

# Salvia News

NUMBER 85



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

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

Summer 2021

# VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP inc

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Find us on  **Salvia Study Group Vic**

## 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

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

## EDITORIAL

*Salvia* 'Van Houttei' is a lovely plant, with its uniquely burgundy flowers held high and produced right through the year. I have planted it widely here and it looks very fine against all companions. It's also tough as boots. It could have been a different story though, as when I was first planting out salvias a dozen at a time I didn't have my head around the particulars of each one, let alone have a range of planting locations. 'Van Houttei' must have shade here and so mine dwindled and died through Summer. Soon after, though, I saw an Instagram post from the UK that showed it in its glory and was inspired to give it a second try.

We learn a tremendous lot as gardeners from the experience of other gardeners. Commercial websites can be a great resource but so often you see the same paragraphs copied and pasted until you wonder whether there is any personal experience behind the information. This I think shows the value of organizations like our VSSG. Personal experience is shared through contributions to the Newsletter, and fed into the original content of the Website, which Lyndi has been doing an excellent job of expanding.

Of course the best inspiration comes from seeing other gardens, visiting them and chatting with the owners if you're lucky enough, or seeing photos. I'm sure we have all seen a plant in a public garden or friend's place and instantly developed a determination to have one for ourselves. We have some great reports of public and private gardens in this edition. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have, and maybe feel inspired to visit some.

*Stephen*

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**Copy deadline for the next edition of Salvia News is  
7th February 2022**

Please email your articles and photos to: [vssged@gmail.com](mailto:vssged@gmail.com)

Cover Photo is *Salvia* 'Dark Envy' photo by Jillian Barkell

**Read more of what's happening next year on page 18.**

We're beginning the year by visiting the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne. A beautiful restful place to begin the year and we will continue to visit more wonderful gardens throughout the year, so come and join us.

**FEB SUN 20TH | Melb. Botanic Gardens | Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra – Meet at "D" Gate – 11am**

Come and walk through the gardens, visiting the new Cacti and succulent garden. Just opposite is the Volcano designed by William Guilfoyle which has a huge array of aloes and succulents and other very interesting plants that can be used in the garden. Then wander down to the new sensory garden to fill your senses with delicate scents and a wonderful array of interesting plants for touching, smelling and again a beautiful restful place to wander.

Lunch will be on the lawn by the Lake Kiosk.

Phone Lyndi Ph 9803 4534 if coming.

**MAR SAT 5TH & SUN 6TH | Ferny Creek Plant Collectors Sale | 100 Hilton Rd (south end) Sassafras – 10am-4pm**

See our fresh Salvia collection waiting to be found.

Salvias for every garden situation.

Salvia books and cards for sale. Bring plants to be identified.

Place orders now so you don't miss out. Pick up on the day.

Email Lyndi: lgarnett844@gmail.com Ph: 9803 4534.

**MAR SUN 20TH | Geelong Garden Visit | 30 Cityview Dve, Wandana Heights – 11am**

This is a magnificent garden with so much to see where ever you look. This is a garden not to be missed. Carpooling may be necessary.

Bring a lunch plate to share. Tea / Coffee will be provided.

Phone Lyndi if coming Ph 9803 4534.

Phone Judy Medlyn Ph (03) 5249 1272.

**APR SAT 23RD & SUN 24TH | Yarra Valley Autumn Festival | 125 Quayle Rd, Wandin – 10am-5pm**

Come and check out our autumn collection of Salvias

Salvias of every colour, sun or shade, tall or small.

Salvia books will be on sale. Bring flowers/ leaves to be identified

Pre order your plants NOW so you don't miss out. Pick up on the day

Email or phone Lyndi with inquiries or order Ph 98034534

Email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

**MAY SUN 23RD | Antique Perennial Nursery | 3153 Healesville/Kinglake Rd, Kinglake – 11am**

Matt and Michael have now opened their nursery to the public on weekends. A huge array of rare and unusual perennials

Tea and coffee will be provided. Bring a lunch plate to share and a chair.

Phone Lyndi Ph 9803 4534 if coming. Numbers need to be confirmed.

