

Salvia News

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Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc

www.salvias.org.au

Summer 2020

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP 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
4. Maintain our Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park for the Group & the general public
5. Manage our website and Facebook page

The Group is a Not for Profit Organisation. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and for the planting and maintenance of our GPCAA (Garden Plants Conservation Association of Australia) registered garden collection. ('Plants Trust' has been a shortened, more comprehensive name for the GPCAA and has been used for quite a while now).

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SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP INC

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Welcome to the Summer edition of Salvia News and my first edition as editor. I have had a very steep learning curve in my knowledge about salvias and Word 2019. Word 2019 is how we produce this newsletter to send it to be printed.

We have received so many interesting articles for this edition, that we have had to advise some of the members that their generous contributions are going to be placed in the Autumn edition. But please remember that we still would like more about your gardens, why you became a member, are you able to advise people on different techniques or skills.

In this edition, we farewell Stephanie as our editor. I have looked at back copies of this newsletter and realised that I really like the new format that Stephanie instigated.

There are many articles about summer in the garden including Spring Summer Experience by Robyn Tyson (page 14) and Seasonal Propagation of Salvias by Pat Anderson (page 15).

Heather Lucas has written about Salvia Concolor (page 16) and a thank you to Stephanie (page 18).

Reminder about the AGM at the December 2020 Christmas Party and Lyndi Garrett has included her Annual Report (page 3).

Wow, my first edition is now finished! Back to reading books for relaxation.

Happy Gardening,



Julie

Editor Salvia News

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Copy deadline for the next edition of Salvia News is 17 January 2021

Please email your articles and photos to:
julie.salvia.news@gmail.com

Cover photo is *Salvia 'Costa Rican Blue'*
Photo courtesy of Lyndi Garnett

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events for this year have been cancelled. Unfortunately, this included our New Members' Lunch which was to occur in September. Although we cannot have this event this year, we hope that our new members will reach out to us. Please do not hesitate to contact the Committee at any time (details in front cover) and we always welcome your suggestions for this publication.

We hope to see you all later in Summer. At the time of printing, the below events are still going ahead. We hope there will be something here to interest you and thank you for continuing to support the Group. The situation is continually evolving and some of the events listed may be cancelled, postponed or modified with late notice.

Please check the website regularly for any changes and additional information.

All events will be subject to social distancing requirements and you must stay home if you are unwell. We have introduced some new COVID-19 icons for events. Our new icons are



Register of attendees to be kept



We will supply hand sanitiser



Social distancing required

Garden Visits are great opportunities to meet with members and explore some special gardens.

Selling events are opportunities to purchase salvia plants, books and seed. You can also bring plants/flowers to be identified. Many of the selling events are parts of larger fairs and shows.

Remember to take your plant lists to events or email your list to Lyndi Garnett prior to the event so you are not disappointed. Please note that 🌿 means it is a selling event.

Please also let Lyndi know if you are attending events. Some events need to know numbers and some events will require a register of those attending.

6

DEC

CHRISTMAS LUNCH IN JEN KLOESTER'S GARDEN (11:30AM)

57 Austin Street, Newtown, Geelong

It is Christmas time and what better way to end such a year than wandering through Jen's beautiful garden. So many roses, poppies, salvias and other perennials. See how she manages to fit them all in to her garden. Bring a chair and a Christmas plate to share with hygienic rules applying. Please bring plants (this doesn't have to be a salvia)/cuttings/seeds to give to others. This is the chance to pick up that special plant or a piece of this or that. Bring bags for plants and cuttings. Geelong is not too far to travel to wander through a gorgeous garden. We will also be holding our AGM which will allow members to get involved if they wish. Ring Jen on Ph 0403846041 to let her know you are coming. Pre-registration through Lyndi is required. Tea/coffee will be provided. All members are welcome. Please bring a plate to share for a sumptuous Christmas feast.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held as part of the Christmas Lunch on 6 December 2020. A formal notice of meeting will be provided to members in due course. All members are encouraged to attend the meeting and have their say about the group.

STUDY GROUP MATTERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Welcome to a year like no other, to the year that was lost for all Victorians.

Despite that, here we are with bright sunny days and our freedom at long last. Yeah!! Looking back at the year, we were so fortunate to be able to attend the Ferny Creek Collectors Fair in March. The next week we found ourselves in the first Lock down !

As gardeners, tending to our gardens, whether it's a balcony, a garden the size of a handkerchief, a suburban block or a rambling paddock, it was our love of plants – any plants, anything that was green or in flower, that got us all through those bleak few months. Our gardens kept us busy, occupied and kept us sane. (Not a question to ask of your partner).

For me the months were wonderful!! Rather than getting plants ready to sell, I finally had time to get stuck into my own garden. Chopping down shrubs and trees, cleaning it out. It was all fed and mulched, something that hasn't happened for many, many years.

It gave me enough time to replenish, redesign and replant old sections of my garden. Of course, with all this cutting back, loads of cuttings were left to try and strike. Now it's spring, they have all grown and need potting up, now I need to find space for all these trays of Salvias!!!!!!

As you can expect, I have plenty of stock but nowhere to sell, and as members couldn't go to nurseries, we suddenly had a brain wave. Why not go "Click & Collect"? we should have thought of this at the beginning. So far it has been a success for those who could travel within the 5km limit and then within the 25km restrictions. This will continue for those who can't attend any garden Festivals.

During those bleak winter months, both Jillian and I were still busy working up at Nobelius. I was fortunate enough to have a Travel permit. "To maintain the safety of a Public Garden". Although we only spend a few hours each week, we worked hard at getting rid of leaves and cutting back. Concentrating on just one bed at a time, we were able to go through thoroughly, feeding and mulching as we went. When completed, it all looks very nice, but those little WEEDS insist on coming up! Now we can begin planting, filling in empty spaces and finding suitable plants for those empty dappled shade areas under the oaks.

