

# Salvia News

NUMBER 54



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

**Summer 2013/2014**

# **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 14 January 2014**



# SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

*Welcome to the Summer edition of Salvia News. Hope you are enjoying your subscription. Please continue to submit your news and views for sharing. It is your input that helps to make it a good read.*

*Just a reminder that Salvia News annual subscriptions include four editions and run from June (Winter edition) each year. Renewals are sent out with the Winter edition. Is your renewal up to date. See page 6 for more information. Any queries, please contact our Subscription Officer Meg Gadd.*

*The Victorian Salvia Study Group has a Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald. For those of you who haven't made a visit to date, it is well worth your time. It is a large display of Salvias that are planted, watered in, and managed thereafter purely on rain water. Of course it has to be maintained and Lyndi and Jillian are meticulous in its care. Although they visit fortnightly, there are gardening working bees during the year which is a great way to learn more about the species and to enjoy new or renew friendships. Its also a great way to learn more about the species in a garden setting. Most are held on a weekend but that doesn't work for everyone. On Wednesday 20 November, there will be a midweek Gardening Day. See page 4, Calendar of Events for more details.*

*Heather Lucas from Heathmont Vic has been busy with Salvia cuttings on page 5. This quarters' News from South East Queensland comes from Dulcie Adam on page 7. Have you been to the Royal Botanic Gardens. Learn what Salvias are grown at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne on pages 8 and 9. If you decide to go along and have a look yourself, don't forget to write about the experience so it can be shared with other readers of Salvia News. Our Meg Bentley shares memories from a recent trip to the UK – Scotland, Wales and Ireland on pages 10 and 11. Sounds like a wonderful trip, makes a great read.*

*There are these stories and much more this edition and it's hoped that you enjoy your read.*

*Another year is almost done. Some of our subscribers have endured severe health issues this year, operations, and beaten the Big C. Others are currently working for a better quality of life as you read. To you all, we wish you better health.*

*The Victorian Salvia Study Group are invited to Patrick and Eileen Hogan's beautiful garden in Ferntree Gully on Sunday 8 December for our Christmas Lunch celebration. Check the Calendar of Events for details. All Salvia News subscribers are welcome. Don't forget to contact Patrick with your RSVP. Look forward to seeing you there. Wishing you all a safe and Happy Christmas Season!*

*Until next time  
Happy Gardening, Beth*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Don't forget to check the VSSG 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*

**Nov 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>  
Sat/Sun**

**Rose Show Mt Waverley Community Centre Mel: 70E1  
Cnr Stephenson Rd & Miller Crs Mt Waverley**

Wonderful display of Roses and a good selection for Sale  
Salvia plants, books and other items will be for sale.  
Bring your Salvias to be identified  
Lyndi will be speaking about Salvias & Roses on Sunday at 11am

**Nov 20<sup>th</sup> Wed**

**Mid week Gardening Day at Nobelius  
11am - 2pm.**

**Nobelius Heritage Park, Crichton Ave, Emerald Mel: 127 G4**

For those who can't come on the weekends and want to help.  
Chance to identify different Salvias.  
Bring a plate to share, a chair, gardening tools, wet weather gear if necessary, a hat, plastic bags for cuttings to take home  
All subscribers welcome to come and join in the fun.

**Dec 8<sup>th</sup> Sun**

**Xmas Lunch at Patrick & Eileen Hogan's beautiful garden  
11am - 3pm, 10 Dion St, Ferntree Gully Mel : 64 H12**

Bring Xmas plate to share and a chair.  
All subscribers welcome to come and share the fun  
**RSVP to Patrick** Ph 97580871 or email: [patrick.hogan@optusnet.com](mailto:patrick.hogan@optusnet.com)

## **Happy New Year 2014**

**March 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>  
Sat /Sun**

**Ferny Creek Horticultural Society's  
Annual Plant Collectors Sale & Garden Expo**

**9 am - 4pm, 100 Hilton Rd, Ferny Creek . Mel:75 D1**

Salvia plants and books for sale  
Bring your list, bring plants to be identified.

**March 10<sup>th</sup>  
Mon**

**Green & Brown Thumbs Garden Club**

**9.45am, 23 Police Rd, Mulgrave Mel: 80 F5**

Lyndi will be speaking.  
Salvia plants and books for sale  
Bring plants to be identified

**April 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>  
Sat/Sun**

**Tesselaar Gardening & Plant Expo**

**9am - 4pm, 357 Monbulk Rd Silvan Mel: 123 B7, F3**

Salvia plants and books for sale  
Bring your list and plants to be identified

# SALVIA CUTTINGS

*Heather Lucas – Heathmont Vic*

Wow, I have finally got some cuttings of salvias to take! After visiting Russell Cheal's garden in Wonga Park and seeing how many plants he has propagated, I decided to give it a try again myself. I must admit that I asked him lots of questions, as did many other salvia members that day. He told us the soil that he used for propagating was Debco Propagation Mix – Superior Cutting Mix and so off I went to find it. He did mention Oban Trading in Ringwood as the place he bought his soil and other garden supplies from but I happened to stumble on the Debco propagation mix at Masters in Ferntree Gully Road, Knoxfield. I went with my mum to check out the plants there, on the advice of Sylvia Hammond from our group, who said they had lots of smaller pots of salvias for a very reasonable price. So along with a couple more salvias and my Debco soil I went home and filled an old wheel barrow with the soil. I cut back some salvias and stuck a few cuttings in the wheel barrow. I also remembered to put labels on the rows in the wheel barrow as soon as I put the cuttings in, so that I wouldn't forget what was what.

