

# SalviaNews

February/March 2002

**THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.**

**The Victorian Salvia Study Group**

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**LAST SALVIA NEWS BEFORE OUR SALVIA EXPO.....**

**SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2002**

**FERNY CREEK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY HALL**

**9.00AM – 5.00PM**

## **Salvia Expo News Update**

The latest news for this exciting event is as follows:

- ❖ The FCHS hall has just been painted and looks fantastic.
- ❖ We will have as many as 500 salvias in containers for display.
- ❖ There will be a large number of varieties available for sale – from tubes right up to large tubs.
- ❖ FCHS will conduct garden tours for those interested in looking at the magnificent grounds.
- ❖ Sarah Guest, garden writer for The Age will be our guest and will be doing an article on the expo. Refer to last Saturday's Age for a pre-expo write up (23/2/02). Other media have been invited.
- ❖ Informative talks will be on all day.
- ❖ FCHS will be taking on the catering for the day. They have requested that large groups contact us prior to the day to give an indication of numbers attending.
- ❖ There will be a number of new and not so common varieties of salvias available for sale as well as a lot of old favourites.
- ❖ Meg has been busy landscaping the front entrance to the FCHS grounds. It contains a number of salvias and looks fantastic. Make sure you stop to have a look as you enter through the gates. Well done Meg!
- ❖ Salvia Study Group members and some volunteers will be wearing a distinctive blue top on the day so that we are easily identifiable. Can you guess what salvia the colour represents?
- ❖ Don't forget we are conducting a raffle on the hour throughout the day. Winners will be rewarded with large pots of salvias. Make sure you don't miss out on your chance to win!
- ❖ VOLUNTEERS – some people have very kindly donated their time in either setting up or working on the day. The next Salvia Expo meeting has been scheduled for next Sunday 3 March at:

Jillian Barkell's  
6 Halcyon Street

The Patch  
9756 6361

and commences at 11.00am. Volunteers wanting to come to this meeting (and you are very welcome) to find out what they can do to assist are asked to contact Meg Bentley on 03 59 649 360 to let her know so that she can allocate tasks and notify Jillian of numbers to expect. If you are unable to attend, we would still prefer you contact Meg and let her know of your intentions. At all our meetings, we ask that everyone bring a plate to share for lunch.

### **Top of the Pots - Salvias for Containers and Small Gardens**

I have decided to remind you once again that Salvias hate wet feet. In fact more salvias die from poor drainage than anything else. So, if your pot/container has a saucer, cunningly place three broken tiles in it and put the pot on them. This way there is no chance of waterlogging.

*Salvia coahuilensis* is a gorgeous purple and drapes fetchingly over the sides of the pot. Rather rare but worth looking for. *Salvia glechomifolia* has dainty blue flowers and perhaps prefers a little shade and shelter. *Salvia patens* was stunning as a container plant in a SA Salvia show a few years back when I was there. The snails couldn't get at it. *Salvia africana lutea* (silver form) is a favourite. The foliage is so pretty and it is very shapely plant with a bonus of unusual terracotta flowers.

For a year or so I have been growing 2,3 or 4 plants together in 12 inch black plastic pots as an experiment. Greed is the motive really. A pot should be flowering all the year round! Any way you will see the results at SALVIA EXPO. *Salvia lanceolata*, *S. runcinata*, *S. dolomitica*, *S. chamelaeagnea* in one pot for example and in another *S. africana lutea* (silver form), *S. runcinata* and *S. chamelaeagnea*. These are all Africans and their leaves contrast beautifully. There are other mixed pots too, some for sale such as *Salvia Marine Blue* with *S. chiapensis*.

**Trudi Fry**

### **Confusing Salvias**

Some salvia groups can be confusing, even to those of us who grow quite a few. Two of the biggest groups to fall into this category would have to be the *Salvia greggii* group and the *S. microphylla* group. So many people cannot tell them apart.

*Salvia greggii* has linear leaves that are completely entire. The margins do not have any niches. The leaves are generally small. There are lots of them and they are always entire. *Salvia microphylla*, on the other hand, has generally heart-shaped leaves (cordate-lanceolate) with notches along the margins of the leaves. The veins can be seen easily and the surface of the leaves is usually dull and smooth to slightly hairy.

Then there is the *Salvia x Jamensis* group. This is a very confusing group as they are a cross between the two. Some will have a dominant *greggii* parent and others will have a dominant *microphylla* parent. Often we can't tell them apart; we just know it is one of "them". All leaves will be niched, even slightly. Often the leaves are shiny, deeply veined and longer than normal.

