

SalviaNews

July/August 2002

Victorian Salvia Study Group
A Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria



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This is our seventh SalNews. The year has gone so fast. Welcome to all the new subscribers and thank you to all for your encouragement and support. Remember that this is a newsletter so send me your news. A lot of our subscribers live too far away to be able to attend our workshops so we will try to give you reports on them.

Winter in the Dandenongs means cold winds, gales, sleet, rain, hail, mists, heavy fog, blue skies, sun and this is all on the one day! And in spite of all this the hot pinks and the glowing blues of the winter flowering Salvias are lovely. Some suddenly become prostrate. Salvia iodantha, stakeless and flat on the ground, never looked better and S. semi-atrata has masses of flowers. This rocky ridge seldom gets frost. I can just imagine Mary Ann in Renmark green with envy. Note no news report from Mary Ann due to extreme temperatures such as -4°C .

We have a fascinating series coming up on 'Salvias Through the Microscope' By Meg Bentley and more on salvia I.D., as well as in depth information on some very interesting plants.

Latest workshop news.....

The pruning workshop conducted by Graham Ellis at Jillian Barkell's garden on July 21st was attended by 14 interested people, two of whom had driven from Bairnsdale (leaving at 6am), and appreciated the warm welcome, gourmet food and the opportunity to see a lovely garden and as well, learn how to prune several different salvias. Jillian specialises in 'large leaf' salvias and has the ideal environment for them. Cuttings were distributed, questions answered and a great deal of worthwhile information absorbed and exchanged. The next workshop, also conducted by Graham is propagation at Trudi Fry's place at Selby. Details later in this newsletter.

Eltham News

Because I am not familiar enough with the genus and I am not quite sure what should be out, I can only be pleasantly surprised when one of my salvias bloom.

In flower now is *Salvia corrugata*. What a beautiful blue! For me this is a rather large floppy sort of shrub but fits well where I have placed it. My daughter saw it the other day and asked me to put some cuttings in for her. The wind completely blew the top off what I bought as *S. 'Lady in Red'* but it had bloomed on and on after I deadheaded it. *S. mexicana* 'Limelight' (I have two) both continue with a few blooms and *S. elegans (rutilans)* is blooming again after I took the spent flowers off. My friend Liz has *S. gesneraeflora* 'Tequila' looking marvellous and several others to a lesser degree. The tiny *S. runcinata* I bought at the Expo has grown but is still tiny and had the tiniest flowers you could possibly imagine.

The small *S. spathacea* I also bought at the Expo was duly planted but started looking very poorly (as did Liz's) so I thought I better take it and pot it, which I did and it is now looking quite good. Need some advice on this. The frost touched a few of the salvias but they are coming on again now. I was worried about *S. dorisiana* but it doesn't look too bad. One that hasn't looked back since I planted it is *S. africana-lutea*; and I can see the flower buds forming and I am looking forward to seeing this in flower. It is a great looking plant at the

moment. I am told (by daughter) that I have planted it too close to where I walk but see if I care - I don't mind dodging it! I also bought and planted *S. lyrata* but this didn't do well either so it is back in a pot. A number of other salvias have flowered and I am happy with what I have at present but will, of course, add to my collection.

Paddy Childs Green

Opportunities to buy Salvias

- | | |
|--|--|
| ❖ RARE PLANT & BULB SALE
Mt Macedon & District Hort Society Inc.
Saturday 7 th & Sunday 8 th Sept 2002 | ❖ THE HERB EXPO
Sat 26 th & Sun 27 th October 2002
Burnley College |
|--|--|

The Herb Society of South Australia
Incorporated
Welcomes You to

**THE EIGHTH AUSTRALIAN HERB
CONFERENCE**

Friday 27th to Sunday 29th September 2002

“Herbs for the Senses”

A CONFERENCE WITH INFORMATIVE LECTURES,
HERBAL WORKSHOPS,
MINI “MARKET FAIR” AND BUS TOURS

Pembroke School
Senior School Campus
18 Holden Street
Kensington Park 5068
Adelaide, South Australia

*For further information contact:
The Secretary, The Herb Society of SA Inc.
P.O. Box 140, Fullarton, SA 5063*

Further details on any of these events contact Lyndi Garnett on 9803 4534

Geelong News

Apart from the bedded salvias in my suburban backyard, I had about 75 potted salvias. Because these required fairly constant attention, I just felt I couldn't continue. I then offered them to the VSSG in Melbourne. It was their wish that I offer them to the Geelong Botanic Gardens, and in spite of their staff being flat out with the huge expansion taking place they accepted them. Of course I have their assurance that I can get any salvia I want in the future, providing they have one to spare.