# Two Top Instagram Accounts for Salvia Lovers

By Stephen Carlin

The wealth of social media platforms out there means that there is something for everyone, with each platform offering a different function. The attraction of Instagram for me is that it is a platform for sharing (or viewing) photos, which makes it great for seeing salvias growing in all parts of the world. Part of the interest is that you can see the very different growing conditions and results. Two accounts that I follow are The-sage-head from the UK, and salvias.com.ar from Argentina, both salvia enthusiasts.

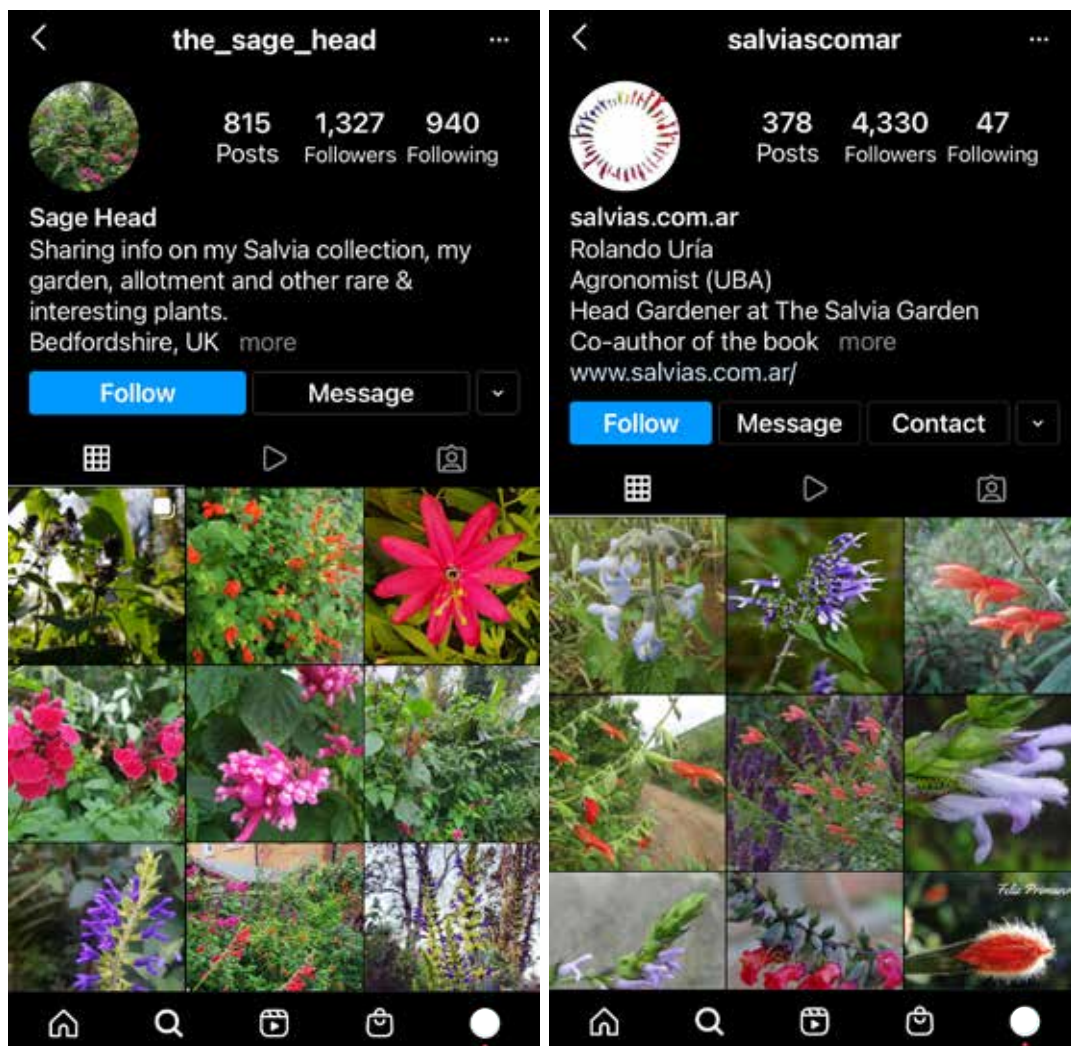
Ollie @the-sage-head has a huge collection, which he grows in his garden and allotment in Bedfordshire. It's interesting to see how he manages the collection by overwintering in the greenhouse, and to watch the explosion in growth as Spring progresses. The English have a very different attitude to gardening to us who don't have to contend with frozen soil.