So I have the following cuttings in my wheel barrow – *Greggii* 'Ritambelle', *Greggii* 'Cherry, x *Jamensis* Yellow', *Curviflora*, 'Violet Eyes', 'Follets Folley', *Flocculosa*, *Mexicana* 'Black Calyx' (Lolly) and even one cutting of *Dombeyi* (now that would be superb if I could keep it going, as I have difficulty in keeping this salvia alive).

Also I have normal 6" black garden pots of *Tubifera*, 'Cerise Velvet', 'Eve', *Concolor* (only two of the six cuttings are still going from a plant cutting I got from Patrick Hogan's plant, so maybe you should hang onto one of your cuttings for me Pat, if these two die) and Phyllis Fancy, which aren't fairing as well as the wheelbarrow's cuttings, but some are still hanging in. Just can't seem to get 'Desley' or *Littae* to strike for me, but will keep trying.

I have also acquired two more wheelbarrows – one I have just completed (drilled holes for drainage, put soil in) and have put in some *Gesneriiflora* 'Tequila', *Gesneriiflora* 'Red Rambler', *Miahuatlanensis* and 'Omaha Gold'. The other is still to be completed.

I have also been on a bit of a shopping spree with regards to salvia seeds – having purchased heaps, some from ebay, some from Chiltern Seeds in Oxfordshire, England and some from Plant World Seeds in Devon, England. I also purchased an electric propagator and plastic propagation tray from Bunnings and a couple of cheap propagation trays from Aldi. I have been meaning to do them for a number of weekends now, but haven't got around to it yet. If I don't it'll be too late for this season I guess.

I am of course supposed to be doing the new garden beds (2) in my front yard and doing an article on same as I go along, but like always I have wandered outside to do this and then got no further than another garden bed doing something totally different!! I have started one of them though, digging a trench in the shape of the garden bed and placing all the honey comb rocks around in place to further dig and place them in and then dig the actual bed and get more soil and compost delivered to finish the bed. Oh well that is a work in progress and another article to come in future. Happy gardening everyone – Heather

*Editor's Note:*

*What a great idea Heather and how very busy you have been. Maybe we could see a photo or two of the completed wheelbarrows for the next edition?*

*If you have a great idea you use in your garden, we would love to hear from you too.*

## **\*\*SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS ARE NOW OVERDUE**

*Subscriptions to the Salvia News are due in June/July each year.*

If you have received a coloured Renewal Form with the Spring edition (No. 53) or this Summer edition (No.54) and you wish to continue to receive a hard copy or online version, then **please complete the enclosed Renewal Form, attach your cheque or include details of your direct deposit with the Renewal Form and post it to:**

The Subscription Officer,  
Victorian Salvia Study Group,  
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CHELTENHAM. VIC. 3192

**Your subscription will LAPSE unless the Renewal Form and payment is received prior to the next Salvia News**

(All overdue subscribers also have a highlighting mark on the address label of their Salvia News).

Please see to this matter AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Any queries phone 9584 8005 or email: meg\_gadd@yahoo.com.au

*Thankyou,  
Meg Gadd  
Subscriptions Officer*

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*by Betsy Glebsch*

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# SALVIA NEWS FROM SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

*Dulcie Adam*

Well here we are, 'springtime in the garden', except that right here in Brisbane we have bypassed spring and launched straight into summer. It was 32 degrees today and promising more of the same in the next few days. Starting the year, everything was so wet that a number of my plants, a large white *Abutilon*, the rose 'Duet' and a quite large specimen of *Salvia melissodora*, succumbed. I have found it much easier to keep plants alive during prolonged dry, as we have been experiencing lately, than during the wet. But enough of weather conditions, I am here to talk about salvias which happen to make up a large part of my garden. I will say though, walking around the garden today, I found the salvias were totally unfazed by the heat. In a bed in the back garden, I have planted *Salvia* 'Marshmallow', a lovely white with a hint of pink exactly like, well, a marshmallow. In the same bed, there is 'Sandra V', 'Angel Wings', 'Little Diva' and 'Easter Bonnet'. Despite my best efforts to keep them all in check and confined to nice little mounds, they have proceeded to riot over everything in their path. The salvias are making a wonderful display. They cope well with wet, dry, heat and cold and my pruning. I highly recommend them for this area. *Salvia rubiginosa* is flowering well in a position under our mulberry tree. It puts up with the quite shady conditions in the summertime. I just love the way it gives so much contrasting colour. The blue and purple together, picks up similar colours in the garden. In the front garden, there is plenty of jostling for space in our typical sized suburban block and it's "survival of the fittest" out there. No one out-jostles 'Phyllis Fancy' which remains one of the best of the big salvias and never takes exception to being trimmed and kept in shape. 'Romantic Rose' is large and rather loose in habit but continues to flower even now. I don't think it realises it's a winter flowerer or did I get that wrong? I have a white marguerite daisy that made it through last summer, which they don't always manage

