

Salvia News

NUMBER 60



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

Winter 2015

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 for the purpose of enjoyment and study
2. Promote and encourage the growing of Salvias
3. Correctly name existing and new Salvias.

The group is a not for profit organization. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and for the planting and maintenance of our GPCAA registered garden collection.

LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE; www.salvias.org.au

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Please post your copy to:

Editor VSSG
3 Creebank View, Pakenham. Vic 3810

or email:

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Don't forget the dot between beth and 'c'.



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Hi

It's that time of year again, time to renew your subscription to Salvia news. Please note that most of you have received your Renewal Form together with this edition of Salvia News. Please don't use the 'New Subscription Form' as printed in each edition of Salvia News. Those who took out a subscription over the past six months are automatically paid up until June 2016. For most others June is renewal time. Don't forget that a completed Renewal Form must be forwarded to the Subscription Officer, Meg Gadd, no matter what form of payment you choose. Any queries please contact Meg direct.

I love this time of year leading into the winter months. There is so much colour in the garden. I often put off trimming back salvias because I don't want to cut off the flowers but of course by shaping and cutting, there will be at least as good a show in the near future if not better. As I write this I know that its only weeks away before the winter Salvias bloom with their massive flower heads, like 'Timboon' (maroon), 'Pink Icicles' (bright baby pink), 'Madrensis' (yellow) to name just a few of the large Shrubs of Salvias in my own garden. I love too Salvia 'Dwarf Limelight' a good 1.2 metre lights up a corner, lime green and purple lights up a corner. I have a smaller one of these on my verge which is slower growing probably because of the Council gumtree. The verge Salvias rely on me adding additional compost, other nutrients and water at different times of the year because of the tree and of course in my opinion, is well worth the effort.

VSSG has been running for around 25 years and in this issue are more reminiscing of early times from and about founding members. You will also find an article by Pat Anderson on coming to terms with Botanical terms. Regular favourites, Notes from Gruyere and News from S.E. Queensland are always a good read. It is hoped that these and other articles in the pages ahead will give pleasurable reading.

Don't forget to check the Calendar of Events, and follow-up on Lyndi's VSSG website for updates and any changes.

Until next time,
Happy Gardening,
Beth
beth.c@bigpond.com

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Check the VSSG website for more details and new events to come, www.salvias.org.au

Take your plant lists to events or email your list to Lyndi, lgarnett844@gmail.com

May 17 Sunday 11am

Judy Percy's wonderful garden

25 Murray Rd, Croydon. Mel: 50 F2

Enjoy this beautiful, quirky garden with many special and unusual plants including plenty of Salvias. Tea and coffee will be provided. Bring a plate to share and a chair.

RSVP essential, please ring (03) 9723 5069 if attending.

June 13 Saturday

RHSV Conference - Gardeners Day Out.

NEW VENUE

Rusden Theatre, Deakin University

Burwood Hwy, Burwood

Program commences at 9.30am. Entry \$10, a light lunch is available for \$15, (must be pre-ordered)

Plants and goods for sale. Unusual items for sale.

FREE undercover parking. Public transport nearby.

Conference RSVP 22 May 2015

Open to the public.

June 21 Sunday 11am-3pm

Working Bee at Nobelius

Salvia Display Garden

Nobelius Heritage Park

Crighton Road, Emerald, under The Packing Shed

Mel: 127 G4

Come and enjoy the fun with others in maintaining our display garden. It's a chance to identify the Salvias in your garden and the opportunity to take home lots of cuttings.

Bring a plate to share and a chair. Don't forget gardening tools, wet weather gear if necessary, a hat and a large plastic bag for those cuttings.

RSVP Lyndi 9803 4534. All Welcome.

July 19 Sunday 2-4pm

Patrick's Digital Photography & Computer Day, Emailing Photos

10 Dion Street, Ferntree Gully Mel: 64 H12

Learn how to take photos, edit and send photos by email, how to store photos on the computer and so much more.

Bookings essential. Contact Patrick, phone 9758 0871

Email: patrick.hogan@optusnet.com

August 2 Sunday 11am-2pm

Plant ID with Lyndi

844 Highbury Road, Glen Waverley Mel: 62 J10

Learn how to identify similar looking Salvias, see what is new in Salvias and Salvias that are unfamiliar.

Bring a plate to share and a chair.

Bring plants to be identified.

RSVP essential, phone Lyndi 9803 4534

August 23 Sunday 11am

Tine Grimston's quirky garden, Serpentine

4 Crimea Close, Rowville Mel: 73 H9

Visit this truly wonderful, quirky garden with so many great ideas. Not to be missed, a real gem.

Tea/coffee provided, bring a plate to share and a chair.

Phone 9752 9897 if attending

September 12 Saturday 10am-4pm

Redhill Spring Garden Festival

Red Hill Recreational Reserve/Red Hill Showground

Mel: 190 J4

Huge range of plants and produces, demonstrations and displays. Salvia plants, books and seed for sale.

Bring your list and plants to be identified.

Remember to check the website regularly for any changes, and additional information www.salvias.org.au

Should you have any queries phone Lyndi Garnett,

VSSG co-ordinator on 9803 4534 or email

lgarnett844@gmail.com

SALVIA NEWS SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

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Don't forget to include your email address on the form.

