

# Salvia News

NUMBER 61



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

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

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### **SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS**

All copy must be received on or preferably prior to copy deadline.  
Copy Deadline for the next edition is on or before 21 October 2015

**Please post your copy to:**

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

**W**elcome to the latest edition of Salvia News. Another issue with a variety of articles for your pleasure. Seed sowing is becoming more popular, I am sure you will enjoy Salvia Seeds by Heather Lucas on page 7. Don't miss Pat Anderson's Classifying Salvias Part 11 from page 10. There are the usual favourites, Meg Bentley's News from Gruyere on page 9, News from South East Queensland page 10 and several articles about past calendar events.



I have had some extra fun these past few months. After winning a competition, I had a visit from Vasili of Vasili's Garden to Kitchen TV Show on the community Channel 31, Digital 44 each Wednesday at 7.30pm and my garden appeared on the show during May. Anyone who has seen the show knows that Vasili is an organic gardener, is particularly interested in growing anything we can eat.

My vege patch is small and wheelchair accessible, my fruit trees are spread throughout the back garden. Additionally Vasili showed interest in the Salvias of which I have about 70. Considering the time of year, and his visit being on short notice, some of the salvias had already been pruned, roses were finished, a little late for Autumn garden display and too early for the Winter blooms, there were still many plants in flower, especially the Salvias. He & his camera crew of which one is his son, spent about 3 hours with me. I have heard from many who saw the show and even been stopped in the street. It's been such a hoot. The question asked most is 'what is Vasili like, is he the same as we enjoy on the teli?' He is exactly how we see him on the screen, has an infectious energy, obviously enjoys people and anything to do with gardening, is ready to share his knowledge or assist with a garden problem; makes one feel comfortable in his presence – a gardeners trait don't you think? Of course he loves something to eat too as anyone having seen his show knows and I had afternoon tea ready. After watching him on TV for years, initially on SBS and currently on Channel 31 Digital 44, it was a real pleasure to meet him.

A couple of weeks later I had to go to Coburg regarding my vehicle hand controls and to fill in the time, my brother inlaw who was my driver and I went to Vasili's boutique Café and Garden Centre. There we met his lovely wife Lisa who runs the Café, Eleni his daughter you may know from the Show with her Smoothie drinks, Jason his Nursery Manager and just before we had lunch, Vasili came into the Café and said hello. We spent a couple of hours having lunch and visiting the Nursery. My purchases included one of his special sprayers that makes spraying the underside of leaves on plants so easy. In my opinion, it is well worth a visit to Coburg. I have been again since. Just for your information, my garden will be in the Spring edition of Vasili's magazine. For more information, visit [www.vasilisgarden.com](http://www.vasilisgarden.com)

Like most people, I love Springtime, so much new grow, new life - bulbs aplenty, many Salvias and roses blooming, fruit trees in blossom, filling the gaps where deciduous trees and shrubs had lain bare, birds and their new families singing – its wonderful to spend more time in the garden.

Until next time, happy gardening, Beth

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**Copy Deadline for next edition  
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21 October 2015**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Remember to check the website regularly for any changes, and additional information [www.salvias.org.au](http://www.salvias.org.au)*

*Take your plant lists to events or email your list to Lyndi prior to the event.*

*Should you have any queries phone Lyndi Garnett, VSSG co-ordinator on 9803 4534 or email [lgarnett844@gmail.com](mailto:lgarnett844@gmail.com)*

**August 23 Sunday 11am**

**TINE GRIMSTON'S QUIRKY GARDEN  
'SERPENTINE'**

4 Crimea Cls, Rowville

Mel: 73 H9

Visit this truly wonderful quirky garden with so many great gardening ideas. So much to see. 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 produce, demonstrations and displays. Salvia plants, books and seed for sale.

Bring your list and plants to be identified.

**September 20 Sunday 1.30-3pm**

**PROPAGATION WORKSHOP**

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald

Mel: 127 G4

Professional propagator Sue Stevens to share trade secrets on how to take cuttings and their propagating mix. Your chance to take home pots of cuttings and trade secrets.

Phone Lyndi 9803 4534 if attending

**October 4 Sunday 2-4pm**

**NEW SUBSCRIBER'S AFTERNOON TEA**

Salvia Display Garden at

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald

Mel: 127 G4

This is special Afternoon Tea for new subscribers to Salvia News, to visit our Display Garden to see how Salvias grow and to meet others in the Group. Afternoon Tea supplied.

Bring a chair. Bring plants to be identified. Your chance to see and discuss Salvias, take home a Salvia and copious cuttings. Look forward to meeting you!

RSVP Lyndi phone 9803 4534

**October 18 Sunday 11am**

**VIVIENNE'S GARDEN VISIT**

7/15 Holloway Rd, North Croydon

Mel: 36 H6

A lovely rose garden filled with Salvias.

Bring a plate to share and a chair.

Phone Vivienne 9762 9241 if attending

**October 25 Sunday 12-4pm**

**IVANHOE GARDEN CLUB  
FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW**

**October 25 Sunday 12-4pm**

Bellfield Community Centre, Cnr Oriel Rd & Bell St  
Ivanhoe

Mel: 31 E2

Flower & plant displays and demonstrations. Sales of plants & seedlings. Collectors Table.

Devonshire Teas, Sausage Sizzle. Enquiries Sec. Julie Stafford 9499 4659

Salvia plants, books & seed for sale.

Email your Salvia list to avoid disappointment.