in our climate. It has grown over the top of the mauve/pink *S. splendens* planted beside it but makes a lovely backdrop to a couple of the Heatwave series 'Sparkle' and 'Glitter' planted either side of *Lagerstroemia* 'Lipan' which picks up perfectly the differing shades in both these salvias. They are very reliable and give a great show every year. Near them I have planted 'Christine Yeo' but I'm not sure she's worth the space. She seems to take root wherever she touches and doesn't give much flower for all the space taken. *Salvia semiatrata* is a salvia well worth its place in any garden. It is never without flowers and again, a wonderful combination of colours on one plant. It is another salvia that completely outgrew the original spot I chose for it but seems to be responding well to being cut back hard. Eventual size seems to be an issue I have – perhaps I don't read the details well enough. I once cleverly planted *Salvia aurea* in front of 'Meigan's Magic' thinking they would make a wonderful combination of colours, but *Salvia aurea* has outgrown 'MM' by a streak. In fact, 'MM' is not doing so well at all. She did not appreciate all the wet weather at the beginning of the year and I cut her back. She has been sulking ever since! *Salvia* 'Timboon' continues to prosper and seems to always have flowers. 'Hot Lips' is flowering well and appreciating the extra space the demise of the *Abutilon* afforded it. It is a very tough plant, has lovely fresh smelling foliage but is not one for those gardeners who like a tidy garden. 'Costa Rican Blue' is magic backing the rose 'Duchess de Brabant' – what a wonderful colour combination.

Well, as this is my first time bringing news from SE Qld for the *Salvia* group, I will finish now with the wish that we all receive the rain we need, no damaging winds (because salvias don't like them) and pleasant balmy days for us all. Bye for now, Dulcie

# Plants We Grow – Winter Flowering Salvias

By Lucille Strachan,  
Perennial Section, Growing Friends Group,  
Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

Salvias are members of *Lamiaceae* - the mint family, a large and diverse family of over 700 species and as diverse in fragrance as they are in flower, habit and colour. Many of the Salvias that are grown in Australia come from similar climatic regions to those from Southern Europe, South Africa, California and other parts of North America.

Winter can be a dull time in the garden, but not if you grow some of the winter flowering Salvias! We grow several of these, starting with *Salvia gesneriifolia* 'Tequila', a real stunner, which has bright red/orange flowers and black calyces. Tall-growing to around 2 m, it is best planted in a part sun/part shade position and the flowering period will be longer if the plant is dead-headed. It is much loved by nectar-seeking birds, as are many of the Salvias



*Salvia gesneriifolia* 'Tequila'

*Salvia karwinskii* grows even taller at around 2-2.5 m and is most suited for a background planting or for a shrubbery. It also prefers a part sun/part shade position, blooming from winter into spring. This plant has dusky pink to coral coloured flowers with hairy, reddish brown calyces which blend beautifully with the large, grey-green leaves, the tips of which may have mauve stems. Dead-heading will extend the flowering period and after flowering, pruning by one third to one half will help to keep this tall plant bushy.



*Salvia karwinskii*

We have several *Salvia involucrata* cultivars which are beginning to adorn the Nursery as the weather cools. *Salvia involucrata*. 'Pink Icicles' is another taller-growing Salvia to about 1.5-2 x 1.5 m, but with the prettiest pale pink flowers with a dash of white on the lower lip. The bracts are also pink and these appear from late autumn into winter. This plant also prefers a cooler place in part shade with morning sun and will also be best placed at the back of a border or amongst shrubs. It has handsome apple green foliage and after flowering is best pruned by one third to one half to lower shoots.

Our next cultivar is a cross between *Salvia involucrata* and *S. karwinskii* - *S.* 'Romantic Rose' which flowers over a long period from winter to late spring. Another tall grower, 1.5-2 x 1.8-2 m, this cultivar has wide tubular flowers of deepish rose pink on densely packed stems and prefers a part sun/part shade position. It also benefits from dead-heading, and pruning at completion of flowering by a good half, to lower shoots nearer the base.

Another cross between *S. involucrata* and *S. karwinskii* is *S.* 'Timboon', again tall-growing to 1.5-2 x 1.5-2 m, with deep wine coloured flowers and calyces from winter into spring. It enjoys the same conditions and pruning as above.

*continued on page 9*

## Plants We Grow – Winter Flowering Salvias

...continued from page 8



*Salvia 'Timboon'*

*Salvia 'Phyllis Fancy'*, although not strictly a winter flowering plant, does flower into winter and being of a different flower colour than those above, I thought I'd include it. Another taller growing *Salvia* to around 1.5 x 1.5 m, this one starts to flower in summer and goes on into winter. It again is suited to a back of the border situation or amongst

shrubs, where its lovely pale blue/mauve flowers just keep appearing. It enjoys sun to part shade and on completion of flowering, all the old flowering stems should be removed, as the new stems will arise from the base. It isn't long before the plant is flowering again.

