed.



Figure 1: *Salvia henryi* taken in early Dec 2009

While I have not researched this subject thoroughly, I have read of some experimentation with *Salvia roemeriana*, where it was established that cleistogamy occurred above 24°C, implying a return to normal flowering in the autumn where day length is still sufficiently long enough.



Figure 2: *Salvia henryi* taken during the heat of summer 2013 – no flowers!

*Salvia roemeriana*, *summa* and *henryi*, were all classified by Bentham in the nineteenth century as being in his section, Heterosphaea, the only one of five sections of New World

# Cleistogamy, Chasmogamy and other dirty words

.. continued from page 11

salvias with both New and Old World members. The other North American species in this section (including those originally classified as in section *Salviastrum*) are *Salvia engelmannii* and *lyrata*. The position of *Salvia penstemonoides* has not been clarified. Old World members include *Salvia nilotica*, *runcinata*, *scabra*, *stenophylla* and *aurita*. All of these species set seed heavily. I wonder if anyone has observed cleistogamy in these African species? If so, I would be very grateful for some feedback. I have certainly observed this with *Salvia stenophylla* and possibly with *Salvia scabra*. I must observe my plants more closely.

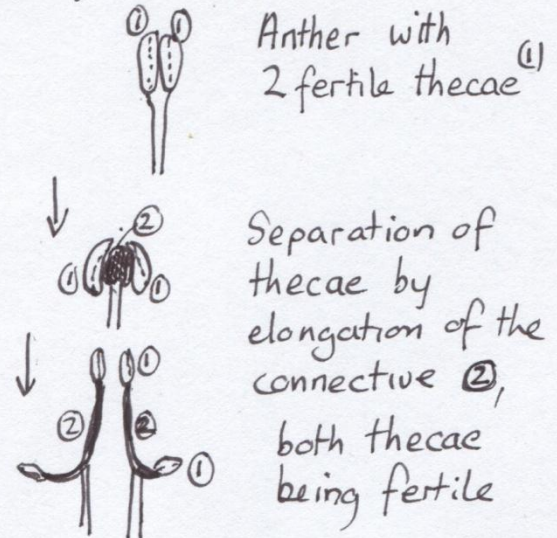
One interesting thought relates to the stamens in this section of *Salvia* -Heterosphace. Only two stamens are functional in all species of *Salvia*, the other pair being reduced to staminodes. Furthermore, in the fertile stamens of most salvias, the two thecae of each anther are separated by an elongated connective which causes the lever mechanism which is so important in the deposition of pollen on the back or head of the pollinator. While the majority of New and Old World salvias also have sterile posterior anther thecae, *Salviastrum* and *Heterosphace* are unique in having fertile posterior anther thecae.

The following diagram compares the possible evolution of the stamens in *Salvia lyrata* with that of the stamens of an Old World *Salvia*, *miltiorrhiza*.

continued on page 13..

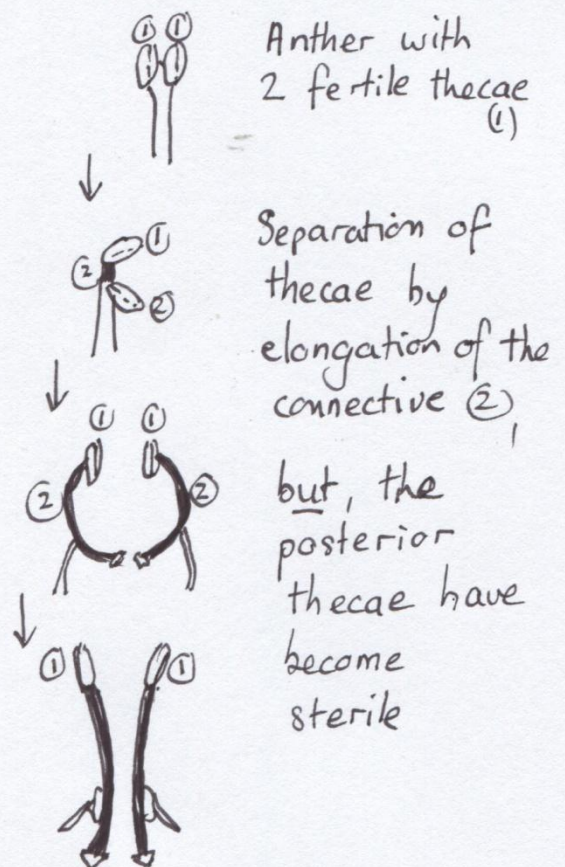
Possible evolution of the staminal lever mechanism in