When the travel restrictions are finally over, we hope that a few members might like to come up and give a hand. It's amazing what an extra pair of hands can achieve. So many small tasks can be crossed off the list.

The Best thing that has come about this year?? We have a NEW EDITOR!! **Julie Kavanagh** has just joined the Group and thought she would like to help. We welcome Julie, who is a lovely, bubbly very competent person to take over the reins from Stephanie Rendell who revitalised the magazine with so many great ideas. I'm sure Julie will carry on finding more good ideas and putting her own mark on our newsletter.

Last, but not forgotten, I would like to thank our committee, for all their support and hard work that has continued behind the lines throughout these horrid months. We have a good committee with good ideas to keep the group evolving and moving with the times.

Now we can expect to have a wonderful Christmas gathering at Jen Koester's beautiful garden down in Geelong. I hope members will make the journey down, and join us in the AGM and celebrate, forgetting the year like no other.

Thank you,

Lyndi Garnett

Group Coordinator

Welcome New Members

A very big welcome to Bill Bampton, Ian Ball, Pam Strain, Lynette Barclay, Jan Webster, Lyn Cannard, Jac Semmler and Connie Menegazzo



I have been living in Nunawading on a block dominated by four big trees that I planted many years ago. Consequently there is little room for new plants as the camellias, roses, and clivias fill most of the space. I was introduced to salvias by attending sessions conducted by Lyndi and bought some plants from her and at plant sales at Nobelius as well as some from Tesselars. Her enthusiasm was catching, and I appreciate the work she has done on the website. I've managed to strike quite a few cuttings using the instructions from the website. I've given these to my daughters and friends. My favourites are the greggii as I love the range of colours and they seem to be very happy in their pots. **Ian Ball**

What about you? Tell us why you joined and your salvia story for our next edition.

Did you know that you can become more involved with the Group by becoming a 'Friend of the Salvia Display Garden'? Helping out in the garden is a great way to meet fellow enthusiasts and to build on your salvia skills and knowledge. If you are interested, please kindly contact Lyndi Garnett.

Hello all at the Salvia Study Group, this is Daryl Lyons and Janine Molan.

We joined the Salvia Study Group several years ago. We live in Nullawarre, south west Victoria, some 35km from Warrnambool, just off the Great Ocean Rd. A typically wet climate, sometimes way too wet for the less hardy specimens, resulting in a fatality or two or five. While 8km from the coast, we still score the odd frost through winter, but nowhere near as common as inland further. Our soils are very loamy, being right in the heart of the best dairy country in the world! While we can get hot days, there is a pretty reliable sea breeze most days, so on the whole we have a good environment for most garden plants. Drought is never an issue as we sit 12 foot above abundant ground water. Our house is located on a few acres and going back about 12 years only had a few natives around it ... that was until Janine and Daryl met!



Bluebird & Gravidia

Daryl brought the first few salvias from his place at Leopold, where he had just a handful of the reasonably common ones, 'Huntington Red', *S. involucrata* 'Joan', *S. leucantha*, 'Christine Yeo' etc. Janine only had *S. gesneriiflora* var. 'Tequila'. To accommodate these a new garden bed was dug, then another. We caught the gardening bug and then moved into an adjoining 1/4 acre horse paddock. A year later we claimed another 1/4 acre from the horses, then a bit more later on for a vegie garden. While our plantings were broad in nature, and we had a leaning to weigelas, iochromas, vibernums, lilacs, Japanese maples and numerous cottage garden plants, it was the salvias that multiplied quicker than anything. We were taken by the fact that the species has such a broad flowering range - at any time of the year there are many in flower and with such a diverse colour range. Also, their quick growing nature is important as they cover up potential weed growing areas. In addition, we found that, on the whole, salvias liked our

climate, as long as we could prevent bog wet occurrences - so new drains were dug around the garden to lessen this.

Anyhow, we started accumulating additional salvias from friend's gardens, nursery visits, mail orders and several years ago were able to get to the group's Nobelius plant sale and now have around 120 - 130 different salvias. We think our peak is from around February - May, especially when our wall of *S. 'Meigan's Magic'* is in full bloom. That said any day of the year there is salvia colour and bird life to go with it. We have had quite a few visits from local garden clubs, primarily due to our salvia collection.

We have learnt a lot over the last few years - there are salvias out there that become quite invasive and that you couldn't kill if you tried such as *S. uliginosa* (Bog Sage), the *S. gesneriifloras* and *S. guaranticas*, which require annual attention to prevent takeover. Likewise, there are others such as many of the *S. greggii* which don't prosper in our surrounds, and we can lose easily. And *S. sagittata* which coming out of our winter always looks like it is going to die but somehow hangs in there. Also, we have found that many salvias will prosper with minimal sun, and we have many growing on the south side of both house and shed and under deciduous trees.



S. confertiflora



scabra, 'Mexican Sage', 'Anthony Parker', *oxyphora*
and *aurea* 'Green Ginger'

As we get into spring, we feed all our garden and heavily mulch, to prevent weeds and reduce our watering through summer. The major cut back occurs through winter, except for the winter bloomers. The size of the garden requires that many plants including a lot of salvias get the power trimmer or arborist saw treatment. There are of course many more delicate salvias that get a more limited and careful trim, if any at all. As we have found with some, cut back too early and then get a frost and the plant is in trouble!

As to favourites, Janine thinks you can't beat *S. Mexicana* 'Limelight' when in full bloom, whereas Daryl's pick is *S. confertiflora*. Like any avid gardeners, we are always on the lookout for something new and different and will continue to accumulate additional salvias - the garden boundary fences can always be pushed out further! We look forward to meeting some of our fellow members and if anyone is down our way and would like to drop in you are more than welcome.