Note: NEW subscribers who have taken out a subscription in the past 6 months are automatically paid up until 1 June 2016 and thus no Renewal due at this time.

Megg Gadd/Subscription Officer
phone (03) 9584 8005
Email: meg_gadd@yahoo.com.au

TRUDI'S MEMORIES

Beth Clisby & Trudi Fry

In 1989 the Herb Society of Victoria (HSOV) was approached by the OPCAA and invited to form a collection of plants. It had been realised that many plants were disappearing from cultivation worldwide and there was a need to collect, preserve and study species. This could be done by ordinary gardeners helped and advised by Botanic Gardens. The HSOV agreed and Salvias were considered suitable for the Herb Society because as well as being ornamental, they were of medicinal and culinary value. At this time a sub branch of HSOV was set up and became the Victorian Salvia Study Group (VSSG).

In April 2001 the first Salvia News was printed. It commenced as a bi-monthly report compiled by Trudi Fry of meetings by the Group, reports on the Official Collections at Emerald, Hampton and Geelong, members' collections, information exchange by the members, and information on Salvias in general. The Group to begin with was very small, and during those early times, the newsletter even then called 'Salvia News' was available free of charge to anyone who was interested. Salvia information was collected from around the globe and shared, as individuals and the Collection Gardens grew. The first Salvia News was four pages, the second was seven pages and included some wonderful drawings by Meg Bentley with her article on Pruning Salvias. Trudi instigated and edited the newsletter until recent years, she was no longer able to do so because of poor health in her senior years. As Trudi is getting stronger she advises that she will endeavour to write an article for Salvia News in due course.

Initially there were three Collection Gardens, Hampton, Nobelius at Emerald, and Bill Whitehead's garden in Geelong. These gardens allow people to see salvias in a garden format in the hope that they will try some in their own gardens. The Collection Gardens were designed, planted and maintained by local members. Later The Hampton Garden was given to HSOV for their use, and although the Display Garden at Nobelius in Emerald was moved once, it is still there today for the general public to visit and enjoy. It was a combined effort for the layout and fitout of the garden initially, today it is mostly maintained on a fortnightly basis by Lyndi Garnett and Jillian Barkell. Working Bees are also arranged on the occasional weekend or weekday for interested people to not only assist with maintenance, but to enjoy a learning curve with the different varieties and plenty of cuttings to take home for propagating for their own gardens.

Like other original members, Trudi had only a few Salvias in her garden at the time of the VSSG formation, perhaps four or six, including Pineapple Sage, Mexican Sage and Cooking Sage. Over the years her interest and collection grew. In recent years too many were lost through drought and Trudi's poor health, today there is still perhaps a couple of hundred Salvias in her garden. She is very proud that quite a few of the Salvias available today are from her garden including *Salvia greggii* 'Holly', *Salvia greggi* 'Crimson and Black', *Salvia* 'Snow White', *Salvia aurea*.

The forming of the Victoria Salvia Study Group has brought many people together as the interest of this wonderful species grows. There are now hundreds available in Australia from the approximate 900 known world wide. The newsletter, Salvia News, endeavours to keep people informed. Subscribers are encouraged to ask questions, submit articles about their own findings, and at intervals are invited together to enjoy a garden visit, work in the Display Garden at Nobelius and purchase Salvias from the Group and elsewhere to add to their own collections from one of the many venues advertised in 'Salvia News'. We gratefully recognise Trudi and the others who humbly started this Group all those years ago to study and enjoy the species, and all those who have joined since. Lyndi Garnett who is still the VSSG Co-ordinator, is the only foundation member still active in the Group, and we all know the time and effort she puts in to sharing her knowledge with those interested.

May the strong foundation of this group continue to grow in coming years, and that gardeners everywhere enjoy this species in their own gardens. Happy Salvia gardening!

Salvia news from Southeast Queensland

Adrienne Starkey- Ormeau (south side of Brisbane)

It's *S. madrensis* time again! Despite some extreme heat and a great deal of rain, this plant never fails to excel and impress. Mine has the canopy of an ever-spreading poinciana shading it, and I'd thought this might suppress its' flowering, but not so. Instead of the stems leaning towards the light, they have grown tall and vertical, with the inflorescence leaning at right angles to the stem. Looking down on the plant, as I do from our verandah, the effect is of a sea of yellow, laying flat across the plant. Rather special. As usual it swamps anything in its path – a *S. 'Van Houttii'* is looking threatened, as is a *S. guaranitica* non-invasive form. I didn't have the heart to move this, because the brilliant blue flower is lovely with the yellow of its thuggish neighbour.

Looking good, and suffering no ill effects from our wet summer, is *S. 'Angel Wings'*, which has flowered non-stop, and will only be cut because she's taking up more space than is available. I think she's the best of the paler microphylla types, and does blend well with everything. Nearby is *S. azurea*, which has stood nicely upright - for once not flopping askew as per usual. It looks good with *S. 'Easter Bonnet'* - a pretty palette of pastels. (Alliteration not intended, it just came out!) *S. 'Desert Sunset'* has been a picture too, growing quite close to *S. 'Mrs Bucket'* – another sweet colour combination. We really are becoming spoilt for choice with array of colours in the microphylla/greggii group. My best white has always been the old *S. greggii* white form, and along with *S. 'Blaze'*, and a couple of stronger pinks such as *S. 'Penny's Smile'* and *S. cyclamen*, I feel I probably don't need to look further afield. However, who can resist the temptation to increase one's collection of these gorgeous plants?