*Salvia lyrata*



Possible evolution of the staminal lever mechanism in

*Salvia miltiorrhiza*



# News from Werri Beach

Maureen Cox, Werri Beach NSW – March 2013

Like Jess in the last issue, I have been feeling a bit guilty about not contributing. However, the reminder about my renewal has spurred me on to write. The main reason I haven't put pen to paper for a while was that I thought I may have been repeating myself. My salvias have been just getting on and doing what they do best. However, like everyone else, things got a bit desperate when we hadn't had much rain for two months. We were getting down to our emergency tank supplies when thankfully we had 6 inches of rain and have had some regular showers since. So, of course, most things recovered except for those I killed with too much fussing! I agree with Meg that you have to let plants use much of their own mechanisms to survive. The watering I was doing really wasn't going anywhere as the earth was too parched. But, at least, I suppose, the little bit of water they did take in, helped them to keep going. The only salvia I actually killed was 'Lara' and I think it was because I was trying to keep a clematis alive in a pot nearby and the salvia got too much water! I discovered though that *S. Iodantha* did not like this summer at all. I think I was watering it every second day. Constant wind did not help and even where I've tried planting it in other spots in the garden, it still has the same problem. However, at the moment, it looks good and is looking like it's ready to start budding. In fact, all the late summer/early Autumn flowering salvias look terrific and with *Plectranthus* and *Tibouchines* flowering as well, the garden is really at it's best this time of year.

Last year, while visiting a market in the southern Highlands, I came across a stallholder with a tray of what I thought was a salvia but only known to me from pictures. He didn't know the exact name although he did know it was a salvia. Anyway, I believe it is *S. viridis*. It is an annual with colourful purple bracts, low growing so for the front of the garden bed. I collected seed when the plant had finished, as the stallholder told me and planted some for this year. Nothing happened and I thought I wasn't going to get any. But I should have been more patient for finally I ended up with several good plants and am enjoying them right now.

I have also been more careful with *S. nemorosa*. Usually, I lose them because they get covered over or I've put them in the wrong spot. This year, however, I have a few good clumps developing and next year I'm hoping for a good show.

At the moment, I'm trying to propagate some of the winter flowering salvias as I'm giving a talk at one of the local clubs in July. I had quite a few coming on but the really hot 40 degree days we had finished some of them off. I have the urge to try some new salvias now that Autumn is here. Time to get out the catalogues.

---

## Cleistogamy, Chasmogamy and other dirty words .. continued from page 12

Is it possible that the relative abundance of pollen from the two fertile thecae on the stamens in the *Salvia* species in Bentham's section *Heterospace* contributes to the existence of cleistogamy in some way? There are many plants with many more stamens, loaded with pollen that do not display cleistogamy. On the other hand, the presence of pollen on the thecae well inside the flower may be significant? What then happens in other plants that can also be cleistogamous in summer, such as *Viola*, which do not have a staminal lever? Or is cleistogamy a way of conserving a reduced amount of pollen? Whatever the reason, it is an odd way of

doing things when plants have evolved alongside their pollinators in such a way as to attract these pollinators.