Those of you who live in frosty areas can grow these examples above, providing you give them some protection from severe frost. All these plants appreciate some protection from hot afternoon sun and cope well with part shade. They also appreciate mulching and good drainage and a feed as they begin to come into flower. Whatever your needs for your garden, none of us can really do without a *Salvia* or three, as they give a wide range of flower colour, habitat preference and some delicious fragrances in their foliage, as well as being beloved by nectar-gathering birds.

**Reprinted From Botanic News, Winter 2013, by courtesy of Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.**

**Photos by Terry Ashton Friend of RBG**

### **CUTTINGS WANTED**

Are you cutting back, not wanting certain *Salvias* any more, then please make cuttings or pot up those unwanted *salvias* and donate them back to VSSG.

Also remember that if one of your *Salvias* has grown too large for the space it is growing in, don't take it out, just cut it back. Don't worry about the height, only the width.

VSSG can pick up *Salvias* or they can be deposited at the next *Salvia* activity. All donated plants and cuttings will be much appreciated.

Thank you to all those who kindly donated plants for our annual *Salvia* Plants at Nobelius day.

Contact Lyndi on telephone 9803 4534 or email [highcon@hotmail.net.au](mailto:highcon@hotmail.net.au) if you can assist please.

## Summer: Notes from Gruyere: Sept/Oct. 2013

Meg Bentley – Gruyere Vic

Not often does one get the chance to have two seasons of Spring into Summer on one year but this year I have been most fortunate to have a quick short trip to the UK – Scotland, Wales and Ireland at the end of their Spring into early Summer. Hoping of course to see *Salvias* growing in remote gardens but being a ‘plants person’ I was more than happy to see beautiful aged trees, many interesting shrubs, assorted perennial plants of all descriptions and well established gardens in cooler climates.



The Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh was indeed great to see, so much of interest especially the Chinese Hillside with many original plants dating back to the early plant hunters like George Forrest, Ernest Henry Wilson and Frank Kingdon-Ward who collected in the wilds of S.W China and Yunnan. Examples were Rhododendrons, Acers, Magnolias, Conifers, Birches, Viburnums, Malus and Roses. Bamboo’s of course, which includes the ‘Fishing-Pole’ bamboo. Smaller plants included Paeony, Primulas, Rodgesia and the famous ‘Himalayan Blue Poppy’ *Mecanopsis*. How extraordinary to see a large poppy flower with such a vivid blue blue colour. These poppies were also planted in beds through-out the gardens. Just think, here in Australia we would have a job to produce one flowering *Mecanopsis*, let alone beds of glorious blue poppies.



Edinburgh Botanic Gardens are a wonderful place to visit and with so many interesting facets to it like the Alpine Garden, Woodland Garden, Arboretum, Scottish Heath Garden, The Queen Mother’s Memorial Garden, Rock Garden and the Fossil Garden, just to name a few. Not forgetting of course the famous Glass Houses. This is the main area where I found the *Salvia aurea* growing under cover in the heated glass house, low growing with silvery grey foliage with quite a few terracotta flowers. There were a few Australian Native plants under cover too, Acacia, Callistemon and a Eucalyptus.

Outside, near the Alpine house, there was one small sad looking *Salvia argentea* that was struggling to grow and I met one of the horticulturalists and asked about the salvias and whether there were others to see in these Botanic Gardens. He informed me that Edinburgh was actually too cold for salvias and suggested I go to Logan RBG where I had a better chance to see them, which has a milder climate and warmed by the Gulf Stream (Logan Botanic Garden is on the South Western tip of Scotland, down towards England and Wales). I did manage to find a row of *Salvia verticillata*

*continued on page 11*

## Summer: Notes from Gruyere: Sept/Oct. 2013

...continued from page 10

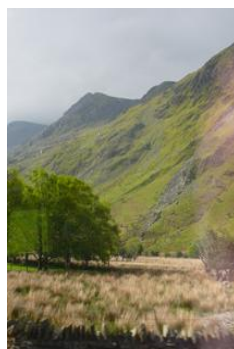
'Purple Rain' not too far away in the Perennial Border, just emerging in the warmth of the spring sunshine and protected by a huge Beech hedge.

The Edinburgh RBG can trace its history back to Scotlands' first physic garden which began in 1670 and over the next three hundred years continued to grow and move. The final move was to Inverleith in 1820 (where it is now), taking three years to move the entire collection of plants and mature trees.

On the rest of my journey through Scotland, Wales and Ireland and the wonderful gardens visited, I only came across a limited number of salvias. Along the River Vartry in Irelands' Mount Usher Gardens, I did come across lush growth of *Salvia forskaohlei* growing along the river bank and too early for flowering. These gardens also had the best example of the Dove Tree or Handkerchief Tree *Davidia involucrata* that I have ever seen and this was in full flower. Mount Stewart Gardens in Ireland I came across *S. confertiflora*, *S. 'Costa Rican Blue'*, *S. vertivillata*, and *S. nemerosa*, some with buds but no open flowers.