Yesterday I attended one of our salvia group meetings, which was hosted by Mick and Sandra Nanka, of Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm – long time members of our group. My very good intentions were that I would *not* bring home any plants, as I have way too many already waiting for homes. Mick and Sandra run a nursery though, and have a huge range of salvias (amongst a mind-boggling range of herbs – their specialty). Well, I'm only human, so now homes need to be found for ten more little beauties, plus various other herbs. As there isn't a great deal of garden space, some of these will go into large tubs, and as I'm finding, they go very well in pots and, planted in this way, are less susceptible to weather extremes.

I have *S. 'Magenta Magic'* thriving in a tub, but it was a little dull on its own so I underplanted with white alyssum, giving it the lift it needed. *S. 'Sparkle'* and the smaller growing angelonia, a strong mid-purple look great together, and nearby, *S. greggii* white form with a raspberry angelonia and a purple calibrichoa are a most satisfying combination. It's definitely a recurring colour theme, but I turn to it over and over – a “cottagey” look I love.

Final thoughts go to *S. 'Meigan's Magic'*. It's planted at the top of a boulder wall and would have to be 2m x 2m by now. The mass of colour has been stunning for months, many months. Now, only because the heavy rainfall has split it in the middle, it will be cut hard. At the base of the wall, is my washing line, and I suppose (reluctantly), that's another reason to cut back this beauty – all our clothes come off the line, sprinkled with petals. Worse things could happen though!

Happy salvias to you all, and may we all receive just the right amount of “weather”!

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A SENIOR'S SAGE EXPERIENCE

Bill Whitehead – 2005

I remember it well, my wife was visiting her relatives in Thailand, I had just retired. This was twenty years ago and with plenty of time on my hands, I started searching for something worthwhile to do. About that time, a friend suggested I attend the initial meeting in Geelong to form a Herb Society. On attending that meeting I became one of its founding members. The subject of herbs and their usage had interested me for a very long time.

About five years later, the Melbourne based Herb Society which I had also joined, called for some of its members to form a Salvia Study Group. About half a dozen including me formed this sub group. I knew this would allow me to collect salvias and to study them. Driving to the Melbourne area several times a year in the daytime I felt I could manage. We had a tremendous job ahead of us, for we know that salvias comprise a huge family with about 900 different members or species.

Amongst the herbs I had been growing was a common sage. It is well known today as a culinary herb, although in former times, it was prized for its medicinal usage. I learnt that every known plant has a botanical name which comprises two parts. The first part, the genus, relates it to its family. The second is its species, directly identifies it to that genus or family. These together positively identify that plant throughout the world. I also quickly learnt that common sage growing so happily in my garden, was known botanically as *Salvia officinalis*. Thus sage belongs to the salvia family, whilst the species name showed that it was known for centuries as being officially safe for use medicinally. Even today the leaves of sage when chewed for a sore mouth or throat give positive healing results.

When the Salvia Study Group commenced about fifteen years ago, we found that salvias were relatively unknown in our community. Our local nurseries stocked very few.

We searched everywhere, even interstate and contacted growers overseas. A salvia grower at Albury, who imported these plants and their seeds, gave us much help. Our aim was to concentrate on

establishing a large garden on ground granted to us by the Council at Emerald in the Dandenongs. When the salvias in this garden reached about 150 species and with their names correctly identified, it became registered by the Ornamental Plant Conservation Association of Australia as a National Collection.

About three years ago, I approached the Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, Mr John Arnott, to offer him eighty different species of salvias for those gardens. He responded by coming to my home with a truck and accompanied by two staff members, to receive them. Prior to this, other members of the Salvia Study Group had visited these gardens with salvias. I believe these gifts together with stock already available in the gardens, allowed them to develop today seven magnificent beds of salvias. These are currently available permanently for all visitors to see and enjoy.

My journey of fifteen years with salvias (or sages) has been a great learning experience. My own garden today possesses about 100 different species of salvias. They range from prostrate at ground level to more than two metres in height. Their leaves and foliage vary considerably in shape and size. The striking flowers range in colour from vibrant blues, purple, intense reds and pinks, to whites and yellows. No wonder they are now becoming so popular, as they are indeed a wonderful genus or family of plants.

Editor's Note

Written by Bill Whitehead for Seniors Week March 2005. City of Greater Geelong Council invited Seniors to write short stories.

Having recently been given access to Trudi Fry's files, another founding member of VSSG and of course the editor of Salvia News for over 20 years, I thought after reading it is well worth sharing. An enjoyable telephone conversation with Bill included permission to print. Bill is 98 years young, will be 100 next year. Bill is one of the founding members of VSSG and has a salvia named after him. He has submitted another article written in March of this year which you may find in this issue on page 17.