MAIL ORDER SHOPPING

(postage prices within Australia)



Ideas for gift giving or keeping

A Manual for Salvia Growers By Meg Bentley

\$30 per copy **Plus \$10** per copy posted

Order form for this item is on inside back cover of Salvia News



Salvia Cards - Meg Bentley

\$10 per pack (5 single flower or 5 assorted)
Plus \$2.50 per pack posted

- Assorted packs
- or** Single Flower packs -
- *Salvia patens*
- *Salvia roemeriana*
- *Salvia microphylla var neurepia*
- *Salvia gesneraeflora* 'Tequila'
- *Salvia leucantha*
- **Total packs @ \$10 per pack \$.....**

Plus \$2.50 per pack posted \$

TOTAL COST OF ORDER \$ _____

Cheque / Money Order payable to Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
Direct Deposit: Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 A/c No: 116846122
Account Name: Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
PayPal: vssgincl@tpg.com.au
Please send completed form to:

Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
844 Highbury Road,
Glen Waverley Vic 3150
Enquiries to: Lyndi Garnett (03) 9803 4534

PLEASE PRINT

Name:

Address:

Suburb/Town: State: Post code: Phone:

FROM OUR NETWORKS

There is so much that can be learnt from our friends, extended networks and industry partners. We are pleased to be able to share....

NEWS FROM SOUTHWEST QUEENSLAND

Dulcie Adams

The Perennial Poppies Group Inc.



S. 'Berry Shann'

Spring/summer in southeast Queensland, and particularly the northern suburbs of Brisbane, finds conditions increasingly warm (what happened to spring) and very dry. The forecast of a wet spring has come to nought in our area so I'm now holding out hope for a wet summer, but not too wet!

Like many gardeners during lockdown, I've done a bit of re-vamping in the garden. It's a very liberating feeling to clear out areas that were not really working and this has made way for new plantings. By removing some over exuberant shrubs, I found room for more salvias!! This new space now has all the 'Wishes' salvias in it and they are all doing well. Grown from cuttings are 'Wendy's Wish', 'Ember's Wish' and 'Love and Wishes' and I've added 'Kisses and Wishes' which I found on a recent trip to Toowoomba. This new garden is filled out with *Argyranthemum* daisies, dianthus and lavender to name a few but I also managed to find some room for *S. 'Amante'*, *S. dorisiana* and *S. rubiginosa* which will all need to be kept under control in my small suburban block! *Brugmansia* and *lagerstroemia* are gaining size to provide some protection from our summer sun, as I've found the Wishes

salvias seem to appreciate it. Also, in the back yard, the soft pinks and pink blushed white of the microphyllas, *S. 'Angel Wings'* and *S. 'Marshmallow'* continue to give the best results here in the hot and humid subtropics. I've recently added *S. 'Berry Shann'*, the colour of berries, and a locally sourced one called *S. 'You Beauty'*, which is a rose and cream bicour.

In the front garden, *S. 'Celestial Blue'* continues to be the stand-out. It has everything, including lovely silvery grey aromatic foliage and unusual flower form in soft blue. The foliage and flower add much valued contrast in any garden and has the added bonus of being very hardy. I just love the scent released from the foliage, not only from brushing against it but on windy days you can actually smell it through the garden - one of the few pleasures to be derived from windy weather other than the sound of the wind chimes. I've planted the dark leafed *Lagerstroemia 'Diamonds in the Dark'* behind *S. 'Celestial Blue'* to give a lovely contrast of foliage colours - now I just need the *lagerstroemia* to grow enough to show up!



S. 'Amante'

Another part of the garden that also benefitted from the removal of a large yellow daisy *Euryops*, I have combined *S. 'Amante'* with more *Argyranthemum* daisies as well as a *S. leucantha*, which picks up the same colours as the nearby *S. 'Di's Delight'* and a number of lavenders. *S. 'Amante'* looks like a very healthy and vigorous grower like its relative *S. 'Amistad'*, although perhaps a lower growth habit. *S. 'Amistad'* does sucker but this is really only a minor issue as it is such a fantastic plant and the colour is gorgeous. I have added a few more greggiis to the front garden as well including the aptly named *S. 'Merlot'* with its deep wine-coloured flowers and one of the new Mirage series *S. 'Deep Purple'*. And where would we be without the splendid *Splendens*? What a wonderful group of salvias with their amazing combinations of colours that can be popped in just about anywhere and flower profusely.

After some judicious pruning, the larger growing *S. 'Timboon'* has flowered magnificently this season and after deadheading, it has rewarded me with another flowering. I guess it's been one of the benefits of staying home and spending more time in the garden that I've been more vigilant in deadheading and general care of my plants. Wandering around in the garden certainly brings to light, not only the things that need attention, but the wonderful rewards of having a garden.

Once again, in taking stock of my garden in order to write this article, I did the count of my salvias. This year I have counted 90 in total and on a suburban block of under 800 square metres, I can vouch for the fact that you can always find room for one more and there is a salvia for every position!

Guess this Salvia flowering in Summer

I have a PBR attached to my name.

I flower all year round in the suburbs.

I grow to mid height, about 1.5m high.

I'm from South America.

I am (turn to page 23 for the answer).

FROM OUR MEMBERS

If you would like to contribute to the Salvia News but do not know where to start, please contact the editor and we can work together formulating a piece. We are always grateful to receive articles and to get new perspectives. In addition to articles, we are happy to receive paragraphs, anecdotes and photographs.



