

SalviaNews_{May/June 2002}

The Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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The charming drawing of a salvia flower in our heading is by Meg Bentley. So far I can't get it quite in place. However my computer and I have come to a compromise. As I seem to promise frequently I will improve. This is the time we ask for your subscription and a form will be included with this. I can promise you an exciting year of salvia news and information and extend to the many correspondents Australia wide many thanks. Lovely to hear that you New Zealanders enjoy Salnews, but news from you would be great to publish. We like to hear from everyone and respect the opinions and information of others—not necessarily to agree but to give all the right to be heard. Please discuss failures as well as successes. This way we all learn. It was wonderful to see so many of you at Salvia Expo, even if we didn't have time to talk!

SALVIA EXPO FROM A GARDENER'S POINT OF VIEW

March 17th. 2002! What a day for the Salvia Study Group! After months of preparation the great day dawned and my friend Liz and I left home early to make sure we wouldn't miss a thing. And we didn't.

Holding the Expo at the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society's own hall was a brilliant idea as the surroundings are so conducive to a wonderful gardeners day out. With good parking and general facilities you didn't have a thing to worry about - unless it was your bank balance after spending up on all the wonderful salvias for sale.

As a member of F.C.H.S. I have seen that hall full of plants many times but it was quite an amazing sight to stand at the door and see and realize that ALL the plants there were salvia. I am a long-time gardener but I'm new to the vast array of salvias available. There seems to be a salvia to suit any aspect, any soil, any climate any personal taste. From small shrubby ones, I bought the small *S. runcinata* and it's looking great in the front of the border, to the larger *S. 'Omaha Gold'* also looking very healthy and grown enormously. I am particularly fond of the many different forms of foliage in plants and will sacrifice flower sometimes for foliage; so if you are of the same mind there is every sort of foliage you can imagine in salvias. And then there is the colour - so many blues, pinks, many reds, gorgeous purples, orange, and I have *S.africana- lutea*, now there's a funny colour. But something for every personal taste. So to see all these salvias displayed to such great advantage and to be able to purchase them at such reasonable prices was indeed a gardeners dream come true.

One can imagine the enormous amount of work that was needed to mount such a display and sale of plants as this, and I'm sure all those involved collapsed in a heap next day but what a success it was and how delighted you must all have been to see the enthusiasm visitors showed for the plants. Members of F.C.H.S. were there to help out and the tearoom was manned to supply much needed sustenance for all. It was interesting to look around and see people from different garden clubs that had made the trip and went home laden. With members of the Salvia Study Group there to give cultural advice, one could go home with the knowledge that you had the right plant for the right spot.

Liz and I went, with our spoils and they are all planted and looking good and have grown like mad. We continue to buy them, seems we can always manage to fit one more in.

Congratulations on a fantastic show!

Paddy Childs Green

THE SALVIA EXPO FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR

The recent Salvia Expo held at the Ferny Creek Horticultural hall on March 17th, was designed to introduce the world of Salvias to as many interested people as possible. It was great to see plant growers, gardeners and a few professional horticulturists including folk from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Thank you one and all for coming along!

I would like to thank all volunteers, including Salvia Study Group Members and the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society members who assisted with so much before the Expo, during... and in the cleaning up afterwards, it was very much appreciated. Everyone who attended the Salvia Expo would have seen just what a great success it was and for those who couldn't make it, we missed you and this is what you missed.

Upon entering the hall, directly in front of you, one could see the Landscape Garden. This was designed to show contrast of leaf, colour, texture and fragrances of the many Salvias. Within the small courtyard stood the beautifully poised 'Bridesmaid' sculpture (on loan from Trudi Fry) cradling a posy of salvia flowers.

To the left and to the right of the Landscape Garden were trestles arranged in three tiers running the length of the hall. These were set out depicting the colours of the rainbow. One side showing variations of hot colours, the other showing cool colours. The theme of the 'Rainbow' was to show the public that the range of Salvia species can cover just about all these colours. What other plant family, apart from the Iris can do this?