[lgarnett844@gmail.com](mailto:lgarnett844@gmail.com)

**November 7 & 8 Saturday 1pm & Sunday 9am**

**ROSE SHOW**

MILLERS Road Mt Waverley Community Centre,  
opposite the train station

Mel: 70E1

Salvia plants, books and seeds for sale.

Large range of roses and flowers for sale.

**November 15 Sunday 11-2pm**

**ANNUAL SALVIA SALE AT NOBELIUS**

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald [below The Packing Shed](#)

Mel 127 G4

Good opportunity to obtain those plants that you may have missed out on during the year.

All plants \$5 each.

Salvia books and seed also for sale.

Email your list to avoid disappointment

[lgarnett844@gmail.com](mailto:lgarnett844@gmail.com)

**December 6 Sunday 11am**

**VSSG CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

Diarise now. Details will be uploaded to the website when finalised, [www.salvias.org.au](http://www.salvias.org.au)

and of course will be in the Summer edition of Salvia

News in Calendar of Events, distributed late November.

## **SALVIA NEWS SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS DUE JUNE EACH YEAR**

If you have forgotten your Salvia News renewal for 2015/16, please submit now. Any queries please contact Meg Gadd/Subscription Officer, telephone (03) 9584 8005, email: [meg\\_gadd@yahoo.com.au](mailto:meg_gadd@yahoo.com.au)

# SALVIA SEEDS

*Heather Lucas, Heathmont, Vic*

Wow, wow, wow, I have a new passion – sowing seeds. Oh what fun, I am having a ball. Annette Bax from Queensland, from whom I have purchased many, many seeds, encouraged me to have a go and believe me I was very trepidatious, but I thought why not and plunged in. I can't describe the pleasure of seeing the little seedlings starting to grow and then actually getting to the stage of potting on to a bigger pot and eventually into your garden and thinking I grew that. Well kind of like holding your first born child and looking into their little eyes and thinking we made this little human being. Okay not quite, nothing as precious as giving birth to your own child, but close!!

Now there are always mistakes made and if there is a mistake to be made, I just seem to find it. Somewhat like getting to our garden events, if anyone is going to get lost, even with a GPS navigation system, it will be me. I couldn't work out why my last tray of seedlings only had some very sparse seedlings coming up and then didn't seem to grow very much, compared to the prior 2 sets of trays which had lots of seedlings and kept putting on lots of growth. So I was looking at them all and trying to find what was different when I noticed that the soil on the last tray had lots of little grit in it, and then it twigged. I had put different soil in the last, to all my other trays!! I'd put in Debco's Seed and Cutting superior germinating mix, instead of the Debco Seed Raising superior germinating

mix which I used on the others. Now I know it's still seed mix, but obviously different types make for different results. The other mistake or rather stupid error I made, was picking up what I thought was my spray bottle with water in it, but was actually the pre-wash stain remover spray bottle. I had sprayed the one and only little seedling of Salvia Hians that was coming up which of course promptly died over the next couple of days.

I've been collecting seeds, purchasing them from the internet for the last 3 years and only started sowing some of them in June last year (26/1/2014 to be exact). I purchased a heated propagation unit from Bunnings and put cardboard strips in to divide the different seeds. Since then I have graduated to purchasing the plastic seed propagation trays with 24 little sections in them, as the cardboard strips obviously got wet and disintegrated. I also purchased plastic labels and wrote on them with a texta pen, instead of the wooden ice cream sticks with pencil, which of course also faded when water sucked up into them and therefore couldn't read what the seeds were, but I did work them out. I have since commandeered my daughter, Laura's heated propagation unit, which was a birthday present from a friend of hers and 2 other propagation units that aren't heated. All of the units have been kept on the bench in my laundry in front of the window and gets lots of light and heat from the sun coming in during the day.

So my first heated propagation unit started on 28/1/2014 had 5 sections with mixed S. Coccinea, S. Eremostachya, S. Exserta, S. Firma and S. Roemeriana. The results being all the mixed S. Coccinea died (yep I'm afraid so) from lack of attention, the S. Eremostachya resulted in 1 seedling being potted on which has only recently in the last month or so has gone to plant heaven, the S. Exserta had one that survived but that died a while back, all the S. Firma never made it, but wait, the S. Roemeriana had 11 seedlings survive and I gave 1 away to Mum and put 3 into the garden and have about 4 still in pots, so only 3 died. Since then I have had 4 more rounds of propagation, the 29/12/2014 (24 sections), 1/5/2015 (24 sections), 10/5/2015 (20 sections) and 7/6/2015 (24 sections). The next round of 29/12/2014 have been potted up into bigger pots and 14 different types of seedlings survived of which I have put 5 into the garden, these being, S. Aucheri, S. Aurita, S. Indica, S. Judaica and S. Przewalski. The last 3 rounds of propagation are still in the units and I will pot them sometime in August, when the weather gets a bit warmer. I am about to do 3 more units, so will see how these go.

So I thoroughly encourage anyone to have a go at sowing seeds, it is so much fun and you just might have a whole lot of new salvias for your garden.

# How do your Salvias Grow?

Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully Vic



It's all in the compost – well it certainly helps. Spreading seven cubic meters of compost at the Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald at a recent Working Bee will keep the Salvias looking good for another year. The compost we use is a combination of (pig / chicken / urea / sawdust and other ingredients). The compost can be purchased commercially for about \$50 per cubic meter. A big 'Thank you' to our helpers at our mid week working bee. It was good to have some new people join us and a very big welcome to **Jim Coghlan, Lorna and Danny**.