Rolando Uria @salvias.com.ar has a large garden outside Buenos Aires, also with a huge

collection of salvias. He also has an active breeding program (he introduced S. 'Amistad'), a botanist's interest in the New World species, and has the luxury of being able to travel round the Americas collecting from the wild.

Both concentrate their posts on salvias, Ollie usually puts some cultivation notes in, which is great. Rolando posts on some salvias that we may never get (or at least will have to wait for biosecurity clearance), so we can admire them now.

For anyone who doesn't know Instagram, it is basically sharing pictures with the world, or likeminded folk. Users post pictures, usually with a short explanation, and other users see the posts either because they 'follow' the poster, or they follow a hashtag like #salvia. That's as far as it needs to go, although of course friendships tend to develop. If you're nervous about security, you can have an account that is entirely private, and just use it to see other people's posts (of lovely salvias).



# Connie's Garden

By Maureen Scoble

My friend Connie and her husband Julian have a farm on the Werribee plains. There is a large dam quite close to the house which is just as well because Connie is a passionate gardener. Also her garden is about 4 times bigger than mine (which is suburban size) and they need the water from the dam for all her lovely plants. You can see their property from the Geelong freeway because they have a big stand of elms on either side of their driveway. I think there are 78 elms. The drive up to the house under the elm tunnel and beside the dam is very special. Lovely and green and cool in Summer and just glorious in Autumn with the coloured leaves. Julian doesn't really garden but he does have serious responsibilities. There is a

lot of lawn around the house and down as far as the dam. Julian mows all that with a ride on mower. The lawn always looks fresh and green. He uses the same mower to chop up all the Autumn leaves from the elms. Good compost! Connie says he is very good at heavy digging but I'm not sure that he likes it much.

Connie's garden is one of the rambling country gardens that you love to explore. There are quite a number of very old River Red Gums in the paddock and down near the dam. On the other side of the water they planted lots of natives as a windbreak and to enhance the view from the house. There are clumps of Eucalypts dotted

about, and as you know they can be quite hard to grow things under. Connie has established clumps of Clivias which always look good. She is also trying other things such as *Salvia 'Anthony Parker'* with *Euphorbia wulfenii*. That is a great combination and they seem quite happy in the dappled (dry!) shade. I did give her a *Salvia miniata* (bright red), which enjoys light shade in my garden but for some reason it didn't go very well for her.

In front of the house there is a giant roundabout. It is filled with blue and mauve plants; lots of convolvulus, Salvias (from the 'So Cool' range) and Hebe. The planting is very dense so hardly any weeds can grow but it survives the hot, dry summers very well.

Connie loves roses and she has lots. They look wonderful for months but of course in their first flush during November they are fabulous. She has them scattered about the garden beds but also draped over a rose tunnel. Just beautiful. On either side of the rose tunnel



'So Cool' salvias in the roundabout



*Salvia* 'Amistad' between 'Bonica' roses



Mid-height mixed bed



*Salvia* 'Amistad' goes nicely against white Camellia

are more roses. Here they are Bonica, interplanted with *Salvia* 'Amistad'. It looks wonderful and Connie doesn't have my problem with *S.* 'Amistad'. In my garden the birds get so enthusiastic about it that they break the flower stems trying to get the nectar. Connie has lots of other plants of course. Too many for me to mention. There are lovely stands of mop head hydrangeas, beautiful grasses and a vegetable garden to die for! Not only is it productive but it looks lovely too. Did I mention that she is a terrific cook?

Leading up to the front door are bushes of plum coloured Loropetalum. Fantastic plant and it looks good all year. Not too far away *S.* 'Mystic Spires' and *S. leucantha* grow happily. I gave her *S. discolor* which is sulking unfortunately. Connie moved it last year so hopefully this Summer it will be happier. I hope she likes it when it stops sulking... some people don't.

When it comes time to cut everything back, the whole family are involved. Connie cooks up a storm so they are well fed too! It takes a lot of work to deal with all that pruning. They leave this job until Winter has set in...no point diving into the middle of heavily planted garden beds when there may be snakes in there??? Connie has seen snakes in her garden. Well they have that lovely dam. She is quite philosophical about it and I guess I am too. My garden backs onto the Maribryngong River so of course there are snakes there too. I can't say that they have caused major issues although that doesn't mean I like them. Those damned ringtail possums though!