The division between each colour section was depicted with very large colourful, crepe paper half-moons starting with the deep reds like *S. Van Houttii* and going to brighter and lighter reds, then yellows, oranges, creams to the varying shades of magenta, hot pinks, cyclamens and including pale pinks like *S. coccinea* bicolour. On the opposite side were the cool colours. And what better to start with than the glorious gentian blue of *S. patens* followed by *S. Costa Rica Blue* *S. guarantica* then fading towards the softer and paler blues to the off whites, palest lavender, lilacs, violets and purples, ending with the deepest of the purples, *S. Black Knight*, which looked splendid on the far end of the trestle.

At the far end of the hall, running across the back wall was the Geographical Border. This border depicted the Old World Salvias and the New World Salvias and displayed a large Map with markers showing the countries of each section. Old World includes Asia, Africa (North and South), China, Europe, --France Germany, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Middle East, Mediterranean, Russia, Turkey etc. The New World covers Central and South America, Mexico USA California, Texas, Arizona, West Indies etc.

In all there were over 150 species on display and well over 550-600 plants used in displays and borders. Other sections of the Expo displayed 'Useful Salvias, Medicinal and Culinary', Salvias in Containers and 'What is a Salvia.. What is a Sage. A display of plants commonly called sage but which are not Salvias, for example Jerusalem Sage which is really a *Phlomis* and Russian Sage which is a *Perovskia*.

There were several plant stalls where many Salvias were sold and so much interest was taken in the extensive range and variety of plants at the stand of Sue Templeton. The Identification table was extremely busy all day and much interest was taken in the Salvia Season Posters which are a boon to those wanting to see what flowers are available throughout each season.

Talks were held through the day covering such topics such as Salvias in The Landscape, Useful Salvias, Salvias for Containers and Small Spaces, New Releases, Pruning, Propagating and also Floral Arrangement, which was on display in the front foyer as was the Art area where Salvias in watercolour were displayed along with photos of many of the Mexican Salvias.

Delicious morning and afternoon teas were supplied by the Ferny Creek horticultural Society and gate prizes of Salvias were issued on the Hour. It was indeed a wonderful event which I am sure many folk will agree and will be enriched with the extra knowledge gained. Thank you again to everyone who helped to make the Expo the success it was.

Meg Bentley

WINTER BLOOMING SALVIA NAMES

Many of the salvias I have introduced flower at this time of year. *Salvia madrensis*, with its yellow calyces and flowers is sought after by people who have seen it in full bloom. It seems to take a lot of frost and come back up even if forced underground. However, if you live in a frosty area the plant might be cut back just as it is about to flower.

It will flower in shade - although it might also be a floppy plant. As far as I know there has only been one supposedly common name applied to this plant in Australia, "Golden Fountains". Betsy Clebsch gives it a common name of forsythia sage. If it is going to carry a common name surely it would be better to follow the American lead and not induce more confusion with a local common name. It really doesn't need a common name anyway because what we have in Australia is the species. There are now a couple of varieties in the US but we don't have them here yet.

There has been a lot of confusion with *salvia gesneriiflora*. I chose to go along with the English spelling, thinking that they knew what they were doing, but next time I get labels printed I shall revert back to the American spelling of *gesneraeflora*. Unfortunately in my ignorance I created a lot of the confusion by releasing various seed grown plants and not just one selection. At first I used "Big Red" for the dark calyx but thought maybe it was a bit twee to be throwing common names around so discontinued use of it. For quite a while the green calyx form was thought to be *fulgens*, encouraged I think by an opinion from England. I introduced the correct *fulgens* a couple of years ago.

Unfortunately people with no knowledge of the rules of nomenclature look at pictures in books and say yes, that is the same plant and use the name they see in a book. Before a variety name can be established the origin of the plant has to be known. If it was introduced as a plant it carries the same variety name, and quite a few varieties, especially from Europe have been brought in. The larger winter flowering plants are not generally useful to mass plant sellers so they do not bring them in. If it comes in by seed it must not carry its original variety name because there is no means of knowing whether it is biologically similar without chromosome testing etc.

There are a lot of people who have grown to love the big red flowers and blackish calyx of *salvia gesneriiflora*. I tend to cut it back in summer, especially if it hosts white fly, and so it wants to flower from autumn on. A plant which is never cut could flower at any time of the year.