On behalf of all the 'Team' at the Salvia Study Group, we welcome you and hope that you enjoyed meeting like minded Salvia enthusiasts. I hope that all your cuttings and leaves are already in your garden.

A few photos from the day showing the before during



*Editor: As usual, Patrick has taken some great photos to record the day at the Salvia Display Garden in Emerald. Although there are several Working Bees throughout the year held both on a weekend and a week day where subscribers are encouraged to join in, it takes much more to ensure the high standard needed for a display garden. There is ongoing maintenance by Lyndi and Jillian each fortnight. If you would like to give them a hand even as a once off, learn firsthand how to maintain the different Salvias and even get to take home cuttings for your own garden, give Lyndi a call to find out when they will be there next on (03) 9803 4534. A great learning curve and fun too working with other Salvia enthusiasts.*

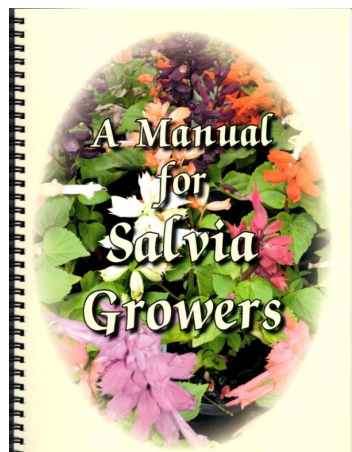
# Notes from Gruyere: Spring 2015

Meg Bentley, Gruyere Vic

How interesting to read the article of Trudi's Memories in the last Salvia News.

This prompted me to recall some of my own early days with salvias and involvement with the Salvia Study Group including the years leading up to 1989 and beyond! I had been growing salvias for some time and always on the lookout for new 'arrivals' species or cultivars. At that time there was not a lot of information available and I would visit University Libraries and State Library to read the 'Floras' of different countries where the Family Lamiaceae was listed and Salvias in particular. I scoured garden books and looked up nurseries for plants and information. In the 90's there were many letters written to overseas institutions for salvia information and I also contacted the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens where I was informed there were two people who might be able to help me. These two were Bill Whitehead in Geelong and Lyndi Garnett in Glen Waverley. Other plant contacts at that time were Sue Templeton at Unlimited Perennials and Canterbury Species Garden run by Valda and Graham Ellis who were a wonderful help with new species and cultivars mostly grown from seed from overseas.

It was at this time that Valda told me of a newly formed Salvia Study Group, a branch of the Victorian Herb Society and a collection of salvias at Nobelius, another one at Hampton which were registered with the Garden Plants Conservation Association of Australia (Plants Trust). Up to this time I had been growing and illustrating my salvias as they came into flower and recording how they performed here in Gruyere (yes, I have been here a long time, 50 years in fact) These notes of course were the beginnings of the Manual for Salvia Growers. The name by the way was instigated by Trudi! In the late 90's there were a few displays of salvias put on for the public at different venues, these were small glass jars filled with colourful salvias, their names included. Trudi and I presented a glorious display at a Herb Conference and another one I remember was at the Dahlia Show in Mount Waverley in 2001 where we were promoting the Salvia Study Group and Trudi had her wonderful pots of salvias.



The first Salvia News started around 2001 with Trudi writing about activities relating to the Salvia Study Group and salvias in general. In those early days many folk wrote to Trudi about their own gardens and how salvias performed. Thanks to Trudi's efforts (and dealing with computer glitches) the Newsletter has grown from a few pages (without a cover) to the now official Newsletter of the Salvia Study Group...Salvia News, thus covering events, news and articles to fill around 20 pages.

By that time my salvia collection had grown and I had registered it with the GPCAA around 2002, and that was when we, as the Victorian Salvia Study Group, put on the first fantastic Salvia Spectacular at the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Hall. This was followed in 2004 with another spectacular Salvia Show. These were great events that created further interest in salvias for many folk far and wide. These days the Salvia Study Group attend many shows and events and supply the public with plants and salvia information...this is an ongoing service and in Nobelius, where their Salvia Collection is held, interested folk can see how the salvias grow, are able to assist in working bees with pruning, learn propagation and take home cutting material.

Meanwhile, my salvia collection here in Gruyere is growing quite well and at the moment there are many winter flowering salvias on show doing their thing for the birds. Some are listed below:

*Salvia corrugata*, *S. involucrata*, *S. madrensis*, *S. disjuncta*, *S. macrophylla*, *S. semiatrata*, *S. leucantha*, *S. iodantha*, *S. purpurea*, *S. rubiginosa* with deep wine buds emerging and the beautiful large pale buds of *Salvia wagneriana* opening out to reveal pale salmon flowers from its white bracts. Others are *S. Mexicana* 'Limelight', *S.* 'Costa Rican Blue', *S.* 'Anthony Parker', *S.* 'Desley', *S.* 'Meigans Magic', *S.* 'Magenta Magic', *S.* 'Timboon', *S.* 'Waverley', *S.* 'Romantic Rose' and *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy'.

It has been interesting to note that many, not all, of the winter flowering salvias are the taller, rather larger leaved varieties. Many of these are more robust growers than the smaller greggii-microphylla types which flower in the warmer times of the year Spring to Autumn, here in Gruyere anyway. Aren't we lucky to have such a tremendous selection of salvias that will take their flowering period from Winter into Spring and Summer into Autumn.