Refs:

Cervelli, C., et al, 2010: "Effect of temperature on plant development and inflorescence structure of *Salvia roemeriana*": *ISHS Acta Horticulturae* 937: XXVIII International Horticultural Congress on Science and Horticulture for People (IHC2010)  
Walker, J.B. & Elisens, J.m, 1962: "A revision of *Salvia* Section *Heterospace* (Lamiaceae) in Western North America": *SIDA*, contributions to botan

## BOOK REVIEW

### ‘A Manual for Salvia Growers’ by Meg Bentley

A Manual for Salvia Growers written by Meg Bentley is for Salvia enthusiasts both new and experienced and is not only a great read but a good reference book. It is currently the only Salvia book *written* in Australia. Meg Bentley has more than 20 years experience growing Salvias and her extensive National Salvia Collection in Gruyere, Victoria is registered with the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia (GPCAA Inc) c/- Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

*A Manual for Salvia Growers* covers many areas including Botany of Salvias, maintenance, propagating, pruning, pest and diseases, how to use salvias for example as an accent, containers, hanging baskets and hedges. There are salvias for sun and shade, Meg explains it all. It also includes cultivation notes and name changes too. She even tells you where you may see salvias. There are 370 plants represented with 202 (colour) photographs and illustrations, all photographs and illustrations are her own work, many of

the photos are taken in her own garden.

Meg says that “with good management and careful planning salvias are very accommodating and amongst the hundreds grown here at least five or six will be in flower throughout the months of the year. They bring honey-eaters and other birds into the garden to feed on nectar and the seed, some even nest amongst the salvias”, some of the reasons why she loves salvias.

Meg often writes for Salvia News ‘News from Gruyere’. She has a wealth of knowledge and always ready to share.

‘A Manual for Salvia Growers by Meg Bentley’ in my opinion, is a must read for any one interested in Salvias – available from Victorian Salvia Study Group. It is also available via mail order. The discounted price is only \$30 per copy plus \$5 postage. Refer to page 23 this issue for an order form. (Soft cover, spiral bound, A4, 125 pages)

## **SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE**

For the majority of subscribers to Salvia News, subscription renewals are due in June each year for the coming 12 months.

When completing the Subscription Renewal Form, could you please check the address label attached to the current Salvia News, and note on the bottom of the form, any incorrect details or spelling, so that we can update our database for the future.

If you also have an email address, could you please print this clearly on the form.

**NOTE:** Renewals already paid in the past 5-6 months, or *NEW* subscribers who have taken out a subscription in the past 6 months, do not need to fill-out a Renewal Form, as you are paid up to 01 June 2014.

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in updating our records.

**Meg Gadd/ Subscription Officer.**

**Ph. (03) 95848005 Email: meg\_gadd@yahoo.com.au**

# Autumn '13 News from Queensland

*Adrienne Starkey, Southside of Brisbane*

*The Perennial Poppies Group Inc*

Like a high-spirited willful child, *Salvia madrensis* defies all my attempts to dig him up. It's been happening for a few years now, and each autumn when those butter yellow flowers appear, my heart softens. He can stay. It's just that the spot is already overcrowded, and he does want to wander about. After the flowers are finished, I may harden towards him again, but for now, he's safe.

Quite close by is a *S. leucantha* 'Santa Barbara', which we (our salvia group) have decided is "not much chop". It is however, flowering away in quite deep shade, toughing it out in very rocky soil (term used loosely). Whilst it is nothing like its more stunning *S. leucantha* siblings, I am grateful for the coverage and colour it does provide. Not everything has to be stunning, a quiet achiever is okay with me.

We have just been through yet another 'Big Wet', for the third year in a row, experiencing wild winds and massive rainfalls. I was going to write about the effects of all the rain on my salvias, until I thought hard about it, and realised that my plants have come through relatively unscathed. Some had of course already met their demise in previous summers, and not been replaced. My garden is very exposed to coastal winds which when extreme, simply snapped off many of my larger salvias, shredding leaves and destroying flowers. I've managed to keep *Salvia* 'Costa Rican Blue', flowering well right now. Love that deep purple. Actually, wouldn't *S. madrensis* look lovely growing near it? A new lease of life for my yellow friend! *S. 'Timboon'* is quite messy but will be fine. All in all, the microphyllas and greggiis grow much better here, just by virtue of being closer to the ground and having protection from other plants. The one advantage my garden does have, being steep, is great drainage and I think that is a key requirement for salvias, perhaps more than any other.