I gathered the seed of this plant in 1991 from a *gesneriiflora* selection called Mole Poblano. In Spanish mole has a number of meanings, soft, mild, huge mass or bulk, or chili sauce. Poblano could be to do with breed or populate. *Gesneriiflora* 'Mole Poblano' was a selection from *gesneriiflora* 'Tequila'. Because it is seed grown it should not be called 'Tequila' and if you want to go to its origins and be slightly more correct than 'Tequila' you could call it 'Mole Poblano' which would go down like a lead balloon.

If anyone can establish that a plant of *gesneriiflora* 'Tequila' has been imported then the story is different. However since I have been circulating it since 1991 I believe that the plants come from my stock. No doubt the green calyx plant is more the species, but then it could be just a variety unless it is studied properly.

Probably my favourite winter flowerer is *salvia involucrata* x *karwinskii* which I introduced to Australia about 1992. I love its cheerful abundance of cyclamen flowers from May to November. It is also less frost tender than most of the winter flowerers. There are various forms of *karwinskii* about. I usually offer one which is about 2m high in the more traditional *karwinskii* colour, but I do think the huge one with greyer leaves and larger sprays of flowers is great if you have the room for it.

Possibly to save confusion by the unobservant the name 'Romantic Rose' has been applied to *involucrata* x *karwinskii* within the *salvia* group. I don't think *invol* x *kar* can be confused at all anyway, the colour and form is not like anything else. Now the name is already long enough, or is 'Romantic Rose' meant to substitute for *involucrata* x *karwinskii* so there is no indication of what it is? This plant does not set seed, at least in southern Australia, so it must be my introduction. Surely the *Salvia* Study Group is supposed to be encouraging the use of correct names so why invent a new one? When people change the names it seems like someone feels that they should rename my children for me. If you go chasing salvias and introduce it do you want me to change the name you call it? So far thankfully no one has decided to put a common name on the beautiful *salvia iodantha* which is gorgeous through winter, or have they?

Sue Templeton

THE RETURN OF THE TRAVELLER

At last, post tourists, festival etc, I have reclaimed the computer briefly and will try to make some sense re salvias of my trip to Europe last year for the Salvia News.

Gardenwise the salvia border is more like a salvia jungle, but I am getting back into the garden too and planting out the herbs, flowers etc I have grown from the seed I collected.

To see my favourite herbs in gardens and in the wild, sort out the thymes and oreganos, and find salvias were my aims when I arrived in England on September 1st. Hampton Court Palace Gardens had wonderful borders and roses, likewise the RHS Gardens at Wisley, but few salvias, other than *S. glutinosa* and bedding varieties. The Labiatae Order beds at the Botanic Gardens at Kew had lots of *Salvia forskahlei*, & *S. verticillata*, *S. aethiopsis*, *S. castanea*, *S. campanulata*, *S. tomentosa*, and *S. macellaria*, all in disorderly autumn mode, the alpine houses had the more interesting herbs including *salvia pisidica* and *S. taraxacifolia*, as well as interesting thymes, *teucrium origanum* etc. Iden Croft Herbs in Kent held official collections of oregano, thyme, lavender, rosemary, catnips and mint. Mostly in pots as are most collections that I saw, but had a huge array of herbs both formally and casually planted in a classic medieval walled garden with a good range of *S. officinalis* varieties in the nursery.

A most delightful place of far greater interest to me than nearby Sissinghurst.

As Christine Yeo had very limited visiting times and my friend had moved to Cardiff I opted for Duffryn Botanic Gardens in Wales which holds the Official Salvia collection. Sadly it was out of bounds {behind a rope} and consisted of well known varieties well grown in large pots. Luckily there was a courtyard full of thymes, a Pompeiian garden and a forest of interesting acers. Chelsea Physic Gardens near the centre of London is balm for the soul. Deni Bown was launching her new book with the Friends group there. The salvias are tucked at the back behind the pond, a pleasant array which included *S. napifolia*, *S. aucheri*, *S. multicaulis* and *S. pisidica*. Their excellent *cistus* collection is also kept in pots.