## Behind the scenes at VSSG

Victorian Salvia Study Group (VSSG) is a branch of the Victorian Herb Society (VHS), formed to promote and encourage the growing of Salvias today and in the future. It is run by the Group Co-ordinator and her Committee together with other active people of the Group. As a non-profit organisation, committee and others in the Group are all volunteers. Any monies made from the selling of salvias and salvia related products, goes back into the Group for ongoing promotion of the species. Even the committee and editor pay for a subscription to Salvia News, the newsletter of VSSG.

Lyndi asked that Committee Members and other active people within the Group write how they see their position in the Group to share with you and the *Editor* may have added some of the things I regularly see. These are not the only people who show their ongoing support, but it gives you an idea of the work involved behind the scenes.

### **Lyndi Garnet – Co-ordinator**

Chairs Committee Meetings  
Professional Landscaper  
Co-ordinates VSSG calendar of events  
Salvia public speaker  
Propagation of Salvias  
Setup and selling of Salvias at the many events  
Maintaining the Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park  
Seed supplier  
Plant sales and enquiries

### **Jillian Barkell**

Attends Committee Meetings  
Propagation of Salvias and potting on ready for sale  
Co-ordination of displays  
Setup and selling of Salvias at the many events  
Recording of sales at the different events  
Proof reader of the newsletter, Salvia News  
Distribution of Newsletter  
Sends 'Welcome Pack' to new subscribers  
Maintaining the Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park  
Plant sales and enquiries

### **Heather Lucas – Secretary**

Attends Committee Meetings  
Minutes  
General secretarial duties  
Send end out letters to gardening clubs and inform them of upcoming events  
Correspondence  
VSSG Branch Report for the HSV newsletter 'Herb Age'.

Chasing costs, availability etc for items that may be required

### **Gordon Donaldson – Treasurer**

Attends Committee Meetings  
Records all financial transactions  
Bank reconciliation  
Profit and Loss Statement monthly  
Annual Statement for the Herb Society Audit  
Banking of funds  
Budget and monitoring progress  
Assisting with maintenance of the Display Garden at Nobelius  
Attending and selling at events  
Propagating of salvia stock for sale

### **Meg Gadd – Subscription Officer**

Lives on a farm in South Gippsland, on top of the Strezlecki Ranges. As Internet and mobile access are very poor, Subscription Officer duties are mostly done when in Melbourne on weekends or for off-farm work.  
Maintains a database of Salvia News subscribers – hard copy and online subscribers  
Notifies Jillian Barkell of new subscribers  
Email Patrick Hogan of new subscribers  
Print out labels and forward to Jillian Barkell for distribution of newsletter  
Email the online subscribers so they can access their quarterly edition of Salvia News

Subscription reminders both by telephone and mail  
Annual Subscription Renewal Forms  
Banking of subscriptions.  
Subscription Update for the Co-ordinator

### **Patrick Hogan – Photographer, PR & Publicity**

Attends Committee Meetings  
Photographs the Salvia collection throughout the year for record  
Photograph outings and garden visits  
Publicise upcoming events via email to subscribers  
Detailed photographic timelines of events and display gardens  
Attends Salvia events assists with setup and sales  
Public Speaking on Salvias for local Garden groups  
Participate at Working Bees at Display Gardens.  
Provides plants and plant material for propagating

### **Andreina Chinn – Committee Member**

Attends Committee Meetings  
Minute taker as required, when Secretary is away  
Propagating Salvias with Gordon Donaldson for the Group  
Assists on stalls at events  
Compiling a history from the archives of VSSG

*continued on page 14*

# News from Southeast Queensland

Sheryl Jenyns, Rathdowney, Qld

Photo Carol Kerkin



I have been growing salvias in my garden for many years now. Their ease, hardiness and beauty make them a must for a Queensland garden. Also there seems to be a salvia for every position. My garden "Rosh Eden" (2 acres at Rathdowney) is situated in

the border ranges south west of Beaudesert in the Scenic Rim. The climate here is cool frosty winters and hot humid summers, average rainfall is 1150ml a year. However in recent times rainfall has been much less. We are very fortunate to have a creek running past our property that has permanent water which we pump from for the garden.

For work reasons we spent two years (2013 & 2014) in Hobart and Melbourne leaving our garden to survive on its own. On our return home in February 2015 it was very interesting as well as gratifying to see what plants had survived. Salvias ranked very high on the list. 'Phyllis Fancy' had become a very large clump comprising of 8 plants, 'Meigan's Magic', 'Anthony Parker', 'Waverley', *involucrata* Bethellii (as I know it), 'Hot Lips', 'Indigo Spires', 'Josh', *karwinskii*, the *leucanthas* ('Velour White' and 'Velour Pink', 'Midnight' and purple and white), *microphylla* 'Musk Pink', 'San Carlos Festival', *rubiginosa* and 'Timboon'. All were looking lovely just needing a cut back and weed removal. It had been a very long hot dry summer. Losses were *purpurea* and 'Black Knight'. Some of the *greggiis* were lost to weeds and couch grass smothering them. I have now joined the Salvia Study group here in Southeast Queensland, and my collection of salvias is increasing steadily with all the lovely newer varieties available.

## The New Book of SALVIAS

by Betsy Clebsch

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

Plus P&H \$10 per copy \$ .....

Total \$ .....

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

Send remittance and completed form to:

**Salvia Study Group**

**844 Highbury Road,**

**Glen Waverley. Vic 3150**

Enquiries phone VSSG Lyndi Garnett 9803 4534

**PLEASE PRINT**

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## Eastern Spinebill on *Salvia* 'Meigan's Magic'

*Karina Davison of Glen Iris Vic*

Getting a good photo is dependent on interesting subject matter - attractive salvias, birds that love them and a little patience. The salvias are grown in sandy soil on the south side of a paling fence in Glen Iris, Victoria.