MID WEEK SALVIA GROUP WORKING BEE

Beautiful Day with lots of cuttings for everyone

Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully, Vic

The weather was beautiful as the group of volunteers arrived for the mid week working bee on 15th April at the Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald. After the customary cup of coffee the assembled team commenced pruning and cleaning. After a well deserved lunch break under the shade of the Pin Oaks and a beautiful salad lunch that included Chicken and Lemongrass Dim Sims prepared by Jillian Barkell, we set out with enthusiasm for the afternoon session, by which time the sun shone brightly. The day happened to coincide with the official launch of a Special Exhibition of rare antique boxes in the nearby Emerald Museum. Many of the working bee attendees including myself attended the exhibition and we were entertained by a local choir. A very big thank you to those that attended and remember that Jillian and Lyndi are at the gardens most Wednesdays – so you can pop along whenever you have a spare hour or two. A very special welcome to Gwen Ince who attended today for the first time. We hope you will come again Gwen and we also hope your Salvia cuttings do well. Lots of visitors are now visiting the display gardens as the Museum and the Packing Shed are part of a new official tour of Emerald. Brochures are available at the Museum.



Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park



Refreshments under the Pin Oaks



Special Rare Antique Boxes Exhibition Emerald Museum

Notes from Gruyer

April 2015

Meg Bentley, Gruyere Vic

Tubers in the Root System.

It is very interesting to see the root system and development of roots on salvias, observed when repotting plants.

One can't help noticing which plants have strong roots, those with friable roots and salvias that are slow to take root. Some folk are apt to repot plants without investigating or even noticing the root system and swap the plant over into a larger container or if pot-bound just tease out the roots and plant it out into the garden.

I remember many years ago a lady asked me to repot her plants because she didn't like to see the roots of the plants, but that is an extreme case. Recently I had a chance to repot some *Salvia lorentzii* (which is a winter dormant plant) into larger pots and couldn't help noticing the large white tubers at the base of the plant. I have also come across tubers like this with *Salvia clinopodioides* (Syn. *Salvia michoacana*) when repotting it which is another plant that is winter dormant. Another is the beautiful Gentian Sage *Salvia patens* which also has tubers and is the Chinese Red Sage *Salvia miltiorriza* which has thick red tuberous roots.

It does make one wonder if all the winter dormant or deciduous salvias possess these tubers and are they used as an extra food storage as in potatoes and some other vegetables?

Of course there is *Salvia guaranitica* that has those menacing underground runners and laden with small tuber-like swellings. I would love to hear from anyone else who has come across other salvias with tubers, other than those mentioned above. Please feel free to drop me a line ...or better still write to the Editor of Salvia News and tell us all about it!

I have been busy still propagating while the weather is on the warm side and planting out while the ground is warm before winter arrives. Many folk have asked me about *Salvia regla* and when is the best time to propagate it? My answer has been try taking cuttings in mid to late spring after the new growth has emerged and before buds have started. Otherwise nip off the buds and take side shoots and tip cuttings while the plant is in growing mode. You might be lucky to try now but the sap goes down (it is deciduous) and the cuttings may just sit until the new growing season in spring, the leaves will drop but it may not be dead! Just have patience and see what happens. I put my cuttings into potting and perlite

mix (double the perlite to one of potting mix ratio). Don't forget to label the pot because you won't know what the little sticks are when the leaves drop off. Enjoy your garden, whatever you are doing!

Meg

SALVIA CARDS

by Meg Bentley



Salvia patens, *Salvia roemeriana*, *Salvia microphylla* var *neurepia*, *Salvia gesneraeflora* 'Tequila', *Salvia leucantha*

MEG'S SALVIA CARDS ORDER FORM

Post with your order together with cheque or money order to VSSG, 844 Highbury Rd, Glen Waverley 3150
Enquiries (03) 9803 4534

.....	packs Assorted	
or	Single Flower packs -	
.....	<i>Salvia patens</i>	
.....	<i>Salvia roemeriana</i>	
.....	<i>Salvia microphylla</i> var <i>neurepia</i>	
.....	<i>Salvia gesneraeflora</i> 'Tequila'	
.....	<i>Salvia leucantha</i>	
.....	Total packs @ \$10 per pack	\$
	Plus \$2.50 per pack posted	\$
	Total cost of order:	\$

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name

Address.....

.....Post code.....

Daytime Ph no ..

Email:

MY FINDINGS FOR 2014

Lyndi Garnett – VSSG Co-ordinator - Mt Waverley Vic

Over the last couple of years, most Salvia enthusiasts have noticed quite an influx of new Salvias appearing on the scene. These are generally the small leaved Salvias, not only are there many new greggii/microphylla types but a lot of others as well. With our knowledge of the internet becoming easier and more and more available, so it is that we can peruse the net for the ever growing number of sites selling Salvias, here in Australia or from overseas, selling seed or from mail order nurseries. Like most of us, when going through these catalogues, we find a new name: well that is like a red flag to a bull – (most of us fall into this category), that when we see a new name we “Must have”. So often we see a name we haven’t seen before or aren’t familiar with, so “We’d better have one of those” without checking to see what it is or if we have it already in our gardens.

Luckily these days most Mail order nurseries and even some seed catalogues have photos to go with the description, so you can see what you supposedly are buying.

A member of the public mentioned to me recently that all these new varieties “they all look the same”, and she’s right, they are all beginning to look the same. Although the colours change from year to year, many within that colour range begin to look the same, making it difficult to identify the individual.