# Understanding Soil and Composting

By Craig Castree



For more information like this about soils, composting, and worm farming, you can obtain a copy of one of my books from [www.craigcastree.com.au](http://www.craigcastree.com.au)

Soil acts as an engineering medium, a habitat for soil organisms, a recycling system for nutrients and organic wastes. It is a regulator of water quality, a modifier of atmospheric composition. It is a medium for plant growth, making it a critically important provider of ecosystem services. Since soil has a tremendous range of available niches and habitats, it contains most of the Earth's genetic diversity.

Did you know that a gram of soil can have billions of organisms, belonging to thousands of species, mostly microbial and largely still unexplored? Organic carbon held in soil is eventually returned to the atmosphere through the process of respiration carried out by minute organisms. However, a substantial part is retained in the soil in the form of soil organic matter. Tillage (turning the soil over) usually increases the rate of soil respiration, leading to the depletion of soil organic matter. So, working the soil in some respects is counter-productive. Since plant roots need oxygen, ventilation is an important characteristic of soil. This ventilation can be accomplished via networks of interconnected soil pores, which also absorb and hold rainwater making it readily available to be taken up by plants. Since plants require a nearly continuous supply of water, but most regions receive sporadic rainfall, the water-holding capacity of soils is vital for plant survival. And this is just the tip off the iceberg of what soil is and does, so without giving you a science lesson, suffice to say that it is worth looking after it the best way you can.

It has become vitally important for all of us to get a better understanding of soil and how what we do to it has a huge impact on its health. To say nothing of the damage done by constantly working the soil, upsetting the ecosystem within it, the use of chemicals is also playing a huge

part on the declining soil health worldwide. This is in part due to the amount of composting insects being killed off by the constant use of chemicals in one form or another. Recent studies are indicating that 40% of all insects are in decline and could die out in the coming decades.

This is something we all should be very concerned about, whilst these insects might be small, I can assure you they have a very big part to play in the overall health of the planet. Insects serve as the base of the food chain, eaten by everything from birds to small mammals to fish. If they decline, everything else will as well. Then there is all flowering plants and about 75% are pollinated by insects, as well as the crops that directly produce more than one-third of the world's food supply. Whilst farming is heavily responsible for much of this, the burden lies with all of us, we all need to do our part and do what we can to be part of the solution and not the problem.

One of the first things we can all do is stop turning our soil over, and instead ensure it always has a cover of mulch no matter what! I use something like sugar cane no more than 25mm thick. This allows the composting insects to return to the topsoil as it is cooler and moister because of the mulch. In doing so, they aerate the soil for you, whilst working away at doing what they do best, breaking down and composting the organic matter you are applying over the top of the mulch. Lightly sprinkling good well-rotted compost over the mulch and scattering pelletised manure type fertilisers or manures will feed your soil. As you water, or it rains, this starts to become incorporated into the soil and if you continue to do this, I can assure you that you will build magnificent soil. You will not believe your eyes with the amount of worms etc. you will find



Compost used as surface mulch

when it comes time to replant your garden with edibles, give it a try and see for yourself. You will also notice that your soil will retain more moisture, which is vital for good plant health.

Lightly dress your beds over the top of the mulch and allow the composting insects to do what they do best and turn it into soil instead. Let them aerate the soil whilst they are working away, that way you get great water penetration when you water your plants. I am a firm believer in not having a dog and barking too, to coin a phrase. Why turn the soil over when you have insects that will do a far better job than you will? And they do it consistently.



Compost. Central to good garden soil

Compost is what organic material turns into after it has broken down. Composting grass clippings, small prunings, weeds, food scraps, animal manures, provided they are not from meat eaters, like dogs or cats, due to worming tablets. Well-aged chook or other poultry manure, all help to make fantastic compost, and of course worm castings would top off a great mix. Compost overall is a wonderful dressing you can apply to your garden as mulch. Australian soils are naturally low in nutrients so composting will go a long way to helping your soil become better quality.

All your food and vegetable scraps, eggshells, paper, clothes dryer lint, vacuum bag dust, and a whole range of other ingredients stop going to landfill creating methane gas and a whole raft of other problems. By composting our own waste on site and putting it back into the soil is most certainly where we all should be heading. Remember to be a part of the solution and not part of the problem, and next time you are out in the garden just think about how important the role is that soil plays in our lives and see what you can do to your own soil better to look after it for the future generations to come.