## New Holland Honeyeater on *Salvia madrensis*

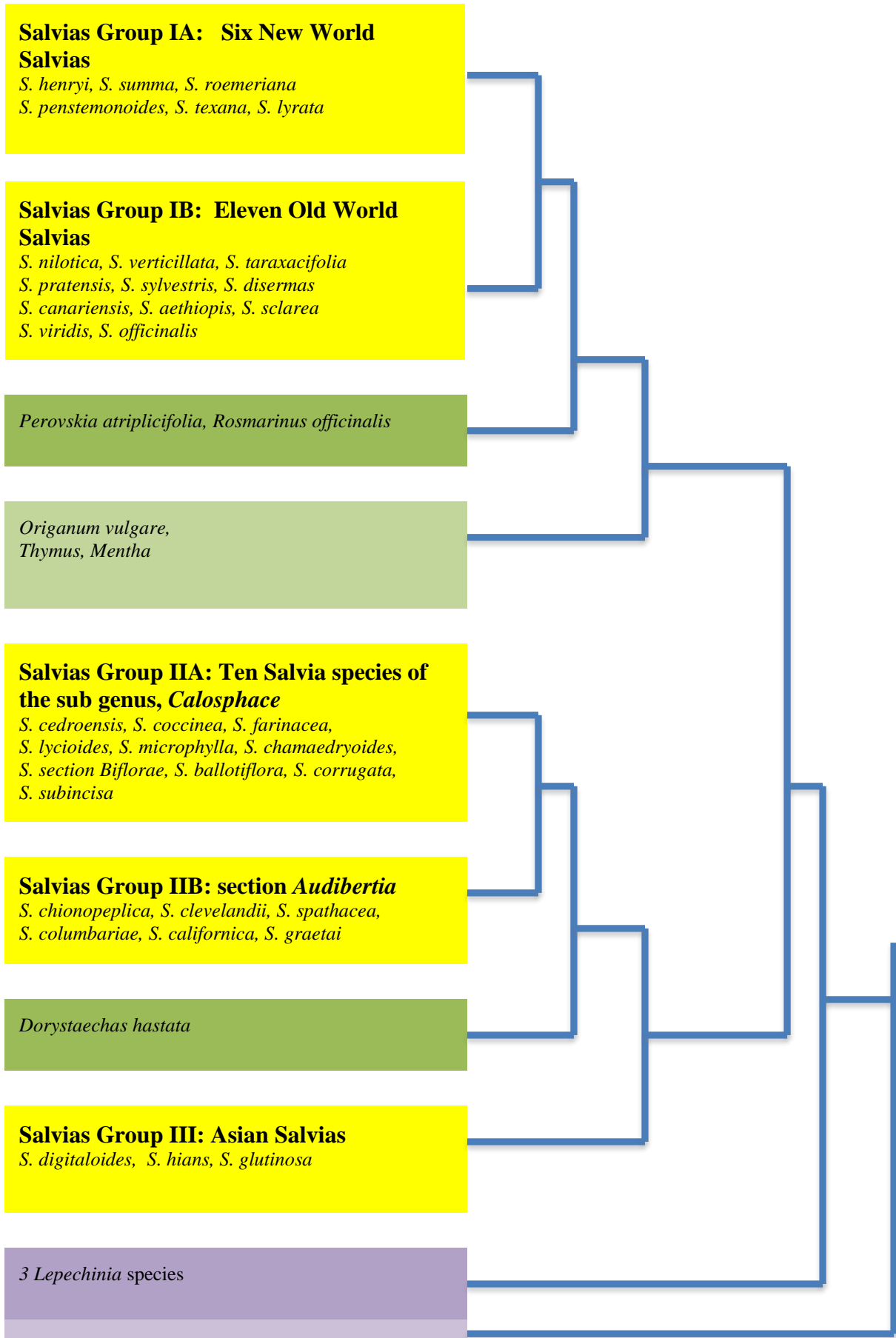
*Patrick Hogan of Ferntree Gully Vic*

The birds and bees love Salvias, and the larger winter blooms attract them by the dozen.



# Classifying Salvias Part 11 – Pat Anderson

Figure 1: A simplified Cladogram based on the results of Walker et al 2004



# Classifying Salvia Part II

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Vic

In the Autumn edition of *Salvia News* this year, I described some of the ways that botanists and plants people have grouped salvias in the past, whether for ‘scientific’ purposes or for garden interest. I also explained that the genus *Salvia* is classified as being a member of the botanical family Lamiaceae. Further, I explained that the characteristics that separate *Salvia* from other members of the Lamiaceae family are the unusual lever mechanism that has developed in the stamens of *Salvia*, to aid pollination, and the number of stamens. Members of the genus *Salvia* have only 2 stamens, unlike most members of the Lamiaceae family that have 4 stamens, organised in 2 pairs.

The sort of classifications I described in the last article were based on morphological characteristics – shape and size of the different parts of the flowers – or place of origin. New approaches to classifying plants were developed in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whereas the 19<sup>th</sup> century classifications were based on morphology alone, scientists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to look at much more plant information, such as pollen, chemical components of plant parts and, more recently, genetic information. Powerful electron microscopes and, later on, powerful computers, made it possible to measure and process enormous amounts of data. So all this data was used to try to determine the evolutionary history of plants, (**phylogeny**).