Two days prior to writing this article I was pleased to receive a visit from Meg. She had earlier paid a call to the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Of course I took advantage of her expertise when we both made a tour of my remaining bedded salvias.

We were both pleased to see the 2 adjacent *Salvia purpurea* plants, one with pale violet flowers and the other with deeper violet flowers. Alongside them both was *S. iodantha* with its similar shaped flowers but a vivid magenta colour. My *S. cinnabarina* held up between 2 stakes is a most compact clump rather than its usual

scattered sprawl across the ground. Its striking red flowers were just emerging all over this clump. Some months ago *S. rubescens* didn't like the pot it was in so I transferred it to the ground. It is now growing strongly and showing its beautiful grey leaves. Conversely *S. michoacan* growing in the ground, appeared to die. I transferred it to a pot to see whether its lapse was permanent or only temporary. I still await the result (*it will reappear Bill in its right time, just don't accidentally dig it up! Ed*).

Although my salvias are now reduced in number, they still require attention. When Meg was here I showed her my 6 *S. roemeriana* plants in tubes which I had grown from seed. I offered her 3 and forgot to give them to her. Next time Meg.

Bill Whitehead

Stratford News

I have only just joined the Salvia group and the hospitality and warmth of its members is fantastic. At the Salvia Expo held recently, I bought up big and saw some beautiful salvias in flower and widened my love of salvias even more. I am still learning all the different names, even the ones I have. I have to dig the tag up to tell you its name with most of them. I can always tell you how it grows etc. but have too many to remember their names, although now that I have joined the Salvia group it will be easier to name them!!

One I do love, and only got it at end of this year, is *Salvia 'Mosquito' (sagittatus)*. It came from Sue Templeton at Albury and I haven't seen it anywhere else. It is so dainty and is a vibrant royal blue on thin stems that wave in the breeze and I think it is gorgeous.

One the birds love is red with black and flowers all winter, in fact the whole year really, and the birds enjoy the nectar. It's tall and very easy to propagate. It grows and flowers in full sun or shade, I think the name is *Salvia gesneraeflora*.

Now Salvia lovers, what I want to share with you is a product called Stressguard which protects your plants from Jack Frost. It's a type of milky liquid which you dilute and spray on frost sensitive salvias or any plants for that matter. It lasts 3 months and it expands when the plant grows. Instead of your plant getting frost bitten to the ground it only burns the top. Stressguard is a Yates product and the active ingredient is a blend of high performance, water soluble, acrylic chain polymers. In our area near Stratford in East Gippsland, having come out of a 5 year drought, this year the garden has gone berserk and it's very good to see one's garden not struggling anymore. I have a bore so have plenty of water even in the drought years. I mulch heavily with grass clippings, mulch from my prunings or bring in free stable horse sawdust with a little manure in it.

Happy gardening to you all from **Jane Lee** at Stratford.

Winter Salvias in Gruyere

Just how tall can *Salvia iodantha* grow? Observing it recently from my bedroom window, which is about 15 ft. off the ground, I could see the full flush of blooms at the same level as the floor line. It looks a magnificent sight and equally delightful is the *S. purpurea* with its lilac-pink flowers mingling amongst the magenta of *S. iodantha* and almost as tall, around 12-13 feet.

The salvia garden has put on a wonderfully brave display this winter, one corner in particular where *S. Costa Rica Blue* stands tall amongst *S. Black Knight*, *S. cacaliaefolia*, *S. Van Houttii*, *S. agnes* and the last few flowers of *S. involucrata* 'Pink Icicles' a new variety available from Sue Templeton. Other salvias in bloom are *S. confertiflora*, *S. lavanduloides*, *S. madrensis*, *S. pulchella*, *S. mexicana major*, *S. fulgens*, *S. melissodora*, *S. corrugata*, *S. chiapensis*, *S. involucrata*, *S. elegans* 'Pineapple' and *S. elegans* 'Honey Melon'.