The weather that really did knock my garden around, including salvias, was the weather leading up to the wet – months and months of very little rain, interspersed with hot desiccating winds. No amount of hand watering can combat those conditions, and I did lose a number of small greggiis, but to be fair, these had not been in very long, and had only just gotten their feet in the ground. Thanks to our 'cuttings network' most are now replaced and thriving, including a few new ones. I'm fond of the pretty amethyst of *S. 'Mrs. Bucket'*, and *S. 'Easter Bonnet'* is a soft creamy yellow well worth having (both Wanda Hirth's seedlings). *S. 'Angel Wings'* is a strong grower of soft pinky mauve, a very sweet thing with a open habit. Old favourites looking pretty are salvias 'Heatwave Blaze', 'Heatwave Sparkle' and the white greggii. *S. 'Indigo Spires'* just can't be beaten for showing off, but *S. 'Waverly'* does look lovely growing next to it. *S. 'Meigan's Magic'* is an amazing salvia. Constantly in flower, it's difficult to know when to cut this back, as it always looks good. The time is coming closer now, as it assumes acreage proportions and threatens to swamp all in its path.

Also new for me, is *S. 'Cerise Jewel'*, about which I was quite so-so, until I noticed that its slightly muted cerise colouring exactly matches the new leaf growth of the lillypillys which are a back-drop to it. It seems to be a robust grower, so it has earned its place. One other pretty greggii, purchased from Lambley's last winter is *S. 'Ritambelle'*. Its a soft salmon pink which didn't appreciate the dry windy conditions when first planted, so I cut it back and fluffed it up with some compost and TLC, with good results, as it now looks lovely – a compact plant with floating soft blooms. I hadn't ever heard of this one and don't know if it goes under any other names here, but its well worth having.

It's still very warm up here, but 'milding down' and as autumn continues its a very good time both to propagate and plant, so *continued on page 16 ..*

# Blue Lotus Water Garden

*Lyndi Garnett*

What a fantastic place to visit, absolutely beautiful. From the moment that you walk through the carpark, you can catch glimpses of these huge beautiful white water lilies through the fence.

As you start to walk in you are confronted by such a tropical paradise with large clumps of Abyssinian bananas lining the carpark leading into an area filled with vast tanks and bowls filled with all sorts of water lilies.

The buildings are thatched to look as if they are from South East Asia with bamboo pickets, poles and artifacts dotted everywhere, it certainly is hard to realise that you were in Yarra Junction where it gets very cold in Winter, but all this survives even in those cold temperatures.

Walking through the café area, you are immediately immersed into a Thailand atmosphere with red bridges over enormous lakes filled with hundreds of waterlilies, white and pink, some purple / blue / mauve, some yellow, always their blooms standing well above huge round flat leaves, a really gorgeous sight.

Although quite a hot day, the water lilies didn't seem to notice, they still stood up straight and strong, while most of us took shelter under the many small bamboo thatched shelters dotted around the numerous paths, always taking you through yet another coloured water lily pond. These ponds were surrounded with lush tropical vegetation and quite shaded picnic areas, where you could enjoy the local birds scratching in the undergrowth or see a heron stalking among the lily pads.

After examining all the tropical vegetation and waterlilies, selections and purchases were made - beautiful blue coloured waterlilies, Abyssinian bananas, Albyssia, Abutilons and other water plants were purchased.

For those who could not come, they missed a fantastic display of breathtakingly beautiful, exquisite flowers. A place well worth a visit, even for a coffee to sit and contemplate the magnificent view from under the shelter of the Thai styled café.

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## Autumn '13 News from Queensland

*..continued from page 15*

now that's what I am going to do, right now. Less talk, more action! Here's to some moderation in our weather patterns and 'happy salvia growing' to you all.

### A note from Barb Wickes:

How different our conditions are here is SEQ - Adrienne with her well-drained soil has had better results than me. A lot of the microphyllas and greggiis don't like parts of my garden so I must relocate them! I lost S.