Bodnant Gardens in Wales really is a garden worth seeing especially if you go later in the season, then you will see the glorious dripping flowers of the Laburnam that people rave about ..... unfortunately it wasn't when I was there but the buds were dripping ready to burst. The Laburnam Walk is a masterful and impressive thing to see. I guess this garden grew the most salvia albeit small specimens compared to our large plants and placed into the design of the gardens within the boxed edging and spaced around the centres. The golden *Salvia officinalis* 'Icterina' was used in many designs and for fillers I noticed *S. nemerosa* 'Amethyst' and *S. pratensis haemetodes* was used. One other Salvia used in designs was the purple form of *S. leucantha*. *S. 'Anthony Parker'*. These were not the best specimens in the world but it was nice to come across these plants and to see them growing under quite different climatic conditions to what we have in Australia. But on the whole – I loved the cooler climate wherever I went and one of the best gardens I had chance to visit were Achamore on the Isle of Gigha, Scotland and run by the Isle of Gigha Trust, 40 acres of woodland walks, walled gardens, huge trees, shrubs and Conifers. The local community bought the island in 2002, and with loving hands have been busy with a massive restoration program. It does indeed have a lovely feel about it.

Of course when you get back home again you tend to land with a thud and have to get back into the swing of things pretty quick smart...but the memories linger on, don't they!



# Starting Salvias in an Established Garden

Julie Campbell

[www.birchwoodnearbenalla.com.au](http://www.birchwoodnearbenalla.com.au)

Gary and I have been gardening in the beautiful Molyullah valley, near Benalla, for twenty seven years. Up until two years ago we had about two thirds of the one acre site planted up with garden beds, trees and lawn. Paths were laid out and we didn't feel the urge to landscape the front slope that featured naturalized daffodils, or the south side of the house which looked perfectly OK with a regular mow over the couch grass and assorted weeds. Then the salvia bug bit us!

Initially we thought we were just filling up spaces with hardy plants that wouldn't demand too much of our time. A trip to Sue Templeton and the Salvia Spectacular at Sassafras early 2012 quickly filled in those spaces. They grew very quickly and flowered generously but I soon found that I needed to pay a bit more attention to Meg Bentley's Manual, as well as Sue's notes.

Fortunately, one of the beds that needed "filling" provided an afternoon and frost protection. 'Iodantha', *Guaranitica*, 'Van Houtii', 'Heartbeat', *Buchananii* and *Gesneriiflora* grabbed prime position. 'Marine Blue', *Canariensis*, 'Phyllis' Fancy', 'Christine Yeo', *Sclarea* and lots more were happy to take the sun. Soon our spaces were full and we were figuring out how to fit more salvias into the garden.

We had just retired from work and were developing a plan to open our garden for Garden Weddings and Special Occasions. We realized that the front needed landscaping, the South side could be improved upon, and we needed a Garden Gate in addition to the driveway gate. A local firm offered invaluable advice on the plan for the front, and just a few weeks later two large garden beds were ready for planting. It was only one year since Salvia mania had struck and we had about one hundred different salvias planted. *Microphyllas* were relatively easy to collect but the special *Greggiis* were a bit harder to come by. I read Betsy's book cover to cover, Meg's Manual several times and was shamelessly hounding Sue with lists. Gary and I both trawled the internet searching for "availability" and so continued our search for "new" salvias.

Not so easy! Last Summer was so harsh that the salvias I was reading about in Newsletters were simply impossible to buy. A trip to Sassafras yielded some fine looking *Confertifloras*, *Disermas*, *Munzii*, *Discolor*, *Argentea* and *Amarissima*. Many thanks to Lindy for saving them for me. Sue popped in with some *Aethiopsis*, *Bowleyana* and 'Angel's Wings' and the beds were well started! Three months later and we are feeling pretty happy with our discoveries. I still have a list of about 30 "must haves" however but everything grew well in the mild June and July temperatures. My placement of salvias according to afternoon shade, frost protection and drainage is improving but I still have a few concerns. 'Black and Blue' recoils in fear every time I walk past as I shifted it so many times it wasn't game to put down roots for a couple of months!

I have so much to learn from experienced salvia gardeners, and of course much more future experience in my own garden. We are up to 150 different salvias now and we feel we are just starting!

My attempts at taking cuttings are finally having a result and I will have a wide range available for sale at our Open Garden on November 2 and 3 this year. Our neighbours at Willowmist are opening with us under the auspices of the open garden scheme. [www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au) It should be a lot of fun and it serves as motivation to have everything ship shape. I am so looking forward to meeting Meg as she has kindly offered to attend over the two days with her Manuals and advice for eager salvia growers. Thanks Meg!