In some areas many of the taller species perform at their best in the last month of autumn and during the winter months. These are: *S. wagneriana*, the darker pink form and the paler pink and white form... both look handsome amidst the foliage of grey leaved buddleias. Towering over the garden is a wonderful salvia that was grown from seed, generously given to me by Sue Templeton who obtained it from New Zealand - *Salvia* 'Blue Bird', which is still under observation / investigation. One could describe it as a larger, bluer form of *S. polystachya*, which is what the Salvia Society call it in New Zealand???

The *Salvia gesneraeflora* 'Tequila', (referred to as the black calyx form) is growing so tall it is trying to push the roof off the house... well, it's bunched up under the eaves anyway and I am forever cutting it back off the pathway, definitely in the wrong spot!

There are a few remaining flowers left on *S. coccinea bicolor*, *S. sagittatus*, *S. 'Waverley'* and *S. urica*. *Salvia hirtella* is just starting to bloom, so too is the beautiful *S. rubinigosa* with its blue and white flowers emerging from wine coloured calyx and bracts. I am rearranging some garden beds to make space for *S. 'Phyllis Fancy'* just near *S. oppositiflora* which has a few orange-red flowers with golden hairs... a real stunner. I will also plant out *S. melissodora* and *S. 'Red Dragon'*, the latter has just finished flowering.

At this stage I am not sure if we are going to get a real winter with lots of rain but we certainly have had cold and a few early frosts; so far the plants have not suffered frostbite. We still need the rain, but spring is on the move, birds are nesting here and the deciduous trees are at bud burst.

Meg Bentley

The Forgiving Salvia

Over the last month or so 'the great winter pruning' has been happening at my place. The winter salvias are at their peak, *S. involucrata x karvinskii* 'Romantic Rose' is an absolute picture and at least 3.5 metres tall. *S. iodantha* has been tip pruned so I can still enjoy the side shoots later on. *S. wagneriana* got a slight trim only because it was hanging everywhere but it is in full flower. I just love the pink tones of the flowers. *S. involucrata* 'tall' got a trim also. In my zest for pruning I decided changes needed to be made in the garden ready for my Open Garden Day in March next year, so out came the spade.

Salvia karvinskii was looking a treat, just ready to flower, but I found a better spot for it. Digging it out wasn't a problem, luckily the root system wasn't that deep. I walked it across to the other side of the garden, planted it, then took one look and thought, my goodness what have I done!! It looked terrible in its new home, panic set in, now I've done it. Well what could I do? Out it came and back to its original home. Being a dry area. I put the hose onto a slow, steady dribble for 3 hours, now *S. karvinskii* is looking hardly any worse for wear after its garden tour. Some lower leaves have yellowed, but its flowers are fine. How is that for resilience? This is not the first time nor the last I might add, that I have done such a thing. I am known to dig out and transplant at all times of the year.

Last summer, on a day of 28°C, I decided that *S. chamelaeagnea* needed to be moved, not when it was cooler, but then and there. Usual 'Elly' trick, dig, move, prune back and water- in for a few days and it lived. What other plant would be as forgiving as the Salvia?

I thought years ago that roses were the 'be all' but what can surpass the brilliance of a Salvia? One for every spot in the garden! Tall ones for a backdrop, for autumn/ winter colour; *S. purpurea*, *S. iodantha*, *S. karvinskii*, *S. involucrata* 'tall', *S. gesneraeflora*, *S. gesneraeflora* 'Tequila' to name a few. To get the best show all year round, alternate between planting autumn/winter flowering and summer flowering.

I am using various *S. greggii* and *S. scabra* as hedging plants as an alternative to box. Tip pruning all summer prolongs flowering and stops the plant from becoming woody and too

large. I have now pruned them down harder ready for the spring growth spurt. *S.* 'Cost Rica Blue' was cut back 1/3 of its original size of 2m. It does get taller but I don't let it. The branches are brittle and pruning all summer stops it getting leggy. My husband is amazed at how much I prune all year, but this creates new flowers and growth and it also prolongs the life of many plants and shrubs. Well that is my theory and the continual colour in the garden proves it.

An update on my windowsill propagating - by late autumn *S. greggii* stopped producing roots and died in the jar, but *S. Waverly*, *S. chiapensis* and *S. Indigo Spires* took well and were quickly planted into 2" pots. They still look healthy and have been planted in the gardens of friends and family. Winter cuttings have not been successful, probably because the window temperature is too low. I will now wait till it is warmer to start spring cuttings.