No one wants to spend their hard earned money on an order, only

to find that they already have that plant in their garden but with another name, or something that looks extremely similar. People don’t want same as, same as, same old, they want something different!, not something that looks like everything else.

What to do: The thing to do is your Homework. With the net so easily accessible these days, check other sites, other nurseries that may be selling the same plant under another name, google the plant in question, check our website www.salvias.org.au for varieties that may look the same or extremely similar to the one you want to buy. Don’t forget that what happens here in our own gardens can also happen overseas, hence the same or similar varieties appearing in overseas catalogues.

Much of this confusion has come about because as you know Salvias are very promiscuous and now seedlings seem to pop up everywhere in peoples gardens. Of course all and every one of these seedlings are pretty and they all must be kept at all costs,(according to the owners) even if they look like something else, because they have a pretty flower and people can’t find it in their hearts to toss these” little pretties away”.

Unfortunately, many of these “pretties” that we now see in catalogues / websites have not been checked to see if they look like something that is already in existence, so they are sold at the local markets and given to mail

order nurseries without doing “their Homework”.

For some reason, those who find they have seedlings coming up in their garden seem to think that they can automatically name and promote these little ‘pretties’ without checking first. By all means enjoy these lovely Salvias in YOUR garden, but don’t confuse an already confused market by promoting something that looks like all the others in that colour range – don’t give pieces to your friends – they have a habit of finding their way to a mail order nursery or market, where no one knows what the Salvia is and just gives it any old name.

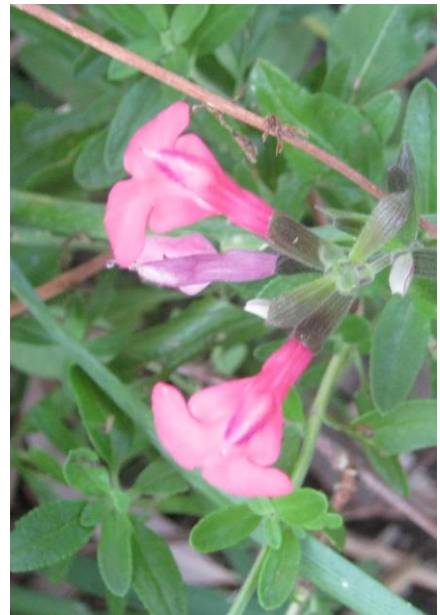
Be selective and find something really different – a different colour, or shape of leaves eg ‘Wendy’s Wish’, this was a really different find. You will notice that the following photos show that some varieties which have been brought in from overseas look just like something that has been around for years or others look extremely similar.

Examples are:
‘Bulletproof’ (Qld) = ‘Navajo Red’ Same flower, same leaf.
‘La Siesta = ‘Cecilia’ (Qld). Same flower, but different leaves. ‘La Siesta’ has a oblong microphylla leaf and ‘Cecilia’ has a large greggii type leaf. Lambley Nursery brought this in from overseas.

continued on page 12



'Cecilia' leaves



'Cecilia' flowers



'La Siesta' leaves



'La Siesta' flowers



'Dwarf Peachy'

MY FINDINGS FOR 2014

Lyndi Garnett – VSSG Co-ordinator - Mt Waverley Vic

continued from pages 10 & 11

'Cecilia' has been in circulation for at least 10 yrs.

'Dwarf Peachy' = 'Sierra Pink'. Same flower, but different leaves. 'Dwarf Peachy' (Qld), (nothing dwarf about this plant) has oblong microphylla leaves and 'Sierra Pink' has greggii leaves.

'Keegan' = greggii bicolor. Same flower, different leaves. 'Keegan' has a more compact growth habit and oblong microphylla leaves, greggii bicolor has typical greggii leaves. Both flowers are darker when they first appear, then fade. A Larkman Nursery find. 'Palest Pink' = 'Marshmallow' both from Qld.

'Jo Anne Shan' (Qld) is a larger version of 'La Luna' - leaf the same, just a bigger flower.

'Tomato Red' (Qld) is a very faded version of 'Holly' - same leaf, same flower.

'Miss Scarlett' = 'Baby sage', (N.S.W) A larger version in leaf and flower. A commercial Nursery.

'Miss Bucket' (Qld) = 'Mesa Azure'. Mesa Azure was imported from USA some years ago.

'Javier' is very similar to 'Mesa Azure', but not identical - Robin Middleton (Eng).

I know most people couldn't care less for the names or what type of Salvia they might be, they just want something pretty that grows in their garden, is hardy, compact, is attractive. But spare a thought for those of us that have to identify all of these look-a-likes that are now appearing, just so you (the

public and the collector) receive the correct plant that you were wanting.

It's becoming harder and harder to identify these plants. Identification has come down to the leaf shape, size, colour and texture of the leaf!!, whether the leaf is round, oblong or broad triangular, greggii or microphylla type leaf, dark green or even a thin texture. There will be mistakes made, but hopefully we will get it correct. Whatever "little pretties" you might have in your garden, please enjoy them as they are all gorgeous, both the bees, moths and other insects love them and don't forget to keep the labels by the plant so you yourself know which plant is which.