Notes from Gruyere

Meg Bentley, Gruyere, Victoria

With the coronavirus lockdown still on the go we have all found various occupations different to the norm and tried our hand at something new or revived something old now that time has allowed new expressions of interest. Apart from propagating salvias and various other plants and then planting yet others out

into the garden, along with my trusty friend the Yellow Robin by my side, I have like a lot of people been going through cupboards and having a general clear out.

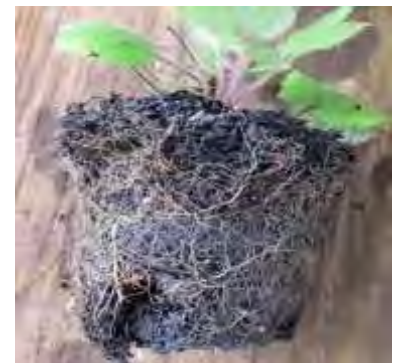
I came across a tray of old out of date herbs and spices but didn't have the heart to toss them so set to work and made a 'Herb and Spice' picture, and yes there are a few members of the Lamiaceae family including salvia's, along with the other spices. The aroma was fantastic as I worked on this project and reminded me of times past when I made 'Clove Oranges'

It has been a rather good time for propagating salvias and also for potting them up into bigger sized pots.

I don't know how many folk have watched garden shows on TV and balked

at the way a potted plant has been placed straight into the ground without any 'tickling' of the root ball, it has also happened when potting up into a larger size pot. Depending on how long the plant has been in the pot or container, one sees a mass of roots and quickly place it into the ground but if you look closer at the root ball you will find many of the roots have been growing up to the top of the pot. This often happens if the plant has dried out a bit and then any watering will often stay around the top area which draws the roots up for the moisture.

I have always recommended to gently tickle those fine roots and ease them downwards towards the base of the plant, regardless whether it is in a pot or going straight into the ground. Lack of this action can result in a plant being root bound or dying off because the roots are too exposed to the sun or heat and dried out completely, especially if birds have scratched away mulch exposing those roots to the elements. Shown on picture here :



A trip through the labelling maze

Fiona Williams, North Warrandyte, Victoria

I'm writing this on Grand Final day as the rain beats down. We've had 44 mm so far so I'm not in the garden. Instead I'm sorting out my master list of salvias – a much delayed but essential task given the amount I propagate and the need to make sure new plants are correctly identified.

I keep a computerised master plant list and just print it out occasionally, so I make changes on the printed list as I go. Unfortunately, the printed list gets increasingly hard to read as it gets rained on and occasionally left in the garden overnight. Deciphering my notes when I decide to update the master list can be a challenge. But it is so useful! For instance, I planted about 15 various salvias around the edge of my fenced vegetable garden 18 months ago. Some have lived and some haven't. Some labels have survived and some have disappeared. But when I wonder what that pale blue unlabelled salvia is, I just check the list and know that its either *S. fluviatalis* or *S. polystachya*. Much easier to decide.

An emerging problem is to identify where in the garden each plant is located. I could probably go high-tech and do something with geo-positioning but that's too hard. So, I just specify the garden bed that each plant belongs to. This was fairly easy when I started my list as I had a small number of garden beds. Locations such as 'outside kitchen' or 'by the front door' was enough. But once I retired the garden has grown and the number of garden beds (and associated salvias) has expanded dramatically. The problem became intense when I redeveloped an expanse of lawn into 5 new garden beds with wide gravel paths. First, I labelled the new garden beds 1 through to 5 with a sketch map of which was which. But then I lost the map. So now I have perennial-north, perennial-south, perennial-mid etc.

Sometimes the notes suggest I need to check plants to see if they are still alive or where there is doubt about identification. So, I find my biggest umbrella and venture out to investigate.

First challenge is that I spread mulch generously this spring which covered up lots of plant labels. This means scratching around the base of the plant to find the nametag. I try to push the labels in on the right-hand side of the plant but that obviously assumes I'm standing in the same place in relation to the plant each time which doesn't always happen. And the cockatoos just love ripping my labels out of the ground and tossing them away.

If I actually find the nametag, the issue is whether it is still in one piece. I used to buy plant nametags at a big hardware store where cheapest prices were just the beginning. Somebody started using less stabiliser in the plastic so the name tags would disintegrate after a year and I'd be having to dig up and align 6 fragments of plastic to try and decipher the name. So, I ordered 2000 much more substantial (if expensive) plastic name tags in a reasonably subtle green colour that I use for all the plants I might want to identify in the future. After 3 years these are still holding up well.

Then the real challenge – is the name still legible? It's so frustrating to unearth a label only to find that it is blank – sunshine is a great way of fading even the most durable inks and pencil markings can be obliterated by pushing the label through soil too many times. You hold the label up to bright light, you squint and after lots of effort you can decipher the bit saying Salv. And that's all. After lots of trial and error I've learnt to write the name on both sides of the label; once with a broad soft

lead pencil and once with a non-fade ink or wax crayon. At least that gives me double the chance of reading the name.

There are always a few plants where I'm still doubtful about its identification. So, I take a cutting inside and sit at my computer with Meg Bentley's "Manual for Salvia Growers" and Betsy Clebsch's "The New Book of Salvias" open beside me and the Victorian Salvia Study Group's website open in front of me and start double checking. I'll also look at Sue Templeton's Unlimited Perennials website, Robin Middleton's gallery and the US site Flowers by the Sea to get more information if I need it. This gives me updated information such as the fact that *S. africana caerulea* is now just called *S. africana*.