Elly Roos

A History Of Salvias in Australia

The earliest mention of Sages being grown in Australia comes from a list written by Governor Phillip Gidley King on 20th March 1803 and sent to Sir Joseph Banks, the botanist who travelled with Captain Cook. Banks appeared to be just as curious to know how European and exotic plants fared here as he was anxious to receive plants from the new settlement for the enrichment of the Royal Gardens at Kew.

The 'Sages' are listed with a group of herbs such as Dill, Fennel, Sweet Chervil and Thyme, so presumably they would have been cooking sages, so much in favour at that time for flavouring meat dishes. However, plant lists published in England during the latter part of the 18th century quote several ornamental Salvias which were available at that time, so it is possible that several of these were introduced into gardens of wealthy graziers in the new colony of New South Wales early in the 19th century.

John Abercrombie, in his 'The Gardener's Pocket Dictionary' or 'A Systematic Arrangement Of Trees Shrubs, Herbs, Flowers and Fruits'.. Their Latin and English Names, etc., printed in London in 1786, lists the following Salvias as being "common" in England at that time: *Salvia mexicana* - Mexican shrubby sage, *S. africana* - African shrubby sage, *S. aurea* - Golden African sage, *S. pomifera* - Pomiferous or apple bearing sage and *S. canariensis* - Canary sage. It is possible that some of these were introduced by horticulturalists such as the Macarthur family for their gardens at Camden Park in the early 1800s. Baron von Mueller, avid botanist and plant collector, added two salvias to his Herbarium Collection in the late 1830s. Specimens of these two plants, *S. misella* (now *S. riparia*) and *S. plebia* can still be seen in the Royal Botanic Gardens Herbarium (Melbourne). Both of these plants contain hallucinogenic alkaloids (as does *S. divinorum*) and are eagerly sought after by some people (*but discouraged by the VSSG - Ed*). These plants were collected in Australia by the worthy Baron but both are considered today to be naturalized herbs, so were probably garden escapes even in those early years. However in 'Census of Australian Vascular Plants' (1990) R.J. Hnatiuk describes *S. misella* as being native to the Cape York region. It was probably found in a remnant area of rainforest specimens indigenous to Papua New Guinea on the extreme northern tip of Cape York.

Victorian Nursery Catalogues from 1855-1889 list a large variety of Salvias available for garden use during that period. Early listings (1855-1865) indicate that the following plants were readily available: *Salvia africanus*, *S. aurea*, *S. azurea*, *S. barbata* (syn for *S. africanus*), *S. candleabrum*, *S. coccinea*, *S. coccinea* 'Grandiflora', *S. heerii*, *S. horminium* 'Purpurium' and 'Violaceum', (these were also sold as *S. viridis*), *S. splendens*, *S. sclarea*, *S. roemeriana*, *S. polystacha*, *S. officinalis* and *S. lileana*.

One salvia grown in almost every early Victorian garden was *S. grahamii* (*S. microphylla* v. *neurepia*). Amongst my earliest memories of our homestead garden, 'Avonsleigh' (near Ararat, Victoria) is that of pulling the flowers off *S. grahamii* in order to taste their sweet

nectar. This garden was established in the mid 19th century and the earliest shrubs and perennials were planted by my great grandmother at that time.

By the 1920s and 1930s many perennials listed earlier in plant catalogues seem to have lost favour, but with the advent of colourful edging borders in the late 1930s and 40s annuals became popular because of their brilliant colours. Amongst these were the 'Bonfire Salvias' - *S. splendens*, at that stage predominately red and grown en mass in those borders.

I commenced my herb collection in mid 1960s and my first salvia, apart from *S. officinalis* purchased from a back yard nursery in Sassafras, was Pineapple sage (then *S. rutilans*) now *S. elegans*. This plant was not easily obtainable at the time and I was persuaded to sell rooted cuttings to a very large perennial nursery in the Dandenongs, which thereafter distributed the herb widely throughout Victoria.

Australian perennial nurseries in the 1960s and 1970s carried very few salvias but with renewed interest in perennials in the 1980s and 1990s growers in Victoria began to accumulate and sell salvias to keen gardeners who realized their value in terms of all year colour and relatively easy cultivation. Collectors such as Sue Templeton, Meg Bentley, Judi Forrester, Velda and Graham Ellis, amongst others, were building up large collections of salvias in Victoria as were Simon Ardill and several others in South Australia. The OPCA, with its policy of preserving rare and endangered species, encouraged the Herb Society Of Victoria to commence and register a Salvia Collection. Meg Bentley and Sue Templeton have also registered their large collections. The Herb Societies of Queensland and South Australia have been responsible for the collection of salvias in their respective states and, more recently, the Herb Group in Darwin is experimenting with the growing of salvias in a tropical climate. We in Australia are still a long way off accumulating the more than 900 known species but with around 200 now we are well on the way.