Coarse compost

# Clunes Garden

By Robyn Tyson

My mum Jeannette, was involved in the horticultural industry for many years during her working life. She has lived in the Central Highlands of Victoria for the past 35 years, in a quaint little town known as the first place to discover gold. Clunes is on old volcanic soils and it's very rocky. The town itself is in a valley next to a creek.

Because of the elevation, it is hot in summer and bitter in winter with frosts starting in autumn and carrying through spring, a challenging climate and situation for any gardener.

When mum and my step dad bought the old miners cottage in 1989 it was run down with an overgrown garden, with some big trees, sheds galore and some hidden treasures. An antique rose thought to be over a hundred years old (unfortunately this was killed when the power in the main street was put underground) and a heritage listed willow that has since succumbed to wind.

The house has been renovated, it is heritage listed, built in 1865, and it was the original

Cobb & Co stopping station on the route from Ballarat to Marlborough.

The garden, which is about a quarter acre, is jammed packed full of roses, salvias, bulbs, natives and some select deciduous trees. It is glorious in spring and many visitors to town are often found wandering around in it or standing in the street admiring it.

With Lyndi's help I of have purchased salvias for mum's garden over the years and it has been trial and error, having thought some of the Mexican or South African types might suit, it boils down to mass plantings of *S. microphylla* and *S. greggii* cultivars with the odd *S. africana-lutea* thrown in.

She loves visitors and showing her garden off and having a chat, if you're ever up that way, you will probably find her on the veranda at morning tea time, nestled between the old bank and the bakery.

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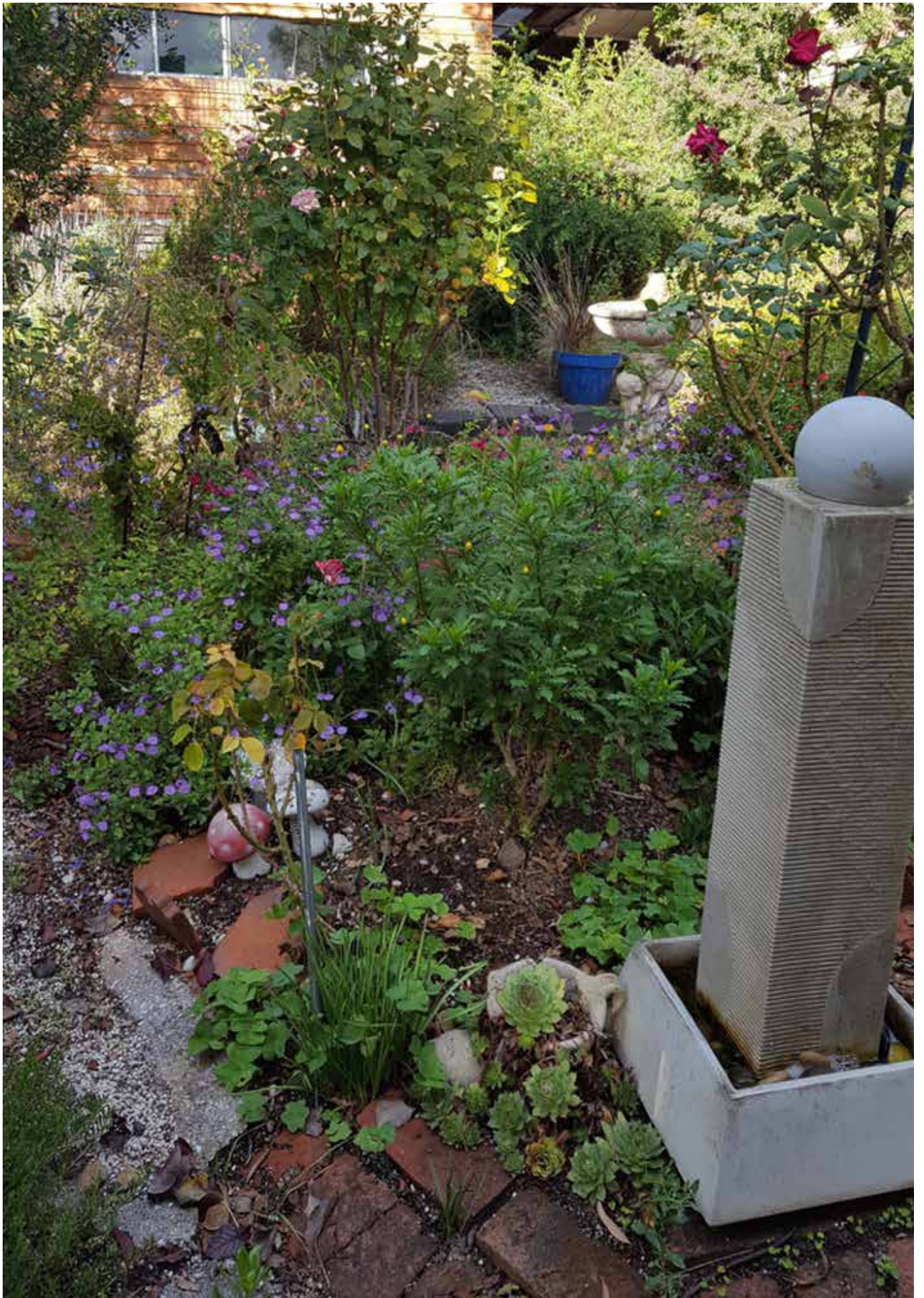
*S. microphylla greggii* making a mixed height display