It's not always easy to identify the plants! The experts give specific information about leaf and flower size but plants grow differently in our gardens. It's been a wet spring so when I read in Betsy's book that *S. africana* has leaves approximately 6 mm in length and I measure the ones on my plant at 30 mm I need to make allowances for the different growing conditions in my garden this year. And what looks like the same plant can actually be different varieties. I have 3 plants of *S. africana* in my garden but when I pick samples from each and put them next to each other, it's clear that two are the same and one is the variety 'Smoothy'. So, I go back to my computerised list and discover that yes, one plant was bought at the Friends of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens. So that is where "Smoothy" must have come from.

So now to update the master list showing where the two varieties are and then to label them correctly. And that brings me to the next challenge. My label collection!

I try and reuse plant labels where possible so if I know something is temporary (eg cuttings) I use lead pencil and rub it out when I no longer need that label. This approach sometimes results in masses of used labels awaiting cleaning but at least its straightforward. The problem occurs with the labels where I've used permanent ink. I try to use them again when I have another plant or more cuttings of the same name. After years of different approaches, I've now make up a structure with three x ten-pack seedling boxes in a pot tray (see the photo) that allows me to store old labels alphabetically and gives me a sporting chance of finding a label if I already have it.



This brings me to the final point in this somewhat rambling article. For those of you who are naming new salvias, can I strongly suggest you do not call it anything beginning with C, M or P? My P box in particular is overflowing. In addition to the scientific names starting with P, masses of the *greggi/microphylla/jamensis* hybrids have names starting with Pink, Purple or other P words. This less than scientific approach to salvia nomenclature suggests that names starting with O, Q, U, V or W will have a better chance of standing out. Somewhat surprisingly E, F and G are also under-represented.

So now back to my master list of salvias and a somewhat sobering assessment of the number of plants I've managed to lose in the last year. Can't wait for a salvia sale to replace them!

Of salvias and other things

Geoff Crowhurst, Thornbury, Victoria

It's quite some time since members came to my place in Thornbury. I live in a single front terrace home, dating back to 1890, and have just a narrow front garden and more at the back, though that is not much more than a courtyard, with brick paving, a built up bed on the west side, and a narrow sheltered walkway out the side door, where I have rhipsalis and donkey's ears succulents in wall and hanging pots. I have diverse plant interests which is reflected in membership of not only the Salvia Study Group, but Heritage Roses in Australia, the Mediterranean Garden Society, and the Victorian Bulb Society. Attention is also given to the Ivanhoe Garden Club, where I am vice-president and newsletter editor.

Way back, I had a rectangular patch of grass in the back garden, but after a bad bushfire season (1983 I think) I replaced that with rather more paving and a hexagonal bed with an obelisk in the middle. The obelisk has a couple of roses on it, and Clematis 'Niobe' that is now in full flower, behind a clump of the fabulous creamy-apricot *Ixia paniculata*. The bed also includes salvias: a yellow *greggii*, a hybrid from *muirii* given to me by Wendy Smith, and two clumps of the herbaceous 'Tesquicola'. This is a very serviceable plant, with two long flowerings if cut back hard about New Year, and benefits by being tidied up and replanted every couple of years. Elsewhere in the back garden are more *greggii* types – white through pink to red.



Salvia muirii

Space being at a premium, if only there were salvias that climbed! On the brick wall facing east I have recently planted *S. radula*, a very hardy South African salvia which I think could be more often grown. The spikes of white flowers come all through the warmer months. In the wild I would imagine that its lanky stems grow up through other



plants, giving it support. I am tying it to some lattice work and going by previous experience it will probably reach a metre or more, with flowering being greatly improved by regular deadheading.

In the same side bed, I had the dark blue *S. coahuilensis* as a ground cover under some tea roses. But with cooler weather, what I call winter grass came up through the salvia, and presented a real problem, as it was almost impossible to pull out the winter grass but leave the suckering salvia. Finally, I pulled out both, and have now planted a couple of cutting grown *S. microphylla* 'Baby Sage', at the same time putting down a good layer of damp newspaper topped with chip mulch. With trimming, these should become adequate ground covers. *S. coahuilensis* has not completely disappeared.

A couple of plants of this salvia have grown up one side of an arch covered with plastic-type lattice to about 35cm, which I have encouraged by trimming off side-shoots. I will see how far up the plants grow. I have placed the same salvia at the foot of another arch, to see how that fares. So, I am doing my best to convert salvias to climbing. I am aware that some of the lanky South American salvias could be trained like climbers, but I don't have room for any of them.

I look after an extensive area of nature-strip out the front, not only my own, but neighbours' strips on either side, including a very large area outside a corner block of two storey units which extends into the side street. I have planted a range of hardy plants: phlomis, coleonema, euryops, many native plants, and some salvias: *aurea*, *disermis*, *dolomitica*, some *microphylla* types and *namaensis*. But the stand-out plant at the moment is *S. muirii*, which very soon re-flowers after trimming with hedge clippers. It seems to do best when grown hard, with poor soil and only rainfall to keep it going. It would have to be one of my favourite salvias. I have just potted up cuttings for more plants.

Spring Summer Experience

Robyn Tyson, Mornington/Mt Martha, Victoria

So, I have taken up the challenge, thrown down by the gauntlet Heather Lucas.

My first salvia was a *S. leucantha* (old purple one) grown for me and given to me by my grandfather, back in the early 80's when we moved into our new/old house.

I come from a gardening family, grandfather, award winning garden in Footscray, a nurseryman father and hobby gardeners throughout the generations. It came to light that in times past our family ancestors garden for Lords in England.

So back to me, I have mixed garden exotics and natives. This is to fulfil my desire for a diverse food source and habitat for all the birds and critters. I'm up to my 3rd house and live on the Ridge at the back of Mornington/Mt Martha, old farming land, very rich in manures, not so good for some natives, but the roses love it.

I have a red microphylla that is about 20 years old, is that my favourite? Probably not, I've had a lot of salvia 's come through my garden most also go.