Ray Boatman

References 'A Potted History of Australian Gardening' by Penelope Ralph (*Journal of the Australian Garden History Society Winter 1981 no2*)

'The Gardener's Pocket Dictionary Vol 111 by John Abercrombie Printed for Lockyer Davis in Holburn 1786

Plants Listed in Nursery Catalogues in Victoria 1855-1889 Reprinted by the Australian Garden History Society 1985

Salvia Seed Available		Books for Sale
Salvia turkestanica	S. sclarea	We have the 2 books of Christine Yeo for sale at \$20 each to members. Christine has a NCCPG Salvia collection in South Devon and has been collecting and growing salvias since 1978. She is generous with her knowledge as we discovered when she visited several of our gardens a few years ago. The books contain clear, concise descriptions of the plants, and until we get a book written for our conditions, I highly recommend them.
S. patens	S. viscosa	
S. virgata	S. tomentosa	
S. disermis	S. spathacea	
S. stenophylla	S. judacia	
S. jamensis Sierra Pink	S. rugosa	
S. x jamensis Pink Blush	S. coccinea alba	
S. coccinea Lady in Red	S. coccinea bicolor	
Contact Lyndi Garnett ph 9803 4534 or buy at a VSSG Workshop		

News from Kylie (our new salvia enthusiast)

When I read the newsletters you all seem so well informed and up to the minute with your horticultural pursuits that I find it a little daunting to write this. But, the lovely lady on the phone did request additions so here it goes....the ramblings of a shift worker at 6am.

I joined the Salvia Study Group a little while ago when I went to an open garden in Upwey. Well, what a sight that met my wondering eyes!!!! I had always had a soft spot for the salvia and its marvellous intense colour range but this was something else. Purple, blue, orange then

the pastel tonings down to the softest pinks and mauves. The shape and form of the plants, the various textures and even the scents. I bought myself 4 plants and it all began from there. Now I haunt open gardens and buy up any new salvia I can lay my hands on. Markets, fetes, garage sales...nowhere is safe! Due to budget restrictions I tend to stay away from the nurseries as yet as I know I would not be able to resist!

I have a little patch of land up in Healesville that I was intending to build on down the track (the financial one that is!) so I started to experiment with the soil types up there and just what would grow with no maintenance and little protection from the marauding wildlife. I put in citrus, olives, bare rooted fruit trees, roses, azaleas, natives, and of course salvias. It was a hotch potch of bargain table rescues and plants that had to be moved when my ex kept the house and I left. My whole garden was uprooted from Ferntree Gully, potted then put in the ground at Healesville. Well, 18 months later the land is on the market and my little green friends will be moved again. I know I will lose some like last time, and it saddens me but at least it is a better time of year this time. I am so looking forward to having my own home again but more importantly a place to settle those plants and not have to move them again. It is a shame that Healesville did not work out as the growing conditions there seemed to suit a wide variety of plants. (Unfortunately the blackberries grew wonderfully well, as did the capeweed). The olives took off, despite the odd run in with the roo's as did the citrus. Every salvia I put in did so well that I was stunned by their colour and size of flower. The wombat left them alone and seemed to concentrate on uprooting the roses and fruit trees instead...oh and ate all the dahlias and daffs as well. I am surprised that my hairy nosed friend left the spud patch alone and I got a nice little crop from it. My poor fruit trees did not take off at all, suffering from the hot summer and the roo's breaking them. The stakes went to the four winds when the mob would "take boggitts" as my grandma would have said and crash through the orchard. I replaced them with heavier duty ones but they only lasted a month. The trees have since fended for themselves and so did not require much pruning this season! They will be bonsais by the time they are moved at this rate. I have been putting off digging everything up until the land sells as the plants stand a better chance in the ground than in pots and I am a little nervous that I will kill them in the process. Any advice on potting up the salvias from the ground? Do I leave the top soil on or do I tease them out and use potting mix? I have no idea how long before I move again as it depends on the land selling and settlement on the next place.