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Meg Gadd
Subscription Officer

Enquiries: phone (03) 9584 8005
Email: meg_gadd@yahoo.com.au

Perennial Salvias a perennial favourite

Dr Michael Simpson, "The Shambles" Montville Qld

Our garden at "The Shambles" in Montville, Queensland is a private joy, a family refuge, a collector's garden and for years has been trampled by thousands of feet during parties, Open gardens, local festivals and bun fights. Amongst the thousands of plants we have collected and shared over 23 years the ornamental salvias have been perennial (pun) favourites and give us year round colour. We have explored the potential of perennial salvias in light and shade, in the context of having no irrigation system and surviving with sparse attention while there are far more important calls on our time.

Our garden is hot, humid, wet and shady, on a once rainforest covered tableland in Queensland. We have learned that these conditions have not stopped us from enjoying salvias except for *Salvia officinalis* which rots away in misery. After observing the willingness of *Salvia coccinea bicolor* we have continued to collect, swap, and propagate Salvias from about 1992. An inventory and photographs of our modest collection of Salvias as of late 2014 is included in our latest book "A Garden Forever, Dreams, Stories, Heritage, History". This self-published book has been printed in Brisbane when most books are being printed in China. The book will retail for \$55.00 and a complimentary copy of "Over the Fence and Over Looked" a colourful hardcover book (2009) & Dvd "A Garden in the Rain" will be included in your order while stocks last. Available from the author's shambles@southernphone.com.au. Our perennial Salvia collection has been registered with the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia and is also updated in the 'Heritage Rose Inventory' page on our website www.montvillegarden.com

Our Salvias mix it up all through the gardens at "The Shambles" with Heliotropes, Chrysanthemums, Linaria, Milfoil, Centranthus, and a large collection of shrubs, perennials, trees and old fashioned roses. You name it, we'll try it. We favour reliability as much as beauty or rarity and have eagerly propagated and shared perennial Salvias, with family, friends and fellow gardeners. The obvious contenders thrive in our garden and we can have Salvia colour all year. *Salvia involucrata*, *Salvia madrensis*, *Salvia iodantha*, variants of *Salvia splendens* and *Salvia*

coccinea provide great mass and colour within the garden. In the time honoured tradition of listing ten favourites below are some of the many worthwhile and willing Salvias at "The Shambles". Our next Open garden and the last with "Open Gardens Australia" is on the ANZAC weekend 25th and 26th April 2015. We hope our Salvias will do their work to the required standard.

1. *Salvia confertifolia* Tall salvia from Brazil with corrugated leaves and quite long spikes of small orange flowers with an orange brown calyx.
2. *Salvia curviflora* A Mexican salvia with bright pink-magenta flower colour a little different to the world of softer pinks around it.
3. *Salvia elegans* syn. *S. rutilans*. (Pineapple Sage) The Pineapple scented foliage is quite attractive. Small red flowers are bee attracting. We also have golden foliage Pineapple sage.
4. *Salvia guaranitica* Tall spreading Salvia from Brazil. We love the clear Mid-Blue flower spikes in summer. A bit invasive, like an unwanted guest at times.
5. *Salvia macrophylla* has large heart shaped, stick, aromatic leaves. We love the colour of the mid to sky-blue flowers better perhaps than *S. guaranitica*. We also have *S. macrophylla* 'Purple Leaf'.
6. *Salvia* "Meigans Magic" has as much willingness to please as our border collie. Accordingly we propagate and share this very garden worthy plant with its white flower and purple calyx.
7. *Salvia microphylla* "Hot Lips". Very hardy and a bit mad with its distinctive crimson-red margin on a white flower. For us it is a reliable Salvia for sharing and for mass display.
8. *Salvia miniata* (Belize Sage) Tall, apple green glossy foliage, bright red flowers grows easily where it is planted and like most of our Salvias reliable in sun or shade. If you love primary colours, this is the red for you.

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9. *Salvia oxyphora* (Bolivian Hummingbird Sage), tall vigorous shrub with tubular crimson pink flowers which are as subtle as a carnival in Rio de Janeiro. It does attract attention though.
9. *Salvia discolor* has almost black flowers on a lax low growing shrub with sticky grey foliage which would prefer a less humid environment. It's unusual so we are proud to grow it against the odds. While mentioning favourite colours Salvias do pale blue very well e.g. *Salvia uliginosa* and *Salvia pallida*.

Just as a couple of examples from our list of Salvia like perennials we have to mention the following.

1. *Plectranthus ecklonii*. From South Africa is a tall, Salvia like shrub which produces panicles of blue, pink or white Salvia like flowers in summer. Easy to propagate and care for.
2. *Lepachinia salviae*. Medium to tall, lax shrub large arrow shaped grey leaves. Long panicles of Mauve flowers in bells which do resemble Salvia if you squint with your Rayban sunglasses on.
3. *Brillantasia subulugurica*. Large leafed, lax shrub from East Africa with quite large mauve/Blue flowers reminiscent of a Salvia flower on anabolic steroids. It is a very willing garden plant.

For any collector of perennial Salvias, there is a lot of enjoyment to be had from taking cutting material, even that ‘obtained’ in dark circumstances and watch the development of a robust and perhaps rare and unusual plant. It is an uncommon pleasure.