'Finn Grove' which had survived the past 2 summers of intense rain but this year it was different as it didn't stop raining for weeks! The plants didn't have a chance to dry out. But as Adrienne says there are cuttings out there to be had. Sue Templeton's 'Coconut Ice' also was lost along with *S. curviflora*. S. 'Wendy's Wish' in the well-drained area didn't blink but I almost lost it in the lower garden. It is all about position! And the trick is to have a couple of everything if you can fit it in - grown in different conditions.

## WANTED

Person proficient in typing to help with Victorian Salvia Study Group historical records

Please contact Lyndi Garnett **VSSG Co-ordinator** on  
**Telephone 9803 4534**

# New *microphylla* & *greggii* Garden Bed

*Heather Lucas- Heathmont Vic*

I wonder if I am like any other salvia gardener who just has to have the latest salvia release or add to the collection of one's salvias, I think so!! Over the past year I have purchased a salvia whenever one that I didn't have in my collection became available at either plant shows and fairs, from the SSG or on the internet via mail order nurseries. So I decided let's check out how many salvias I have in pots, ready to go into the garden. I keep excel spreadsheets of all the salvias I have and also how many I have in pots, plus other plants that I have purchased (believe it or not I do purchase other plants, besides salvias!!). I had around 70 pots of salvias to be planted, of which many were *greggii* and *microphylla*'s. So I decided that I would create a new garden bed in the backyard along the swimming pool fence. I always found it difficult to mow this edge of grass and so I dug out a ½ metre wide by about 5 metres long area of the grass on the other side of the fence and created a new bed for *microphylla*'s and *greggii* 's only. The inspiration for this bed actually came from Pat Anderson's beautiful garden in Warrandyte, Melbourne, Victoria. Whenever she has her garden on display for a garden club/association or Open Gardens Scheme, I try and go. She has an area of *greggii* and *microphylla*'s along part of her front driveway in front of some very big salvia's and they looked fabulous on my last visit, so I hope my new bed will fill out and look half as good as hers. I have put in 34 different types of *greggii* and *microphylla*'s in this bed. I thought I'd try and group colours or types of salvias together, so I have a number of yellow/orange salvias i.e. x *Jamensis* 'La Luna' (soft yellow), *Greggii* Apricot Wensley (apricot flowers), *Greggii* Desert Sunset (orange/salmon flowers), *Silkes Dream* (coral red flowers), *Greggii Ritabelle* (soft salmon/pink, cream throated flowers, this plant from Lambley's Nursery), *Easter Bonnet* (creamy lemon and magenta flowers from Kathy Biasco in Queensland), *Microphylla Iced Lemon* (lemon/white flowers) and *Microphylla Heatwave Glow* (soft apricot flowers). I then have some more

of the Heatwave series next to the MH Glow (Blast-coral, Blaze – crimson red, Glare - white, Glitter – soft lilac, Sizzle – mid pink, Sparkle – deep hot pink), followed by some purple (Navajo Purple, Purple Warrior) then pink (*Greggii* Lara, Nancy's Blush, Navajo Pink, Navajo Rose, *Greggii* Sierra Coral, *Microphylla Cyclamen*, then blue (*Cookie*) salvias. Also in this bed are the lovely newer salvias *Icing Sugar* (beautiful 2 toned light and dark pink flowers), *Martine* (baby pink flowers with dark calyxes) and *Grace* (pale silvery lavender flowers).

Last year I created a new garden bed in the front garden, when we cut down a huge conifer tree that was sapping all the water out of my front garden beds, as nothing was growing really prolifically and the roots from same had spread far and wide. In this bed I have put many hardier types of salvias namely *African Sky*, *Apiana*, *Aurea* (prostrate form), *Barrelieri*, *Broussonetti*, *Chateau Cathare* (from Lambley's, one of their new additions, a low evergreen mound of grey, sage like foliage with soft mauve blue white throated flowers), *Clevelandii*, *Desoleana*, *Leucophylla* 'Bee's Bliss' (another Lambley's plant) and *Leucophylla* 'Grey Sage'. I have also put in many *Nemorosa*'s, *Pratensis* and *Superba*'s and a couple of bigger salvias – *Madrensis*, *Follett's Follyt* and *Pink Gruyere*. I lost an *Atrocyanea* and *Concolor* during the hot spell. I also lost a number of my potted plants, probably about 10 to the heat.