I have put together a little nursery in the backyard where I am renting with a fence to keep the dogs out. So far no thefts have taken place other than a few empty pots. It was interesting to note that the dogs only stole the red pots to play with and not any other colour...and they say dogs are colour blind! They have a red ball so the similarity was there I guess. I got really brave and left a pot of sweet peas on the back porch. Daily doggy excavations have slowed the growth rate a tad but the learning curve is kicking in and I am determined to win in the end! My salvias still in pots are kept out on the front porch far far away from staffy jaws and paws! I am looking forward to the pruning day on the 21st so that I can learn more. My pruning method at the moment is a bit universal and does not alter much between fruit tree and perennial...just make it look neat! I am also looking forward to learning more on the propagation of the cuttings as my last two attempts on the salvias turned to compost. They were from my own plants so I can try again when the time is right.

Kylie Bright

Macclesfield News - Salvia Sale

I have decided to have an 'End of Winter Salvia Sale' & 'Garage Sale'. Come for a drive to the beautiful area of Macclesfield. I can guarantee a good bargain, a fantastic view, hot cuppa and something to nibble on to keep you warm during our cold winter. I have a large number of Salvia varieties available. Give me a call if you have any queries on 59 688 567 or 0412 766 763. Hope to see you at the sale - *Donna*

Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th August 2002

10.00am - 4.00pm

401 Tschampions Road, Macclesfield

Melways Ref 310 B3

Report on Official Collections **Nobelius Site Emerald**

The day (26th July) was spent weeding and pruning. The mulch laid down last spring has successfully suppressed weed growth and the Camomile Farm compost mix encouraged rapid growth during summer and early autumn. Unfortunately recent gale force winds have damaged the brittle stems of *Salvia iodantha*, *S. purpurea*, *S. involucrata x karvinskii*, *S. involucrata* 'tall'. Some of these have had to be cut back, however they served a useful service by sheltering the smaller salvias and protected them from the severe frosts Emerald has experienced this winter, though *Salvia dorisiana*, *S. involucrata* 'Joan', and *S. rubescens* have been damaged. *Salvia leucantha*, which usually suffers badly (we don't cut it back until it recovers), is OK and flowering.

There is much winter colour. *Salvia purpurea* has been flowering well but with so much damage needed to be cut back to ground level. The *Salvia involucrata x karvinskii* are still heavy with large trusses of bloom. Our very sturdy and bushy *S. corrugata* is in brilliant bloom, such a wonderful blue. *Salvia* 'Blue Bird' has flower spikes 6 feet high topped with clouds of small blue flowers. *Salvia iodantha*, though wind damaged, is at the peak of its flowering period. It is a mass of brilliant magenta.

Two African salvias, which do so well here, *S. lanceolata*—'old rose' pink and *S. africana caerulea* - pale blue, are dotted with flowers, and indeed show colour for most of the year. *Salvia agnes* has been flowering for months as has *S. Indigo Spires*, attracting the admiration of passers by for at least half the year. The untidy *S. microphylla* 'Huntington' hedge has been removed during the past few months to give space for new plants - *S. x jamensis* 'la Luna' and *S. rubescens*. The new growth from root tips of 'Huntington' are trying to take over the bed but much of this growth was removed today. The border of *S. officinalis* 'Icterina', also 10 years old, needs replacing - my first task this spring. The *S. officinalis* 'purpurescens' border is still OK. We have had a few losses. A *Salvia muirii* in full flower was stolen complete with label. Not the way to be a Salvia Collector! *Salvia canariensis* was pruned well back in early autumn and is responding now with lush new growth. *Salvia apiana*, *S. leucophylla* and *S. mellifera* and the 10 year old *S. fruticosa* are also thriving.

Ray Boatman

Progress at the Hampton Site

On Monday 8th July we had a round up of Salvia helpers at Mark's garden for winter work. People assisting on the day were John and Jenny, Elly and Graham. There was virtually no weed problem. In summer seedling paspalum can establish itself but this was dealt with earlier.

In a salvia garden winter is the time to prune many of the species. Salvias which had finished flowering; *S. madrensis*, *S. puberula*, *S. psuedonutans* and a form of *S. karvinskii* x were pruned to ground level to clear space for the new season's growth. Many salvias are particularly well in this garden during winter. These including *S. dorisiana*, *S. elegans* 'Honey Melon', *S. iodantha*, *S. fallax* and *S. africana-lutea* will be pruned in spring, if they ever stop flowering. The 2 plants of *S. purpurea* were still flowering somewhat but they had a little new growth showing at ground level. As a little experiment one plant near the path was pruned to ground level while the other received a light pruning. Several salvias, namely *S. africana-lutea* and *S. spathacea* will need to be moved soon because of problems their growth has produced. The plants of *S. disermis* and the many forms of *S. officinalis* have become very woody and rather ugly. We need to propagate and replace these cultivars.