So, to my current favourites (they have been that for awhile) as they give me a food source and habitat. 'Meigan's Magic', the bush is about 2 metres across flowers all year except when I prune it. (very difficult to decide when) usually very late winter/ spring as we get frosts. It attracts little wattle birds, eastern spine bill honey eaters, and to my delight blue banded native bees.

My other favourite is *S. aurea*/Africa lutea, I first saw this in flower at the toilet stop in Salmon Gums in WA. It was in full flower, an enormous shrub, alive with birds and bees. The most UN usual colour flowers. I have about 4 varieties of these low growing, smaller flowers, but my pride and joy is a medium shrub that is masses of flowers and then the most amazing calyxes.

Any way I think I've said amazing enough times. I plug away with my old faithfuls. That don't turn up their toes when pruned, cope with no water and frost. I enjoy the newsletter and get inspired when going on garden visits, keep up the good work.



Seasonal Propagation of Salvias

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte, Victoria

I found Russell Cheal's article about propagating *S. melissodora*, so interesting. I too like to keep records. They can be so revealing and save a lot of guess work and wasted time in the future. Listening to the experience of other people is equally valuable.

I had difficulty with trying to propagate the lovely *S. clevelandii* some years ago. It was group member Des, who at that time was working at Geelong Botanic Gardens, who explained to me that he only ever had success with this species by taking heel cuttings in November. He was quite right and with good reason. Plants like *S. clevelandii* that grow naturally in places with hot, dry summers, tend to go dormant during the summer so there would be a minimum of movement in the vascular system of the plant in that season. In recent years I confess to not bothering so much with *S. clevelandii*, even though it used to be one of my favourites. This is because *S. 'Celestial Blue'* (a cross between *S. clevelandii* and *S. leucophylla*) was introduced to us and, although the flower is a paler colour, the plant is much more robust and the foliage has the same aroma. It is also easier to propagate!

Russell's detailed description of how he propagates *S. melissodora* is so helpful for all aspects of propagation – not just this particular species. I am one of those impatient propagators that likes to 'give a gentle tug' of the cutting to test resistance to decide if it has rooted or not. I know it is absolutely the wrong thing to do, but if I am potting on other batches of cuttings whose roots have definitely emerged from the base of the pot, I might see if there are others I can knock over at the same time! I also know that it isn't any sort of guide because resistance can come about through the development of callous at the base of the cutting. This might be a pre-cursor to roots forming, but if they haven't yet formed, there is no point in potting them on.

So, thank you Russell, and let's hear about other people's propagating experiences.

The Duchess (e) I know

Soo Mei,

In a lot of gardens where salvias are grown, there are also roses in them. This is a story of one special rose I grow. So often while at the hairdresser, I read about duchess exploits in the tabloids. However, there is one that I personally know and it is Duchess (e) de Brabant.

A romantic looking full-cupped old heritage tea rose that blooms continuously throughout the year, it can cope with shade (yes even with competition for light from my weeping mulberry) has fragrance and even thrives on neglect. Not having sharp thorns just adds to its allure! No wonder from the pages and stories of the garden owners featured in Susan Irvine "Rose Gardens of Australia" book, this rose was often mentioned with pride, passion and praise - that sure got me interested, intrigued to search and seek for it.



It was neither in any castles or chateaus when I finally found my Duchess (e) but Coles supermarket (when they used to sell bagged bare-rooted heritage roses in winter years ago). On a windy day as the blossoms dance together with blue/purple salvias, Michael Bubl  lyric/song "Sway" comes to mind!



Salvia concolor

Heather Lucas, Heathmont, Victoria

I have coveted for so long a Salvia Concolor to live and flower in my garden and up till now have not succeeded, especially as I had seen Patrick Hogan's most excellent example of this plant at one of his garden visit days many years ago.

However, I planted a new garden bed with a Salvia Concolor in it and wow it is flowering and is so prolific and beautiful.

Is it the fact that I completely stripped and dug and turned over the old soil and added soil improver in this area before replanting? Who knows, but I am a happy salvia camper (for want of a better term) now.



Growing salvia seeds

Julie Kavanagh, Ferntree Gully, Victoria



A friend of mine bought two packets of seeds from Bunnings. 'Blaze of Fire' and Salvia tricolour mix. She planted twenty seeds of both salvias and they all germinated. I now am the proud owner of the 'Blaze of Fire' which I am lovingly watering. This has now got my interest in buying seeds from the Salvia Study Group and having read the seed germination tips on the website, I am assuming I too will be successful. I will report next newsletter on the current success (or not) of my new adventure.

MY FAVOURITE SALVIA



Salvia rubignosa has to be my favourite. It is intriguing waiting for the bright blue flowers to emerge from the wine purple bracts. The long flowering period can be extended with careful pruning. I constantly have to clear out dead stalks to keep the bush tidy. It is a good flower and causes much interest inside.

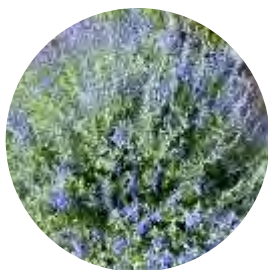
Best wishes to all. Neil Keir.

Maureen Scoble, Avondale Heights, Victoria



I fell in love with S. Van Houttei all over again after reading Sandra Fosters' ode in the Salvia News. I used to open my garden for the Open Garden Scheme in Victoria. One time (ONE time), that salvia bloomed its heart out for me on exactly the right weekend. Every person stopped in their tracks, right in front of that plant and worshipped. Alas it never happened again. I only water my plants through their first summer so S. Van Houttei went.