Some traditional classifications of plants have attempted to organise them into evolutionary trees, branching with time, showing which groups of plants are most closely related to each other. The newer, mathematical way to determine evolutionary trees is called **Cladistics**, and the evolutionary trees (**phylogenetic trees**) produced are called **Cladograms**. Cladistics is basically a process whereby a large amount of information for a group of plants is used, whether that information is morphological or molecular, to form a set of tree-like diagrams from which the most appropriate one is selected according to various hypotheses. The branching of the selected tree, particularly if based on genetic information, therefore suggests not only the relationships between the specific plants under investigation, but also how they might have evolved.

There are a number of scientific papers suggesting possible evolutionary paths for *Salvia* species. As early as 1933, two German authors, Himmelbaur and Stibal, postulated that the stamen lever mechanism originally developed in the Old World about 25 million years ago, specifically in E. Asia and subsequently spread to the New World. They further postulated that subsequently these specialised stamen structures further evolved, adapting to the parallel evolution of their pollinators – both birds and insects – giving rise to a huge number of different species of *Salvia*. In particular, they suggested that this co-evolution might have taken place in parallel in both the Old and New Worlds. In botanical terminology, this would mean that *Salvia* is not monophyletic – i.e. it didn’t have a single evolutionary path.

In 2003, some researchers from Mainz University in Germany, Classen-Bockhoff, Wester and Tweraser, wrote an excellent review of the staminal lever mechanism in *Salvia* in *Plant Biology*, but also asked a series of questions, such as:

- If the lever mechanism evolved in parallel in different parts of the world, then how often and why?
- If several parallel developments took place, could each development and subsequent geographical dispersal have taken place in different regions and different time frames?
- What is the relationship between other genera within the Lamiaceae family that also show only 2 stamens and some elongation of the connective tissue between the anthers and *Salvia*? Examples of these are *Rosmarinus* and *Perovskia*?

In 2004, a significant publication appeared in the *American Journal of Botany* reporting the collaborative research of 2 scientists from the University of Wisconsin (Walker and Sytsma) and 2 from Heidelberg in Germany (Treutlein and Wink). Several more papers have since been published, extending and refining this work, but I will only summarise the first paper in this article, leaving the rest to a subsequent article.

Their aim was to test, at a molecular level, whether *Salvia* is **monophyletic** i.e. whether it has a single origin, and how *Salvia* is related to other members of the Lamiaceae family. The authors collected genetic data from a total of 112 taxa (or species), comprising 70 *Salvia* species, together with other species from the Lamiaceae family, from the sub family Nepetoideae. This type of analysis also requires inclusion of an “out-group” (something different,

## Classifying Salvias Part II

but not too different), which in this case was *Verbena officinalis*. The genetic information used came from chloroplast DNA, as this is inherited from the female parent, is abundant and easy to work with.

One smaller set of data, 55 taxa, included 36 species of *Salvia*, used 2 gene sequences, and it is the results of this that I shall describe below. The results of the larger data set were similar.

**Cladistics** works by building a **matrix** (table) of **taxa** (species) and **binary scores** (0/1) for a huge range of characters. The process then looks at every possible tree that can be drawn to relate these taxa, and by then selecting the best tree. The best is the one that is arrived at by the least number of steps. Statistical measures (sort of “best-fit”) are assigned to the branches of this best tree. In other words, the method is statistical and any results will only be as good as the data used. Using only 55 *Salvia* species out of a possible 900 in the world is clearly not especially good. Nevertheless, there are some interesting outcomes from this analysis as seen in Figure 1. This is a simplified **Cladogram** based on that presented by the authors with many lines and numbers removed, but the branches (blue lines) link the **taxa** (species) that are most closely related.

If you look at Figure 1 (on page 11), you will see that:

1. There are some clear groupings, delineated by blue lines. Since these groupings are based on genetic information, these groupings suggest separate evolutionary lineages for various species of *Salvia*. In phylogenetic language, this means that *Salvia* is **polyphyletic** - meaning it has evolved in time and space more than once.
2. There is one distinct group of 6 *Salvia* species from the New World ( called Group IA in the figure and coloured yellow) that is closely related to another group of 11 *Salvia* species from the Old World (also coloured yellow and called Group IB).
3. That these 2 groups are, in turn, closely related to *Rosmarinus* (Rosemary) and *Perovskia* (Russian Sage) and slightly less closely related to the herbs, *Thymus*, *Origanum* and *Mentha*. (shades of green)
4. In Cladistical terms, these taxa all form one **Clade – Clade I**
5. A second Clade - **Clade II** comprises all New World species. The New World species are often referred to as belonging to a sub-genus of *Salvia*, called ***Calosphace*** with members such as *S. microphylla*, *S. corrugata*)
6. The closely related, but separate group in this Clade II (shown in the figure as Group IIB) are all species from the California, SW USA area which are often referred to as ***Audibertia*** species (those special ones from California with the strong perfumes and whorled flowers, like *S. clevelandii*).
7. These appear to be closely related to the genus, *Dorystaechas*
8. A third group emerges - **Clade III** – of species like *S. digitaloides* and *S. hians* that may be possibly independent Asian lineage

Interestingly, there are some parallels and differences with various classifications outlined in my Autumn article. For example, Bentham (19<sup>th</sup> century) treated ***Calosphace*** as part of *Salvia* but he treated the ***Audibertia*** species as being in a separate genus. Epling, on the other hand, treated these as two groupings as being closely related (1939).