I visited Switzerland to meet Magdalena, the original herb collector and tincture maker for Weleda. We went to an amazing experimental herb farm in the Swiss French south near Sion where many different forms of the classic aromatic herbs such as thyme, sage, oregano, lavender and rosemary were being developed. The *salvia officinalis* and *S. fruticosa* were strong and fragrant, there was also a hybrid which resembled my "Greek Skies".

In Italy near Lucca, in Tuscany we met Lauretta Guerra at her wonderful nursery 'Le Essenze di Lea' specialising in salvias. Her impressive collection [in pots] contained many new to me, eg *S. atrocyanea*, *S. koyamae*. She gave me seed of *S. sclarea alba*, *S. patens* lavender lady, *S. bertowii* and *S. algeriensis*. All doing well now. We got methane for the car in nearby Prato but I didn't see any *S. pratensis* growing wild.

Sicily was very different from the north, greatly modified countryside, hot and dry, but a BD farmer took us to a strong wild population of *salvia triloba* used for tea, and in the centre of the island I was given seed of an unusual variety from Monte Sicula with spiny calyx, pink flowers, also growing well. Palermo Orto Botanica had a reasonable collection of labiatae inc salvias in small terracotta pots on top of a stone wall. Having learnt and seen so much I feel we are very fortunate to have the space and the climate to develop our collections in often large gardens.

Judi Forrester

A CUTTING REPORT

Having been associated with the Salvia Study Group for a few years, and listened to all the members ideas of the propagation and growing of salvias, I have come up with my own way of propagation. Most members do it by putting cuttings into a propagation mix or another variant. I have, over the past year, been taking cuttings and putting them into glasses of water on the north facing window sill with no direct sunlight on them. Generally 2 or 3 inch tip or mid-stem cuttings have both been successful. Both have taken to growing vigorous and healthy root systems. First signs of shooting roots are within 2 to 3 weeks. Deciding when to put plant in potting mix depends on the condition of the plant. If it is looking tall and upright I let the roots grow to at least ½ to 1 inch long.

Salvias used for my experiments have been

Salvia Indigo Spires, *S. Mexicana limecalyx* *S. Waverley*, *S. chiapensis*,
S. guaranitica.

S. greggii Raspberry Royal

S. greggii Coral, *S. greggii* Sierra Pink, *S. greggii* Tangerine

S. greggii Alba

S. microphylla Pink Blush *S. microphylla* Cyclamen.

I will attempt to do more but the kitchen window sill only holds so many containers. It is so enjoyable watching the roots shoot on a daily basis and constantly keeping up the water supply to the glasses. Once potted up they grow vigorously. I feed with either a weak solution of Charlie Carp or Seasol.

Elly Roos

SALVIA HOUSEKEEPING

I've just been gardening on a perfect autumn day, which made me think of a few things I could say about 'Salvia Housekeeping', or the habits of some salvias, good and bad.

I don't have a huge garden, so I need to keep things in reasonable check. My husband would never agree that I reach this goal, and so I tell him my favourite fairy story is Sleeping Beauty, and I won't mind the day when nobody can get in at our gate, or down our paths, and we're locked up for ever in greenery, much of it salvias.

I must say that I have Never Intentionally removed a single salvia from my garden. That's not to say many haven't left, either by their choice, or by my mismanagement, but some really do try my patience. One of the first salvias I bought (at a street market) and successfully removed from my garden was *S.lyrata*. This happened because *S.lyrata* insisted on spreading, and spreading, and spreading, all over my culinary herb bed. Of course by the time I had successfully removed all trace of it, I was much more 'into' salvias, and wanted it back. Another salvia who nearly came to the same end, for the same reason, was *S.uglinosa*. After seeing it in a garden, which I must admit was somewhat 'wild', I sought it out and planted it, only to find my garden was also becoming somewhat wild. I then spent several seasons trying to relocate it, until I thought it had quite vanished. It wasn't until I grew a new plant in a position where I thought it had less chance of taking over, that I found the original was again reaching up amongst the scented camelias. That plant had another hacking this week. The second plant has also found a way to escape, and until I had a good prune last week, we had yet another path which was pretty well impossible to walk down! It's probably growing in next door's jungle garden too; we exchange and chop each other's jungles over and under the fence.