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Some Thoughts on Writing and Talking about Salvias

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte, Vic

As Salvia collectors, we have mostly come to terms with the need for Botanical names, rather than common names, so that we can refer to our plants precisely and consistently. While some regard this as a nuisance, we should be grateful that our forebears established a system for naming plants in a way that can be clearly understood across language and regional barriers. This is probably even more relevant in the 21st century when we can jump on the internet and discuss our beloved Salvias with fellow enthusiasts around the world. Of course, we can still get their names wrong, and indeed, a lot of our discussion is about getting them properly identified.

Questions are also asked about correct spelling and pronunciation of these Botanical names. There is an *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* which lays down the rules for the correct writing and spelling of plant names. Pronunciation, however, is another matter altogether and it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with which school we went to.

Botanical Latin is essentially a written language and there is no general agreement on how it should be pronounced. There are four main systems in the English-speaking countries: (1) the traditional system used by gardeners and botanists, (2) an old academic system of classical Latin, (3) the 'reformed' or 'restored' academic pronunciation adopted by classical scholars as presenting "a reasonably close approximation to the actual sounds of the language as spoken by educated Romans" and (4) the Latin of the Roman Catholic Church, which is based on modern Italian pronunciation. While the 'reformed' system is the most logical to use, the current practice in Australia is to use the traditional English horticultural system. It matters little really as long as we understand each other.

For those wishing to take the trouble, the following rules may help:

- Every vowel should be pronounced, hence *ros-ma-ri-ni-fo-li-a* or *Co-to-ne-as-ter* and *He-be*
- The stress is on the first syllable in words of two syllables, hence *fal-lax*, and in words of three or more syllables, the stress is generally (but not always!) on the penultimate syllable, hence *syl-ves-tris*, *af-ri-ca-na*. (although, what about *Cal-lis-te-mon*??)

Pronunciation according to the traditional system is as follows:

a	Short as in cat or long as in rather
ae	As in seat
au	As in shawl
c	Hard before a, o, u as in cat. Soft before e, i,
y	As in ceiling
ch	As in cat
e	Short as in set or long as in meet
ei	As in height
g	Same rule as for c
i	Short as in tin or long as in fine
j	As in jet (except where a name is based on a person's name or place name as in <i>jamensis</i> , when we say <i>Hamensis</i> , as pronounced in Mexico)
o	Short as in pot or long as in vote
oe	As in see
ph	As f
s	As in this, not those
u	As in rub
ui	As in ruin

I hope this is helpful. But the bottom line is that it really doesn't matter too much so long as we understand each other. It is far more important to spell and write names.

Salvia News

Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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SALVIAS FULFILLING THE SEARCH

Bill Whitehead 2015

In starting my herb garden in 1983, I then joined the Melbourne based Herb Society. By 1989 having six different sages and other herbs, I needed more. So it suited me well when the Herb Society of Victoria (HSOV) requested that some members form a branch that became the Victoria Salvia Study Group (VSSG).

This new branch employed horticultural principles whereby it used botanical names, hence sage became perhaps the first member of the salvia genus. Certainly salvia and sage are rooted in Latin, meaning 'to save', that is one's health. Sage then needed a specific name to identify it in the genus.

Early history shows us that around 1750, botanical names were introduced to the monasteries officina or garden plot which were used to feed the monks. Thus the Latinised version officinalis. At that time the botanical name for sage became *Salvia officinalis*, and was regarded as the first salvia. It is estimated that there are about 900 Salvias worldwide. How many do we have in Australia? I can only hazard a guess to be well over the 400 in Australia and this includes both species and cultivars, none being indigenous species to this country.

Concluding, I rejoice in my years of travelling between Belmont and Melbourne where VSSG held their meetings. How could any member forget these meetings and the 'fruit' in seeking those salvias. Forgot to say that in my garden I did succeed in planting a little over 100 salvias, named by species and their cultivars all thanks to VSSG.

One cannot and would not fail to recognise the marvellous Group co-ordinator, Lyndi Garnett, who always inspired us to do our best for VSSG and that gives me great pleasure. Of course I cannot omit our parent body who brought us into being, that is our Herb Society of Victoria, and my thanks to them. I still receive my monthly journal.

Respectfully
Bill Whitehead

LETTERS

Seeking Salvia Propagating information

I love salvias. They are easy to grow, cut back, pick for inside, many colours and varieties. However, I have one that is getting a bit out of hand, having cut it back as I thought fit several times.

Searching the internet for 'propagating salvias' I came across your website. It was very informative and helpful and I thank the Group for the trouble of explaining the required information in such a useful way. I shall now look at my salvia a little more carefully, and expect lots more blooms soon!

Jenny Loveder, Brighton, South Australia.

*Hi Jenny,
Thankyou for taking the time to email. I have attached a couple of articles on propagating that have appeared in our newsletters that may be of interest, these two written by Meg Bentley. Meg is the author of Australia's only Salvia book called 'A*

Manual for Salvia Growers' by Meg Bentley that can be purchase through mail order (\$30 plus \$10 postage see website). All the photos and drawings are her own work.

The Victorian Salvia Study Group newsletter 'Salvia News', is distributed to subscribers quarterly Australia wide and further; A4, 20 pages with colour and black and white photos together with articles for both new and long term enthusiasts of Salvia growing. Additionally, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to email giving as much information as possible, you may even include a photo. You may send these queries direct to the co-ordinator, Lyndi Garnett – lgarnett844@gmail.com or to Salvia News editor, Beth Clisby who will forward to the relevant person.