Clade I poses some queries in that it contains most of Bentham’s Old World species from his subgenera *Sclarea* and *Leonia* as well as a few species from the New World, such as *S. henryi* and *S. roemeriana*. All the New World species in this Clade, however, are grouped together, suggesting a single dispersal from the Old World to the New, with subsequent diversification.

As pointed out before, this research was reported 10 years ago and since then further developments have taken place. However the results open up some suggestions for future classification of the huge genus *Salvia*. One possibility is as follows:

1. As the type species for the genus *Salvia* is *Salvia officinalis*, all those other species in the same Clade - i.e. Clade I could remain in *Salvia* while *Rosmarinus* and *Perovskia* might also be included in *Salvia*.
2. Clade II could become a separate genus called maybe ***Calosphace***, which might also include the genus *Dorystaechas*.

# Classifying Salvias Part II

*continued from page 13*

But you needn't worry – yet. Nothing has happened in 10 years. Also, the above research was not based on a wide enough selection of salvias from around the world to be really meaningful.

So, in another issue of *Salvia News*, there will be more to follow, together with a closer look at the different stamen types, linking these with potential evolutionary paths.

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## Behind the scenes at VSSG

*continued from page 8*

**Vivienne Smith**

**Committee Member**

Attends Committee Meetings

Assists on stalls at events

Propagating Salvias with Gordon Donaldson for the Group

**Meg Bentley**

Editor of 'A Manual for Salvia Growers', the only Australia book on Salvias

Artist and illustrator

Has a registered garden with the OPCA with more than 350 different varieties of salvias plus many other plants in a bush setting;

Imports seeds and plants from overseas that often become available here after seeing how they grow in conditions here in Oz;

Grow and provide plants for the Group;

Consults about the species, assist with sharing how to grow, propagate and maintain the species;

Writes for the newsletter including 'Notes from Gruyere'

Has been active in the displays especially for special events.

Has recently taken a step back because of personal commitments.

Share and guide enthusiasts, and encourage the growing and sharing to anyone interested.

**Pat Anderson**

Has a huge collection of species and cultivars in a large garden, all clearly labelled.

Made the labels for the Display Garden collection at Nobelius.

Networks with Salvia enthusiasts around Australia and overseas.

Propagates Salvias including from seed which is how many new species have been introduced and shared with the Group.

Keeps detailed records of where her plants have been obtained to assist in sorting queries about names of plants.

Gets together with like-minded salvia enthusiasts to study the plants and floral characteristics in detail, as well as consulting more widely, in an attempt to sort out queries

Maintains spreadsheets of information about aspects like all the cultivars and crosses of the *S.greggii* and *S. microphylla* types for reference purposes.

Although no longer able to attend committee meetings, assists at plants sales, donates plants for sale.

Is a horticulturalist, extensively read, including scientific journals.

Shares this knowledge by writing articles for *Salvia News*

# Photography and Computers 2015

Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully Vic



Ten Salvia Study Group members attended the above meeting given by Patrick Hogan at Dion Street in Ferntree Gully on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2015. After a warm up cup of coffee and a quick walk around the back garden to inspect the Salvias and the frost damage done to some species, it was time to get down to basics.

Many questions were answered and many questions were also raised during the lively presentation. One of the most important items conveyed was that you have to experiment in order to get the right settings for your photograph. Using the Auto mode on cameras is fine but taking control of such items as Aperture, ISO and shutter speed will result in a better photograph – after a little experimenting. Patrick recommended that each participant take 10 photos using various settings and then when your photos are on your computer look at the difference between each photograph. When you are happy with the best photo, look at its properties (right click in windows and select properties) where you will find all the properties belonging to the photo – date taken, ISO, Aperture settings, shutter speed etc and you will soon find out what combination of settings best suit your requirements. With a little patience and some practice everyone can take good photos. It was good to see some familiar faces and lots of participants had bought new digital cameras. Happy snapping and remember – **THINK** of what you are trying to achieve before you press the shutter and remember to always push down on the shutter slowly and gently – without moving the camera.

## **Gardening Rule:**

**Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully. Vic**

*When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant!*

# Visit to Judy and Ian Percy's Garden "Girrahween"

Margaret Keir

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, we visited Judy and Ian's garden in Croydon on a perfect Autumn day – just the weather to visit this beautiful garden. As soon as we parked the car, we could see that Girrahween is a plants person's garden, where we were soon welcomed by Judy and Ian.

The front garden is filled to overflowing with many unusual trees and plants. In 1970, Judy and Ian planted a Norfolk pine, then as their ideas for the garden developed, they planted a Cedrus deodara, maples, magnolias, camellias, jacaranda, strelitzia and perennials. The twisting paths are lined with so many interesting plants including salvias, roses, lavenders and cuttings given by friends. Along the path to the back garden, large shrubs of Cercis canadensis "Forest Pansy," Smoke bushes "Grace" and "Golden Spirit" were showing Autumn colours and they are under planted with more perennials.

The Back Garden is a tranquil green Paradise of wonderful trees including birches, maples and a ginko and flowering cherries, two wisterias, climbing roses and clematis. Garden beds are planted with foxgloves, violas, cyclamen, bulbs, hellebores, perennials, erodiums, geraniums and many, many salvias. The plants thrive in soil enriched with organic mulch and manure from the chooks and worm farm. Throughout the garden there are vegetables, herbs and citrus. Ian has transformed the paling fences with displays of interesting old tools and framed mirrors to give an intriguing glimpse of the garden as you walk through the winding paths. The largest elkhorn and stag ferns I have ever seen are on poles set in concrete. Judy pointed out her amazing pots of orchids and gave us offshoots to take home.