Then there are the less common roamers. After having for many weeks been unable to go out into my garden, I went out again to find that *S.cinnabarina* had straggled over an entire bed, covering not only other salvias, but most things in sight. As I pulled on its long branches, I found it had begun to root all over too. I half-heartedly put the roots in another bed, as even then, I had the feeling that here was another salvia to watch carefully. A season of sun and rain later, *S.cinnabarina* is off again, straggling away, with not a flower in sight since it was planted! This one really is trying, it's been tied up again today, and another root more carefully planted, and maybe, just maybe, one day I shall see if its red flower is worth the wait and the straggle of often unsightly branches.

As for red flowers that wander. I don't even remember planting *S.coccinea*, Lady in Red, but I must have. When we moved to our home it looked like the moon, not a blade of grass, let alone a salvia, which can only mean it was me who planted it. The builders had even removed the top soil. I lie, there was one tiny clump of grass, which I found one of my cats (Tabitha a big round British Blue) trying to shelter under. But red *S.coccinea* I have, and this too wanders. I find flowers peeping out through the fuschias, snuggling up to the gardenia, and half way up the brugmansia. This one I don't mind though, it flowers and flowers and flowers, in fact I think it must have some show for all 365 days of the year. As you may gather, my garden is 'natural' rather than colour co-ordinated.

Then there is *S.oppositiflora*. Now what does *S.oppositiflora*'s flower look like? Red again? Well, after three years I still don't know. It too tends to straggle, in my garden, and although it doesn't take off anywhere like the above plants, I have to be careful not to chop its long branches when I'm weeding. I live in hope of a flower.

As well there are the jungle plants. I Know what the labels say, but. *S.gesneriiflora* Was planted in a suitable place, and yes the lady next door does like the red flowers with their black bracts that appear over our 6 ft plus fence! *S.involucrata* maybe not so well placed, but where in a small garden Do you grow *S.involucrata*? We've cut off far more than there is left, over and over again, but when it's in full pink flower I refuse to cut it as I adore watching the honey eaters feeding off it. However, several times a year, cut it we must. *S.mexicana* grows almost as much, and tends to break off if we get a high wind, but I don't think it spreads its arms quite all over the place like *S.involucrata*. *S.mexicana* lime bracts is worth it though.

Then there's *S.purpurea*. This label I just did not read properly. It started off at the front door, flowered profusely, and then encroached on the doorstep in weeks flat. I was rather amazed to see its purple flowers, as I thought it was a blue salvia – the blue salvia nearby had actually died. I then moved it around to the back,

and the footpath was quickly overtaken. I just hope I haven't cut off all the flower buds with the chopping, as it has now grown into a green tree and it still awaits a verdict on position.

What doesn't spread all over a small garden, well I am beginning to wonder, but *S.patens* has stayed reasonably compact and mine is the most beautiful blue. As is *S. Marine Blue*. *S.verticillata*, Purple Rain has remained compact, and died down in winter. Pretty pale pink *S.taraxaciflora* has stayed very neat as has *S.runcata* with its lovely leaves. *S.sinaloensis* is also a brilliant blue, relatively neat plant as is *S.coahuilensis*. They'd both be neater if I pruned harder. I think *S.scabra* is going to be fairly compact.

Then there are the *S.greggis* and the *S.microphyllas*. They almost always have a flower, and always have dead heads. It would take me all my time to keep them deadheadless – but they flower on anyway. Always some colour somewhere. A bit woody if not watched, but fairly neat for all that.

Good luck with your salvia purchases – although, if you're like me, anything with 'salvia' on the label will find a space in the garden, often with surprising, and delighting, results.

Winsome Thom

REMARK NEWS

We are having a run of hot, sunny days and the salvias are thriving. It hasn't rained for months and apart from the shorter daylight hours and cold nights it feels like summer. I have been giving most of the garden a deep watering once a week. *S. mellifera* is left to fend for itself in a hot, dry spot and has grown into a robust, compact bush.