So here are the groups as we know them:

- Greggii Group**      greggii species, dark pink, smaller flowers than others,  
 alba, white,  
 ‘Raspberry Royal’, crimson fading to pink,  
 ‘Fulhams Red’, bright dark red,  
 ‘Coral’ salmon orange,  
 S. greggii x lycoides, small, purple flowers,
- Microphylla Group**      Microphylla spp, baby sage, small leaves and small red flowers,  
 Var microphylla, bigger leaves and bigger, red flowers  
 Var. neurepia, syn S. grahamii, large, cordate leaves, large, red flowers,  
 Var wislizenii, syn S. lemmonii, red flowers, thinner leaves, often a twiggy plant,  
 ‘Huntingdon’, red flowers, small flowers, striped stems.

Mexican Bandits, as advertised in nurseries, include S. greggii, S. greggii alba, ‘Fulhams Red’ S. greggii x lycoides (purple), S. x jamiensis ‘cyclamen’, (cerise flowers).

- S. x jamiensis Group**      Bicolor, yellow and pink tinged flowers, long, slender, shiny leaves  
 (greggii parent),  
 ‘Pink Blush’, cerise flowers, shiny, cordate deeply veined leaves  
 (microphylla parent),  
 ‘Cyclamen’, very similar to above but larger flowers and leaves,  
 ‘Iced Lemon’, cream flowers, small, shiny, broad, linear leaves (greggii)  
 parent  
 ‘Sensation’, light pinkish yellow flowers, broad, linear leaves (greggii)  
 parent,

Most examples of all three groups have very long flowering periods, up to 10 months a year. Most are very hardy, taking north to west positions. Some do well in baskets or spread and flop along the ground. All are very colourful in the garden. They are ideal for small patios or small gardens and make ideal pot plants. If you have trouble finding them contact Salvia Group Members.

**Lyndi Garnett**

**Salvias in the Geelong Botanic Gardens**

It has been quite a while since the Salvia Study Group made a visit to see the Salvias at the Botanic Gardens in Geelong, so I will inform one and all of the progress now taking shape. My most recent visit was an accepted invitation from John Arnott and Jayne Salmon, to discuss Salvias in various situations, etc and to speak with the Voluntary Guides at the Gardens. It was a 'round table' discussion which I find so much better than the informal 'up front' talk and everyone is much more at ease to ask and have questions answered.

Since John Arnott, the new curator, took over the running of these lovely gardens, things have been on the move. There is a Master Plan underway to relink the Gardens to the waterfront and bring together new concepts in garden design and management. Jayne Salmon is the 'hands on' organizer of Friends Of The Geelong Botanic Gardens, which is just one of her many talents.

There is no doubt about the fact that Salvias grow really well in the Geelong area, this may be due to the soil type and the climate but whatever the reason, let me say this, the Salvia garden is going to be a real feature and a great asset to the Geelong Botanic Gardens in the near future.

The new salvia 'minder' is Des Lawrence, a quietly spoken gentleman with a great interest in the salvias and ever ready to learn more about them, as we all are! After a short discussion about salvias, eg. origins, hardiness, growing and pruning etc with the Guides of the GBG, we walked around the salvia gardens, checking comparisons, correcting names and enjoying the plants in general.

The pruning problems of the past have certainly been out-grown and the plants look in marvellous shape with garden areas being extended in readiness for new additions.

Jayne tells me that their annual Jazz in the Gardens Festival was brought forward which will enable all interested folk to come to Ferny Creek to the Salvia Expo on March 17th. Des is keenly interested to come and will be bringing along one of our other great salvia enthusiasts, Bill Whitehead who also has a great garden of Salvias in the Geelong area.

Having finished my visit to the Gardens, I drove around to see Bill and Shirley... and the Salvias which consists of a very good collection. In anticipation to obtaining more Salvias, Bill has been doing quite a spring clean in his garden, pruning back plants and digging out unwanted strays like Salvia guaranitica. Bill and Shirley are very orderly gardeners, Bill with his little staked up plants (and big ones) and Shirley with her collection of Asian herbs including her great plants of Lemon Grass and peppers. Bill sends his regards to one and all and is quite looking forward to catching up with everyone at the Salvia Expo.

We hope to see you all at the Salvia Expo on March 17th... even if it is just for the Salvia fragrance alone!!

*Meg Bentley*

Please do not hesitate to contact the following people should you have any questions regarding the Expo:

Meg Bentley                      03 59 649 360

Sue Templeton                      02 60 254 585 [www.albury.net.au/~templeton](http://www.albury.net.au/~templeton)

Donna Grundy                      03 59 688 567 [downtoearth1@bigpond.com](mailto:downtoearth1@bigpond.com)  
or 0412 766 763

**SEE YOU AT THE EXPO!**

*Editor's Note: Due to the fact that the Salvia Study Group's members have been frantically preparing for the Expo, this copy of the Salvia News will be brief.*