## Editors Note

*Don't forget to have a look at Julie's website noted at the top of this page and enjoy more of this magnificent garden. I am sure it was a very successful Open Garden enjoyed by all who visited. Thankyou Julie for sharing.*

# Recognise the differences between *S. clevelandii* and *S. munzii*.....

Lyndi Garnett, Glen Waverley, Vic



*Salvia clevelandii*



*Salvia munzii*

## *Salvia 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 – looks 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

## *Salvia 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 it possibly due to the green leaves

### ***Editors Note:***

*If you have a Salvia that you cannot recognise, please take a photo and email to Lyndi [highcon@hotkey.net.au](mailto:highcon@hotkey.net.au)*

Please include your name, address and contact number and as much information as possible.

Keep checking the Calendar of Events for the next ID day with Lyndi. Lyndi also answers queries at other VSSG functions, so don't forget your samples to take with you.

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## **SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN**

VSSG Salvia Display Garden is at Nobelius Heritage Park,  
**Crichton Road, Emerald, under the packing shed. Melway 127.G4**

Free parking and no entry fee. See approximately 100 different salvias grown in the display gardens that only receive rain water after planting. You are invited to visit at your leisure.

Or you may wish to join a one day Working Bee. They are a great way to learn about the species while enjoying new friendships and helping to maintain these beautiful gardens. Check out the Calendar of Events in Salvia News and on the VSSG website. Enquiries please contact Lyndi on telephone 9803 4534 or email [highcon@hotkey.net.au](mailto:highcon@hotkey.net.au)

## SEEDS

As not everyone has access to a computer, this article has been reproduced from the VSSG website. If you are interested in purchasing any of the seeds listed, please print a list of Salvia seeds wanted, together with your name, address and telephone number and forward together with your payment to 844 Highbury Rd, Glen Waverley 3150. Victoria. Australia.

Payments can be made by cheque, or if by direct deposit, don't forget to add the details of payment made on your order slip. Cost of Seeds is only \$3 per packet, with a minimum of three if you want them posted.

All seed is collected annually and sourced locally from collector's gardens each season.

Below is a list of seed in their colours collected during 2012/2013 that are available to purchase.

Any plant that produces seed has the potential to become a weed in an ideal environment, but few gardens have ideal soil. Most gardeners enjoy self seeding plants and all Salvias are easily pulled out from areas that they are not wanted. They are never a pest.

### Sowing Salvia Seed

Salvia seed needs light to germinate. Sow seed on top of moist good quality seed growing soil, pat down gently. DON'T cover with soil, just some fly wire to stop the 'Midnight Munches'.

Water gently with either 'Smokey Water' or a teaspoonful of Epsom Salts dissolved in 1lt of water, once or twice until germination begins. Water gently only if soil dries out.

### Seed sources

**Ginny Hunt – seedhunt@cruzio.com**

Ginny has a very comprehensive range of seed from America

**Alplains - www.alplains.com alandean7@msn.com**

Alan has a very comprehensive range from America

**Chiltern Seeds - info@chilternseeds.co.uk**

Good range of salvias and vege seed

Local seed can be obtained from our Sales Tables. See Calendar of Events, or Ph 98034534 for list and availability

## BLUE

### S. lyrata ( dark leaf)

S. lyrata is a rosette type, with dark green, sometimes burgundy leaves , sending up a central flower stem of white - pale blue flowers, sets copious amounts of seed. Very good as a border.

### S. repens

S. repens coming from South Africa is a tough hardy Salvia. This is a small clumping groundcover that has a central flower stem and pale blue flowers. sun or semi shade Grows in gravel, great for those exposed, hard to grow areas that are hot and dry. Rockery or an edging for a bed. Full sun

### S. somalensis

Another tough Salvia, growing to 1.2 - 1.5m. S. somalensis loves a sunny position. It does well with root protection. Long rugose leaves and large spikes of pale blue flowers. Good as

a background or mid ground plant. Looks wonderful planted as a background row with a mass planting of a vibrant coloured plant in front.

### S.forskaohlei

This is another rosette type Salvia. It can be herbaceous, but generally it stays perennial if given a shady position and some moisture. In good soil, the leaves can become huge, making a wonderful clump. It doesn't like dry situations, the whole plant becomes small. In spring, up will come a tall central spike with beautiful large mauve flowers that have a pronounced white beeline.

As this sets seed readily, it self seeds over the garden and could possibly become a problem, but most plants are easy to pull out when small. The do have a long taproot.

We are using them as an edge to the large tall Salvias at Nobelius.

*continued on page 15*

## **SEEDS ...continued from page 14**

### **S. mexicana 'Limelight'**

This is a tall Salvia, growing 2-3m. Forming a broad open shrub with very interesting almost diamond shaped leaves that have a grey/blue hue. In early autumn it produces masses of large flower stems of lime calyxes and dark blue/purple tubular flowers. Putting on a wonderful show, it is the earliest of the autumn/winter Salvias. This needs a sunny/semi shaded sheltered position

### **S. macrophylla**

A medium growing Salvia to approx 1.5m. As the name implies, it has large cordate leaves, and very sticky stems. Autumn - summer it produces wonderful buds and true blue tubular flowers with the stamens exerted - very interesting flower formation. This needs good soil with some moisture and a sheltered position. It is best planted among other shrubs to keep it upright. This can flop and form a wonderful clump of large leaves as a background plant. It possibly came from the forest floor as an understorey plant.