Throughout the garden Judy has placed pieces of her own art work - mosaic tiles, pillars and bowls for water and also other little whimsical found items including old wheelbarrows and tables housing potted collections of plants. Our Salvia Study Group friends enjoyed our shared lunch in the large, immaculate shed where we chatted about Ian's collection of interesting antique tools including two shelves of blow torches.

Our members were happy to be able to take home precious cuttings from Judy's plants and we look forward to be able to visit again at some future date. Thank you Judy and Ian for your hospitality.

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*by Meg Bentley*



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# RHSV GARDENERS DAY OUT

The RHSV Gardeners Day Out in June at their new venue was a huge success, and Don and Jennifer and committee should be applauded for another great day! The new venue at Deakin University in Burwood had free undercover parking, public transport nearby and ample seating for an event that brings more gardeners each year.

Perhaps the only concern was for those with mobility impairment and unable to do stairs, there was quite a walk to the lift. For anyone like me in an electric wheelchair, it was easy.

The speakers were excellent. This year they included Vertical Gardening, both for the home and commercial. I was particularly impressed with the vertical gardens that had trees as the top layer which as they grew, gave a canopy to lower layers that could include ferns or other shade loving plants. The speaker showed us that almost anything can go into a vertical garden as long as the soil and watering requirements were taken care of at the time of putting together. He showed some of the commercial gardens he had built around Melbourne, and also showed nature in different areas around the world, how plants grow and how we can learn from this and use in our own vertical gardens.

Wes Flemming - 20:2020- 20% more urban green space by the year 2020

With larger homes on smaller blocks, and density housing becoming part of the new today, there is a growing need for more green space.

There are many reasons why we need more greens space including

- hospital patients who have a view of nature recover faster
- outdoor activity
- less obesity
- less health problems
- trees reduce exposure to UV radiation reducing risks of cancer
- experience of nature can improve children's discipline and reduce ADD. Children who play in nature engage in more creative play

Councils are reducing Public Opens Space because they can't afford to maintain. Most services are contractual.

One 25 ft tree can reduce annual heating and cooling costs of a typical house by 8-12%.

Mature city tree canopy can reduce internal air temperatures by 5-10 degrees F

87% of us live in urban areas but we don't look at trees etc for urban areas.

Trees increase longevity of roads and other surfaces – it has been proven that they last up to 50 years longer when well treed.

The more green life, the more an area is used.

Using green space brings communities together, increases safety real and perceived.

Landscaped areas – less graffiti, littering, noise and pollution.

The more landscaping the more people outside, less crime, parental control.

Plants reduce noise by reflecting and absorbing sound energy.

Storm water plants reduces erosion, improves water quality by intercepting pollution.

Retail green life sales have decreased by 20%

Greenscape – is it a luxury or necessity?

2020 Vision, 20% more urban green space by 2020.

Green space today is mostly developer led. Many Councils believe there is too much.

Let's challenge how things are being done today, let's help to instigate change.

How we live in the future will be instigated by the horticultural industry if done right – needs everyone's support.

Look for solutions to the barriers of the 20% increase of open space by 2020.

Green space is not just a luxury. Talk about it, plant a seed is the only way we can make a change. <http://2020vision.com.au>

Well known Sandra and Graham Ross were the final speakers and always kept a captive audience.

As happens each year, there were the awards presentation of The Hanging Basket Competition as seen at the International Flower and Garden Show. We were shown photographs of the winning baskets. I didn't think it possible but believe that the winners once again outdid previous years.

The day is well known for the RHSV raffle with some brilliant gardening related prizes. My driver had told me that she has never won anything in her life, so you can imagine her delight when her lucky ticket was the first drawn and she took home a box of bulbs and plants.

It's a great day out and well worth marking in your diary for next year, the second Saturday in June. Enquiries Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria - <http://rhsv.org.au/>

# A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

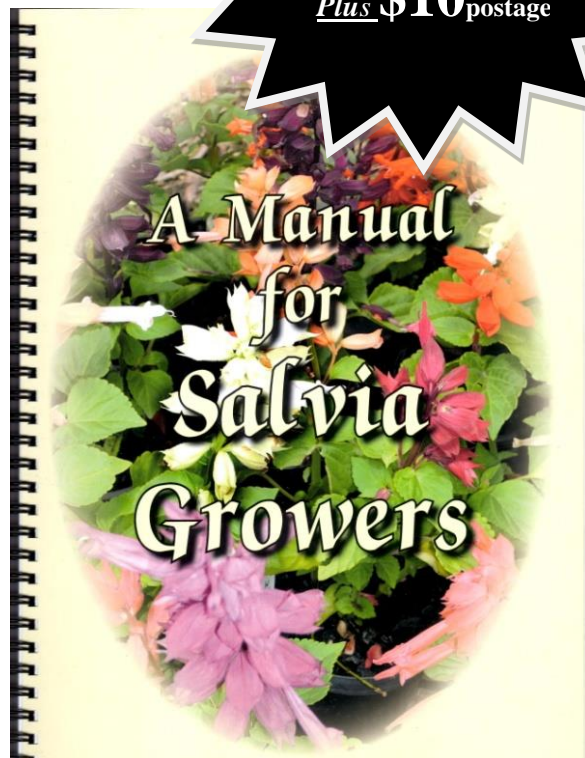
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