It did get me thinking though about favourite salvias and how the favourites have changed over the years. I got my first salvia from Sue Templeton perhaps 25 years ago. It was via mail order from her nursery on the Victoria/ New South Wales border. Not only has it survived but it has a place of honour next to the fence. It was my first favourite because it just grew when I knew nothing about gardening.



S. chamaedryoides came next. It also stayed. I think I have 6 plants now. That blue is to die for and it doesn't demand water all summer either. The next four I still have, but I have learnt that they are not to be trusted. They can spread alarmingly if you are not careful. S Christine Yeo, S. uliginosa, S. Black and Blue and S. microphylla 'Cyclamen'. Don't turn your back! I'm not in love with them anymore but we are still friends (mostly).



My next favourite was S. semi atrata. I now have a couple of that one.



But then I saw
S. miniata...
bright red in the
SHADE.
Yum.



Being really fickle
I soon moved on to
S. oxyphora with fat
hot pink flowers.
It's just lovely.



My last love is a disaster of my own making. Two years ago, I had my first spectacular flowering of S. 'Meigan's Magic'. I couldn't believe how beautiful it looked. It must have been in the perfect position with just morning sun. When I first saw it in the afternoon, it was in semi shade and the navy and white flowers just glowed. The "HOWEVER" now happened. I thought it was too big for that position and moved it. Two years later I'm still trying to recapture that magic. I may have to pull stuff out and put it back into that original position. Anyway, until I get it right, and see it looking wonderful again, I shall remain in a hopelessly besotted state. Isn't love tragic?



THANK YOU

Heather Lucas, Heathmont, Victoria

This article is to give a huge thank you to Stephanie Rendell for the time, talent and expertise she has given to her role as Editor for the past year. We would also like to thank her for her contributions to the planning and running of many salvia events, plus helping out at our selling events.

Stephanie unfortunately could not continue in this role due to having an incredibly busy life, being a Mum to a little toddler boy, having just had her second child (a lovely boy girl, Penelope) on 22nd July, 2020, as well as holding down a job.

Stephanie came into this role like a breath of fresh air, with new ideas and put her own stamp on the Salvia News. Her first edition of the Salvia News was the Spring 2019 Edition, No. 77 and her last being the bumper Spring 2020 Edition, No 80 (as we missed out on Winter's Edition due to Covid). We have been very blessed with having awesome editors for the Salvia News since its inception, starting off with Trudi Fry and then Beth Gilchrist (formerly Clisby) took over in 2011 and was editor for eight years.

We would also like to welcome our new Editor, Julie Kavanagh, both as a new member to our group and Editor. We look forward to meeting, catching up and chatting at our future events and of course to this edition (your first) of the Salvia News.

Salvias 'that missed the last edition'



S disermas



S eigli

S. hierosolymitana



S leucocephala



Summer

What is flowering now



Amistad



canariensis var
candissima



'Costa Rican Blue'



discolor



gesneriflora 'Red Rambler'



plectranthoides



'Purple Passion'



'Rubin'



S. canariensis 'Alba'

There are too many *greggii/microphylla* flowers to choose from, so Lyndi has chosen a selection of other flowers instead.

What is happening in my garden.

Judy Percy, Croydon, Victoria

Hello to the Salvia Study Group.

It has been an incredible 2020 for my husband and myself with both of us having leg and heart operations in March and July.

Three new great grandchildren also arrived. We cannot see two of them as they live in Beechworth and Albury. Our daughter came down in July to help us look after us and the garden.

Pruning was needed as our garden was like a jungle. We heavily cut the salvias (especially 'Royal Bumble') and it is so cool that the collection has come back with a vengeance. Cotinus are all leafing up with their golden and purple growth which I contribute to all the rain we have had. The weeping maples have been amazing.

I just love the salvias on the front fence competing with self-sown foxgloves. We had an enormous bird of paradise removed as it was becoming very hard to manage. A path has been created with a bird bath at end of it. I do intend to finish the mosaic bowl on the top. We are very happy with it so far.

Might even find space for another small salvia. I am very grateful for having a garden to get us through this year. So much missing Salvia Group meetings and garden visits.

Hope you are all well.



Salvias in Containers

Tine Grimston, Rowville, Victoria

Many Salvias seem to do just fine growing in containers. I am always moving things around to fill bare spots in my garden and have found that some of the smaller salvias do well in pots. I can move them to a prominent spot when they are flowering and retire them elsewhere when they have been pruned back and not looking their best. They can look really decorative in a nice container. Sometimes I plant into ordinary black garden pots and put those pots inside a decorative container. Sometimes I plant straight into the decorative container. If I plant directly into a basket, I line it with plastic first (just poke a few holes at the bottom). This stops soil and water coming out of all the gaps in the weave.

Many of my decorative containers are old baskets or rusty things, so I don't expect them to last forever. I just pick up others when the originals are too decrepit for further use. Keep an eye out for containers on hard rubbish piles or at the op shop.



Even some of the larger salvias cope OK in a pot. I have a salvia 'Pink Icicles' in a large pot and it doesn't seem to mind at all. It makes me prune it more religiously than if it was planted in the garden.

When the nurseries and Bunnings are open again, I will get some of the "potted colour" type salvias and display them in old baskets or galvanised pails.

Because my watering regime can be erratic, I usually put a tray of small pebbles or gravel in the bottom of the container and stand the pots on that. I fill the gaps around the pots with coir or straw or whatever I have at hand (only for aesthetic reasons), and then water as usual. The tray of pebbles holds some of the water, so if the plants are parched, they can put their roots down into the water, without the pot actually sitting in lots of water.

This seems to suit my erratic watering program.

Footnote:

Mosquito article in the Spring 2020 newsletter
Lyndi Garrett, Glen Waverley, Victoria

Mosquitoes are just as pesty this season, nothing has changed - they still bite, they still buzz around my face annoyingly!