### **S. virgata**

A herbaceous perennial forming a rosette. A few branched flowering stems appear late spring/early summer, producing mauve/ blue flowers. Leaves are long and wide. Flower stems reach approx 60cm in mid to late summer. Likes a sunny sheltered position. Easy to grow, puts on a good flower show especially if a number are planted as a border.

### **S. nilotica**

A small clumping perennial. Small leaves form a clump. Flower stems appear late spring/summer, producing pale blue flowers. A small hardy perennial for a border in a sunny position.

### **S. napifolia**

A herbaceous perennial, making a small open rosette of furry leaves. This forms a large clump of plants. Flower stems are produced in spring with masses of small mauve flowers and interesting calyxes.

### **S. 'Celestial Blue'**

An interesting x, having the leaf shape of

S. leucophylla and the beautiful sweet smell of S. clevelandii as well as their lovely pale blue flowers. This forms a woody shrub to 1x1m. Grown in good soil with good drainage in full sun, this should do well especially beside a path, so brushing past the leaves permeates the air with a lovely smell.

### **S. scutellariodes**

This is an interesting groundcover. Like its name, it scuttles beneath shrubs to come up in the sun to say hello. Ivy shaped leaves and beautiful true blue flowers in Autumn/Winter. Best grown in a sheltered position with other shrubs.

### **S. personata**

This is a medium sized annual, growing to approx 1m, large bright green cordate shaped leaves and small electric blue flowers in spring/summer/autumn. A good upright filler behind a hedge between shrubs. A sunny/semi shaded sheltered post.

### **S. muelleri**

An interesting violet purple Salvia. Grown in full sun, makes a good plant in front of the bed. Flowers all year. Leaves are a dull blue green with wavy edge. Frost and drought hardy.

## **PINK**

### **S. viscosa**

A tough rosette type Salvia. It may be herbaceous in very cold areas, but mostly stays green all year. Leaves are large, rugose with a blue /grey hue to them. Flowers are a panicle of small maroon and white on a tall central stem forming a wonderful sight. Plant in a sunny situation, the better the soil, the larger the leaves.

### **S. mic. 'Pink Blush'**

Very similar to S. 'Cyclamen' in habit of growth, flowers are just a little smaller, but still the same colour. The major difference is in the leaves. Leaves have an oblong shape, not a cordate shape. Again good for filling up an empty area.

*continued on page 16*

## **SEEDS ...continued from page 15**

### **S. lanceolata**

A very hardy open shrub from Sth Africa growing approx 1-1.2m. Leaves are grey with small wavy, lobed leaves. Flowers are a large mushroom pink colour, with a large open falcate hood and a coloured vase shaped calyx. Very tough. Grow in full sun in good well drained soil. Frost and drought tolerant.

### **S. greggii 'Sierra Pink'**

A good small shrub 40x40cm for the front of the garden. Drought and frost hardy. Pale mid pink, flowers all year.

## **RED**

### **S. gesneriiflora**

This is a tall Salvia reaching at least 3m H. It grows in an upright fashion, eventually forming a clump. Leaves are broad ovate and slightly hairy. Flowers are a bright pillar box red, very large tubular shaped with a green calyx (other forms have coloured calyxes). This can flower on and off for most of the year, but late winter - summer is the main flowering time. Can grow in a sunny position but benefits from semi shade. *NOT* frost tolerant and needs some water during the dryer months but generally a hardy good background shrub, good for screening out neighbours. The birds love this plant.

## **YELLOW & WHITE**

### **S. glutinosa**

This is an Asian herbaceous Salvia, growing to approx 40cm. It produces a large clump when established. Leaves are large hastate shaped (arrow shaped). They provide good growth before going into flower. Flowers are on one or two central panicles with pale butter yellow flowers that have purple markings down the lower lip forming the Bee line. It needs a sheltered sunny/semi shaded position or keep it in a pot so as not to lose it or accidentally dig it up. Once established it grows very well, likes deep soil with leaf litter.

### **S. lyrata (green leaf)**

This can be herbaceous in cold districts, but generally will remain green all year. After it

flowers, it can look scrappy until the new growth appears. Leaves are green with dark markings down the veins - hence the name. very attractive. Flowers are white if you can catch them. The flowers come and go very quickly. It is grown for it's leaves not it's flowers.

### **S. apiana**

A beautiful perennial shrub to 80-1m H from California. It is best grown from seed as it seems so hard to propagate from cuttings. The stem is hollow and proves difficult. Leaves are a silver grey, large and pointed in whorls around the stem. In late spring/summer, it sends up this tall central flower stem to produce masses of pure white butterfly shaped flowers, which the bees adore. After flowering, it can often die, but usually it'll send out new shoots. It must have good drainage and not be too crowded by other plants. It can easily turn up its toes suddenly. Full sun and deep soil.

### **S. pratensis 'Swan Lake'**

A herbaceous perennial with a rosette of leaves, these are long and thin with pointed apices. Flower stems appear in early/mid spring, producing stems of many small falcate white flowers. Grow in a sunny position - as a border or spotted around the garden.