S. 'Indigo Spires', *S. 'Tequila'*, *S. iodantha*, and *S. purpurea* have grown exceptionally well and their fabulous flowers are a constant delight. The *S. karwinskii* have decided to push ahead at last and I am looking forward to their first flowering. The following are also doing well and flowering: *S. semiatrata*, *S. polystachya*, *S. involucrata 'Bethelli'*, *S. 'Waverley'*, *S. 'Costa Rica Blue'*, *S. 'Black Knight'* and *S. 'Van Houttii'*.

I had taken for granted the reliable growing habit and continuous flowering of Purple Majesty so I felt somewhat guilty and not a little peeved when I discovered that every stem was covered in scale. I removed the badly effected stems and used so much white oil on the remainder that I fully expected to see the leaves fry and shrivel up in the heat. They didn't and it is putting on new growth. I now keep an eye out for ants marching up and down the stems, a sure sign that the scale has returned.

Mary Ann Dyer

MACCLESFIELD NEWS

Well I can prove if you neglect your garden it will look after itself, especially if you set it up to do so to start with. Last September, I stuck down cardboard on top of grass, then a thick layer of stable manure (fresh), then newspaper and lastly pea straw. Planted into the gardens a couple of weeks later and now I have the usual suspects standing straight and tall – *Salvia iodantha*, *S. karwinskii*, *S. madrensis*, *S. fallax*, *S. gesneraeflora* and *S. gesneraeflora 'Tequila'*. These are all in the garden at the back of the house which faces north. All of the plants in this garden are huge and desperately need cutting back ie. *Salvia elegans 'Honey Melon'* and both *gesneraefloras*. Since last September, I have only watered once as it is too much of a luxury when on tank water, and I have topped up the pea straw once. I also managed to get quite a few cuttings just before Christmas.

Salvia madrensis is in flower and what a show – I have been waiting very patiently for this and it is well worth the wait. *Salvia semi-atrata* is also in masses of flower and its two toning is truly stunning.

The front garden is a different story. Receiving morning sun the plants have not grown anywhere near as quickly but have had the same treatment. *Salvia patens* has continuously flowered for some time and is a beautiful blue. The rosettes all struggle, probably because although they may only receive morning sun they have no overhead foliage and they also do not receive any supplementary watering to the rain.

Display stakes have been put into the front garden, so I guess that makes it officially a display garden. The dilemma in using these stakes (same as the ones used at the Expo) is that the plants are so big and crowded no-one would be able to see the stake. Have to put some more thought into that one.

My garden and nursery are open by appointment. All you need to do is call me on 0412 766 763 to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Donna Grundy

GEELONG NEWS FROM BILL

About 11 years ago when I was quite new to salvias I was made a gift of *Salvia discolor*, *S. chiapensis*. Both these plants are still growing in the same spot with no work or further enhancement done to the soil. They have flowered beautifully each year, in fact *S. discolor* seems to flower non stop throughout the year. The drooping flowers with their palegreen sheafs or calices and their almost black corollas remind me of tear drops. Of the many different species I possess, with all the different flower colours displayed I do think that *S. discolor* is the most stunning. But it is so hard to pick out any one species for supremacy. At present I have large bushes of both *S. Indigo Spires* and *S. polystachya* in full bloom. The former with its deep blue flowers and the latter with its palest blue flowers offers a brilliant contrast.

The soil in my flower beds is in dire need of enrichment and I have several bags of animal manure to spread around the plants. I was quite interested in the Editor's comments in the May issue of *Herbage* where she says she has become almost fanatical about mulching and uses grass clippings after they have broken down a little and adds a little *Dynamic Lifter*. I like this method very much, particularly if one can get the clipping free.

About 2 years ago I bought ten bags of pine bark mulch and declined to use it. On reflection I felt that the soil should be improved first. Unfortunately the soil is still waiting for this to happen. I feel I need organic mulch that breaks down fairly quickly. Perhaps the grass clippings with *Dynamic Lifter* might be the answer.