*Best wishes and Happy Gardening
Beth / Editor*

Pruning of Winter Salvias

Lyndi Garnett, Glen Waverley Vic

Now is the perfect time to prune those large leaf Salvias and take cuttings.

Many of these tall large leaf Salvias may have finished or are almost finished flowering. They may be looking a bit bedraggled from the wind, or Wattle Birds crashing into them, many clumps may have old canes that need taking out. Have a look at your plant and decide what needs coming out. Old canes can be pruned right down to the base, of course if there are new growths coming from the old canes fairly low down, then prune to those new shoots.

Usually you always prune to a bud or new shoots, but it may not be possible to find new shoots happening on large plants, so you will have to prune to where you think there should be a bud or prune to a suitable height and wait for that new growth to appear. While you are taking out the big old canes, don't forget to clean out the clump of weak, old, dead or crossing branches, the same principle as pruning a rose bush.

If you are like me and cannot throw away any pruning – (you just have to take all those cuttings), well now is the perfect time. If you find yourself with too many plants to pot up, just give them to a friend or give them to the group to sell – we can always use some more pots of whatever you give us. (just phone and we can organize to pick up.)

Don't even think about taking cutting of the small leaf Salvias e.g. *greggii*'s and *microphylla*'s, they will only sit and sulk in this cold weather. They are best taken in the warmer months.

Taking Cuttings

Take tip cuttings, anywhere from 8 – 14cm long, strip off the lower leaves and any flowers and buds. (we want the energy in the cutting to go into producing roots and strong growth – if there are flowers or buds, then the energy goes into producing that flower and not roots. If the cutting does root with a flower, then it is likely to be weak and may not survive any shocks or stress.) Nip out the top bud of leaves as this promotes bushiness.

As many of these large leaf Salvias can have hollow stems, it is best to take the cutting by cutting through the node, or at least leave a heel.

Dip the cuttings into a rooting gel or powder and put into a pot of ordinary potting mix. Plant the cutting deeply so that there is at least one node below the surface. This all goes to help produce roots. Many people prefer to plant one cutting to one pot – this can take up a lot of space. The idea here is that the cutting will continue to grow in that pot, no repotting and no shock associated with repotting for the plant but some people don't have a lot of room e.g. me, so I put a number of cuttings in one pot and tease them out and pot up into individual pots when rooted.

Always water the pot of cuttings or potted up plants in well – this is to settle the soil and to eliminate the air around the cutting stem, so the cutting can then get on with the task of producing roots.

Place the pot/s of cuttings in a sheltered place, out of the wind and if possible a warm area. It is not necessary to place them in a heated propagating unit at all.

Because of the cold weather, these plants don't transpire (lose water) as much as in the warmer weather, so leave them outside in the elements in a sheltered position.

To tell if the cuttings have rooted, you can either see the roots appearing through the bottom of the pot or you can tip up the pot, carefully taking the pot off the soil to see if there are any roots. If there are no roots, carefully place the pot back over the soil and firm the soil around the cuttings again, water again. Another indication that the cuttings have taken is that the cuttings are putting on new growth.

But beware, there are some cuttings that seem to put on new growth, but rather these elongate their stems and leaves, but don't produce any roots. Once the cutting/s has rooted and you need to pot up, carefully tip up the pot with your hand and fingers carefully positioned through the cuttings and tip out, carefully lay them out and gradually tease them apart, placing a cutting in a half filled pot of soil. When all the cuttings have been teased out, then proceed to cover the cutting with good potting soil and firming around the stem. Don't forget the label and water in. Scatter around a little Osmocote and set them aside and watch them grow.

It's that easy, so have a go – you never know, you may have success where others fail, and give them away to someone to brighten their day.

A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

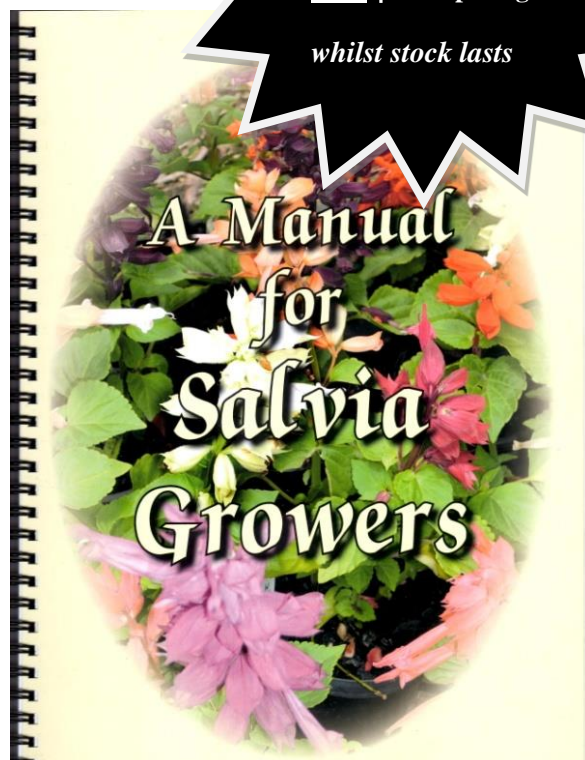
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