### **S. aethiopsis ( biennial)**

A rosette of giant grey/white furry leaves ( similar to *S. argentea*), lobed edges of leaves. Flowers in summer/late spring on a single stem with masses of white falcate flowers. Drought and frost hardy. Good contrast plant for front of bed.

### **S. coccinea 'Alba'**

A very useful Salvia, as this Salvia will grow well in a sunny situation as well as in dryish shade/semi shade. Flowers most of the year and produce copious amounts of seed. For a novice seed grower, this is a great Salvia to start from seed. Very easy.

**Salvia News**  
**Victorian Salvia Study Group**  
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# LETTERS

*Your contributions whether in letter format or as an article are always welcome. It is your contributions that make Salvia News worth reading. Where possible please include a full size photo so that we can resize to fit. This will ensure the best possible reproduction. Please email or send via Australia Post.*

*We have readers from all over Australia, even some further afield so please include suburb/town and State together with your name for publication.*

**\*COPY DEADLINE for next issue is 14 January 2014**

*This is a letter sent to Lyndi with permission to print in Salvia News for your reading pleasure.*

Hi Ya,

Here is my seed sowing technique to share...my little talk....

To all you Salvia and plant lovers,

Once upon a time when I first started growing Salvias, I was quite ignorant as to seed sowing, I wanted the instant gratification of getting a plant and in my ignorance I had no idea that a seed sown plant was going to be superior, I just thought that the plants were a superior form and a sown one was inferior, I was buying quite a few plants from a 'salvia specialist' and then had my nose out of joint as they wouldn't sell me certain plants as I was told that they wouldn't grow here.....well that was it....wouldn't grow here what is that concept..how would anyone know what grows here unless they lived here. I thought about it and decided to go on a seed buying expedition...I bought...I emailed around asking anybody and everybody that had seeds on their site...I made quite a few friends worldwide and it all began...

I had read that salvia seeds needed light so I surfaced sowed them on the potting mix, The potting mix I used was superior, only the best for my salvias. The germination was good but the seedlings didn't look like they were growing as healthily as they could of. I had a look at my nursery and found Searles seed raising mix. Since then I have never looked back. The seeds germinate and now grow at a great rate in their marked tube pots and then get potted into their individual tube pots once they pass their

two true leaved stage where they are right to pot up, I wait a bit longer so they look like they are strong enough to transplant.

The great thing about sowing seeds is you never know what you will get, salvias are a funny lot they have lots of anomalies so it is exciting. *Salvia greggii* reds will throw yellows and whites (Who would guess that!). Sometimes they are a fickle lot and they won't germinate, so you try again and again and again. Eventually you will succeed. There is nothing more magical then turning that little seed into a 6 foot plant and seeing it flower and set seeds and completing the circle.

Now I have to admit I am one of the lucky ones who live in the tropics and can sow outdoors all year round. The seeds receive morning sun and afternoon shade. If I lived down there that wouldn't stop me, I would get my brain ticking over to see what I can do.

Seed sowing is the most fun , rewarding and surprising thing you can do as you just never know what you will get....then when I was growing and they were flowering I tried googling to get pictures to compare them to. There wasn't much to compare to, so I started taking photos of my treasures and the Salvia bug has begun.....

Happy gardening,  
Annette Bax  
Townsville, Qld

# A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

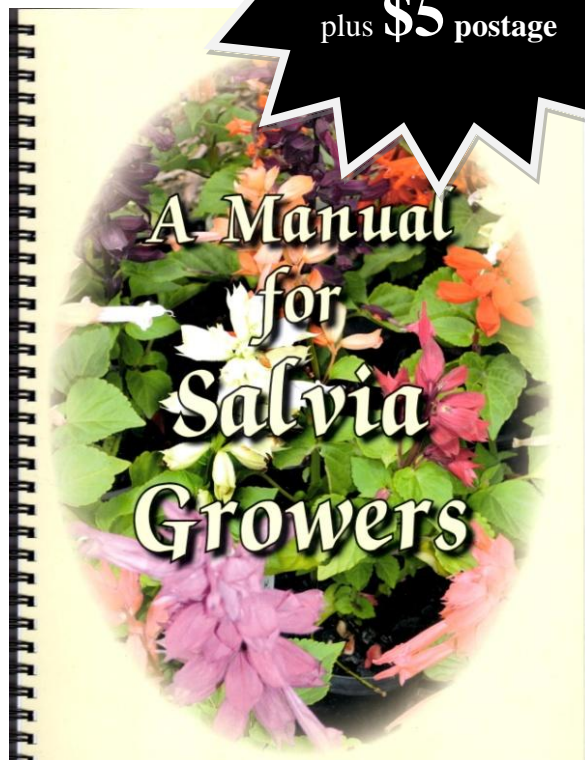
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There are now approximately 370 Species and Cultivars represented  
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- Propagating and Pruning
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**A Manual for Salvia Growers** by Meg Bentley  
can be ordered from:

HSOV Salvia Study Group  
6 Halcyon Avenue  
The Patch Vic 3792  
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