Bill Whitehead

QUEENSLAND NEWS -The Perennial Poppies Group

In SE Queensland we have had the longest and hottest summer in years and it has taken its toll on us all. Great relief in recent days (early May) to receive some good rains and cooler weather. Autumn/winter in the sub-tropics is the most wonderful time of year for salvias and they are displaying their beauty as usual. *Azurea* has been putting on a real show for weeks and now the *involucratas*, *puberula*, *iodantha*, *elegans* purple are bursting into flower. *Costa Rican Blue* never stops flowering in our climate – along with *chiapensis*, *Purple Majesty* and the old faithful *Indigo Spires*.

A few of us have just purchased some of the new salvias Sue Templeton has on offer and look forward to seeing how they go in our climate. *S. 'Kathe'*, *S. Chiquita Blue*, *Salvia 'Anthony Parker'*, *S. 'Omaha Gold'* and *S. Phyllis Fancy* look most interesting.

Within our cottage garden group we have some enthusiastic salvia collectors and we need to make time to have a study day very soon and compare notes on growth habits. Amongst us we would have over 100 and mostly they thrive in our climate. In the cooler areas such as Tamborine Mountain, Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast Hinterlands it is possible to grow a larger range of the cooler climate species. There are some areas that get quite bad frosts so are limited as to what will survive, however with protection many of them will come back in the spring.

Our cottage garden group meets every two months in members gardens and our members come from all over SE Queensland – the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Tamborine Mountain, Brisbane and one from the South Burnett region. With such a wide range of climatic conditions it is great to share information and see how plants grow in different areas. I recently spent a weekend at The Queensland Herb Society's annual Herb Awareness weekend and it never ceases to amaze me how many people are unaware of how many salvias there are and what great assets they are in the garden. I'm looking forward to catching up with salvia enthusiasts at the Australian Herb Conference in Adelaide in September.

Barb Wickes

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NEWS

During our *Salvia Expo* in March we were pleased to have a weekend visit from Peter Love and Robyn Powell, key members of the *Salvia Study Group* in South Australia. Peter is the co-ordinator of the group, Robyn is the owner of a thriving herb nursery, *Tupelo Grove*. Both enjoyed the *Expo* immensely and purchased rare salvias to take back for the South Australian collection. We thank them both for their

assistance with the Expo during their visit. Peter helped man the gates for a period, and Robyn assisted in the sales area. Both visited several nurseries and gardens and especially enjoyed a brief visit to Meg Bentley's garden.

The Herb Society of South Australia is hosting the 8th Australian Herb Conference at Pembroke College from 27th – 29th September this year. There will also be two tours following the conference, on 30th and 1st. The overall theme for the conference is Herbs for the Senses, and the topic of salvias will play a prominent role. A registration brochure is being distributed. Please contact Peter Love, in South Australia, telephone 08 8276 9621, or email plove@picknowl.com.au, or Ray Boatman in Victoria, telephone no. 03 9754 4889 for further details. It is hoped that as many people as possible from Herb Society of Victoria and the Salvia Study Group will be able to attend.

Report on Our Official Collection

The garden at Nobelius park, with a lot of attention from Ray, is looking great. Salvia rubescens is particularly stunning. The old row of S. microphylla Huntingdon has been removed and an all red bed planned. At Hampton a group of Salvia group members got some hands on experience and were able to see S. madrensis, S. purpurea and masses of salvia colour and learn about salvia maintenance. Any member with an hour to spare either through the week or at the weekend can contact Graeme on 9836 0415 to arrange to work in the garden.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday June 16th Elly Roos Garden visit 11 am, 59 Ferguson Street Upwey

Sunday. July 21st Jillian Barkells garden, 6 Halycon Rd The Patch propagation demonstration

BYO lunch to share is the general routine. Phone Trudi On 9754 4041

THE HERB EXPO

October 26th and 27th, 2002 at Burnley College will be an opportunity to buy some more salvias. Please ring Jillian on 9756 6361 if you would like to join us in propagating salvias for this. A chance to learn as well as help the Salvia Group funds.

Please remember that your subscription is now due and we have heaps of interesting articles and information for you in future newsletters. Also some workshops and activities as well as garden visits.

The views expressed by the contributors of this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of this Society.

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