I have just updated my list of salvia pots to be planted out and to my amazement I am now up to 105 pots (I'm supposed to be going down, not up in numbers). I guess I'll just have to keep digging up areas of grass and have 2 more new beds planned for the front garden. I guess eventually I won't have any grass to mow!!

I hope that everyone is well and enjoying the cooler weather now that we are in autumn.

# LETTERS

## VSSG donates a water well to a village in Cambodia



On behalf of the villagers in Cambodia I would like to thank the Victorian Salvia Study Group for donating a water well to a village in Cambodia.

Unfortunately about 50% of the villagers in Cambodia do not have access to clean drinking water which means they have to walk many kilometres for clean water or alternatively drink dirty water full of germs including parasites which affects their health later in life.

After the well is installed Buddhist monks come and bless it and then the villagers have our equivalent of a party with lots of food and everyone drinks copious amounts of clean water.

I would also like to thank other people within the Victorian Salvia Study Group for their donations. Meg Bentley has given thirteen wells. She believes everyone should have access to clean water and told me she was giving her thirteenth well in the year 2013. Lyndi Garnett and Mike have given four wells and Geoff Crowhurst and friends, three wells. Meg, Lyndi, Mike, Geoff and his friends have given more than clean water, they have given a healthier life for the villagers and importantly, dignity.

The wells are \$380.00 each which includes a photo of the well and a plaque saying you

have donated it. Some people donate a well in memory of a loved one who has passed on or as a birthday or Christmas gift. One group, who train with Linda Mainwaring from Body Blast Personal Training, went on diets to lose weight and organised sponsors for the weight they lost. They ended up donating five wells. They must have lost a lot of weight! There are many reasons why wells are donated.

We are a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible.

If anyone would like any more information please contact Irene Robinson 9720 7913 or email: [irenerob1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:irenerob1@optusnet.com.au)

*Irene Robinson*

### 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  
30 June 2013**

# A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

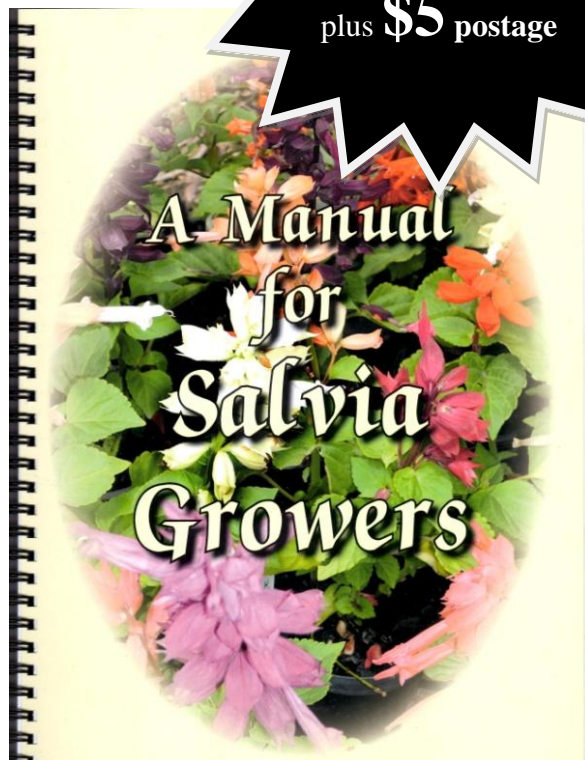
by Meg Bentley

There are now approximately 370 Species and Cultivars represented  
202 Photographs, Illustrations and Index



Contents include:

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



**A Manual for Salvia Growers** by Meg Bentley  
can be ordered from:

HSOV Salvia Study Group  
6 Halcyon Avenue  
The Patch Vic 3792  
Phone 9756 6361

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