When I look for them whilst I'm sitting outside doing cuttings, they are nowhere to be seen, but as soon as I have my hands full, they come in their dozens, so cuttings and potting mix go flying in all directions while I'm busy breaking my arms and leaving bruises on my legs while I'm trying to slap at them.

Just wait till I get my hands on them!!

Pesky little blighters!

Jobs for summer

Cut back salvias, especially those *greggii* and *microphylla* shrubs that have become leggy or full blown and beginning to flop everywhere, especially over other plants.

Keep salvia roots cool by watering well and mulching.

If you are cutting back now, don't forget to fertilise before mulching.

Large leaf salvia cuttings require shade to strike and the small leaf salvia cuttings like the sun, but only after they have spent a few days in the shade to settle.

Comments & Feedback

We hope you enjoy Salvia News as much as we enjoy collating it for you. We welcome your comments and feedback regarding this publication, our website, the Facebook group and the Study Group in general.

You can send your feedback to us at any time by emailing the Editor or Lyndi Garnett (Group Coordinator).

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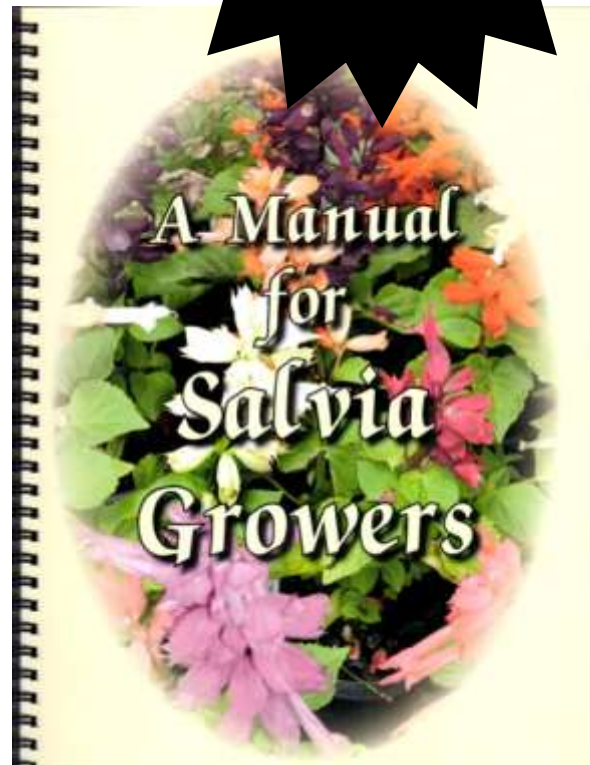
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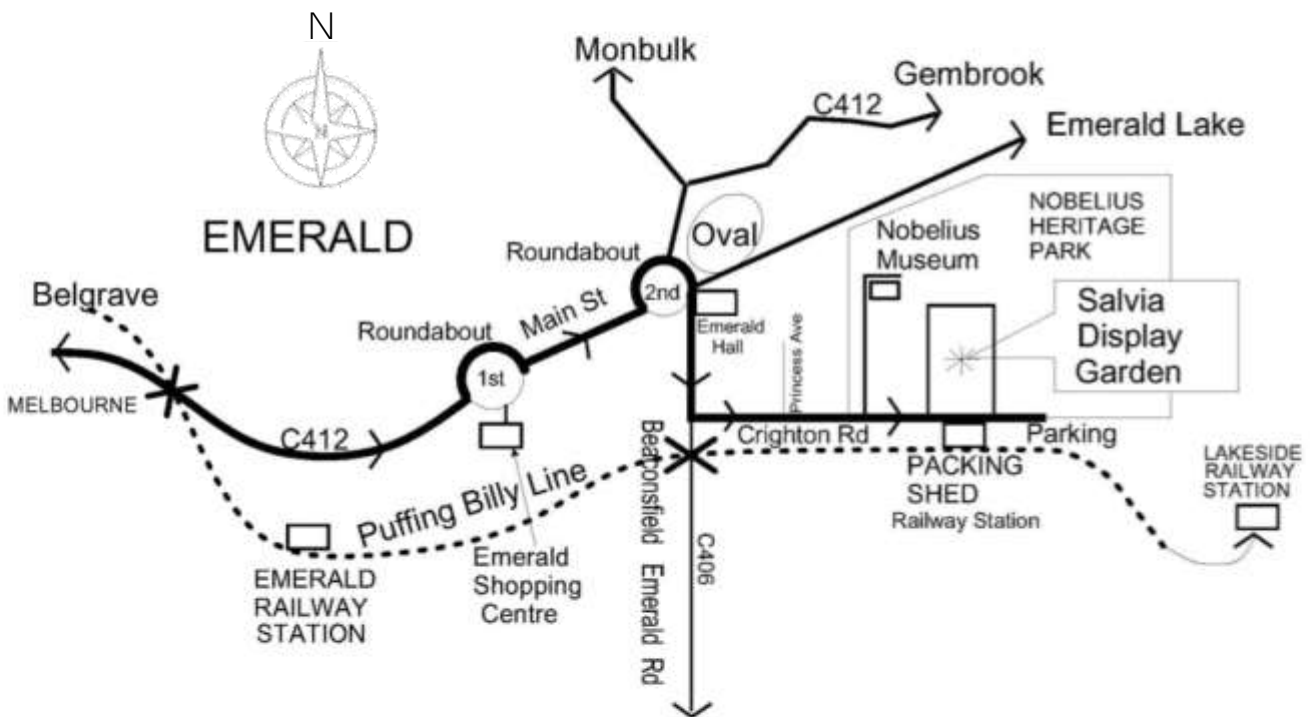
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DIRECTIONS TO THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN



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