Notable omissions from the collection here are *Salvia* 'Black Knight', *S.* 'Purple Majesty' and *S. canariensis*. Over recent years there has been a slow but steady loss of species. Now the number of species is rather low. After we have made a new map and taken stock of the plants this spring we will be able to do another planting. We were lucky people who were treated to a luscious lunch, thanks to Mark. He even allowed us to check out his home made wine, quite delicious.

* ~ *

Now for a Salvia wine question ... Which Salvia, lost from Mark's garden, is used to flavour German wine? Answer on the last page.

* ~ *

Graham Ellis

Both these gardens are show places. If any of you would like a guided tour or can assist with the maintenance of either plot please ring our Site Curators Ray Boatman on 9754 4889 (Nobelius) or Graham Ellis on 9836 0415 (Hampton) and arrange times either during the week or Saturday - Ed

South Australian News

So far the winter here has been fairly mild. With herbaceous and semi herbaceous salvias, new growth is appearing at the base. We are in the process of preparing for the 8th Australian Herb Conference. On the Saturday of the Conference will be a session on Salvias presented by myself, Robyn Powell and Simon Ardill. There will be salvia displays at the Conference and salvias will be on sale at the Market Fair on Saturday afternoon.

The post Conference bus tour on Monday will take you to Urrbrae House at Netherby where the Salvia Group has undertaken salvia plantings in the grounds of the historic house including inter planting of salvias amongst the roses along the rose walk. The tour then proceeds to Woodhouse, the Scout property at Piccadilly in the Adelaide hills, where salvias have been planted in the grounds of the old homestead. Later on the tour takes you to Tupelo Grove the wholesale nursery at Mylor run by Robyn and Ian Powell. Robyn and Ian specialise in growing perennials and are the principal growers of salvias in South Australia. They also have an extensive garden featuring salvias. So there is a lot in the Conference to interest salvia enthusiasts. For more information contact Peter Love phone (08) 8276 9621 or by email on plove@picknowl.com.au.

One project the Salvia Group is becoming involved with is the documentation of the habitat of salvias in the wild as a guide to finding out the best conditions for growing the various salvias in Australia. The first areas to be studied are Mexico, South Western United States and South Africa. Perhaps people in other groups could contribute to those studies or select other areas in the world such as the Mediterranean and the Middle East or China.

Peter Love

Dates for your Diary 2002

- August 18th**
11am **Propagation workshop with Graham Ellis at Trudi's**
39 Temple Rd Selby Mel 84 J2 PH 974 4041
Lunch BYO Food to Share
Soup/bread coffee tea etc provided & a warm welcome.
- September 15th**
11am **Nursery Visit to Arja's – Herb & Cottage Nursery**
942 Main Road Hurstbridge Mel 185 K8
9718 2249 (BH Wed – Sun) - 9719 7660 (AH)
Lunch will be at a local cafe (reasonably priced)
- October 20th**
11am **Colleen Muir at her home in Hawthorn will show us**
how to prepare Herbarium pressings. Bookings will
be necessary Phone
Trudi 9754 4041 or Ray 9754 4889
- November 17th**
11am **Picnic for subscribers at the Collection Site**
Nobelius Park Emerald

* ~ * ~ *Answer to Graham's question: Salvia sclarea (Clary Sage)* ~ * ~ *

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Victorian Salvia Study Group (VSSG) was duly elected when we became a Branch of the Herb Society of Victoria. These members are:

Lyndi Garnett Coordinator 9803 4534	Ray Boatman Secretary 9754 4889	Elly Roos Treasurer 9752 6712
Trudi Fry Editor Salvia News 9754 4041	Donna Grundy Publicity Officer 59 688 567 or 0412 766 763	General Committee Meg Bentley Jillian Barkell

This was approved by the committee of the Herb Society Of Victoria (HSOV) on 28th April 2002. All others involved with the Victorian Salvia Study Group are the subscribers to Salvia News.

Any statement on behalf of the VSSG must come from the Executive Committee

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