*S. microphylla greggii* spilling from wall to path



*Salvia* 'Hot Lips'



A mixed planting with roses and garden features

# Landscaping with Salvias

By Julie Campbell

For the past three years we have been trying to use our experiences with Salvia positions and characteristics, to apply group plantings in appropriate areas. We can now see fully laden perennial borders with succession planting seeming to work, in most cases. This has been a big learning curve.

We placed a rather large gazebo at one end of a straight path and planted white wisteria each side. This is going well. Friends from the Salvia Study group helped me source *S. melissodora* and *S. 'Pink Musk'* however the heat murdered a few. Not to worry, there are now several of each established in the "Avenue" bed complementing the *S. 'Carradonna'* drifts and *Eryngium 'Blue Glitter'*. Vertical Structure comes from several Crab Apple 'loensis' and *Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster'*. Succession colour comes from the December and April hacking back of the 'Carradonna', numerous hair trims of 'Pink Musk' and 'Karl Foerster' flowering in Summer/Autumn. We have Rosemary 'Huntington' spilling over the wall all year.

The eastern side of the Avenue path has a double hedge treatment. Rosemary 'Tuscan Blue' forms the outside wall and a row of *S. africana-caerulea* are clipped into balls on the inside edge. They have just a soaker line providing minimum water. Great plan. But. The vegie garden with tomatoes was next door, sending lots of water into the hedge! We have now replanted and have a water barrier and drain in place. Time will tell if the constant rain in July has killed more of our very hardy *S. africana-caerulea*.

We had collections of several *S. nemorosa* to place; 'Amethyst' groupings (quite tall) are now starring in the long Northern bed, 'East Friesland' groups are in Salvia Walk (the longest established Salvia border), drifts of 'Kate Glenn' in the Southern bed, sweeps of white 'Snow Hills' in the white bed, 'Caradonna' and a mix of pinks bought randomly from Mitre 10 in the garden entrance bed, and a grouping of 'Blue Hills', are all in different areas. Have been thrilled with them. They are so resilient and help in marking each separate area with an individual colour palette.

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*Salvia 'Kate Glenn'* in foreground

Random remarks on some of the salvia groupings in the garden.

One original plant of *Salvia spathacea* has grown into a sizable clump in the “Native” bed and looks very comfortable flowering for most of the year. *S. leucophylla* ‘Bees Bliss’ is also creeping amongst these native plants.

*S. ‘Annie B’* (instead of *S. leucantha*), numerous *S. argentea*, *S. ‘Celestial Blue’*, a *S. leucophylla* and *leucophylla ‘Figuro’*, *S. apiana*, ground cover *S. aurita var. aurita* and a grouping of *S. ‘Finn Grove’s Improvement’*, and *S. ‘Boundary Creek’* are all working well in the bed which competes with the voracious roots of several *Casuarinas*. *S. amarissima* has also proven to be very hardy here with a generous flowering period. Lovely. The grey leafed bed pretty much planted up.

*S. ‘Amethyst’* was quite a bit taller than all my other *nemorosas*. Maybe they have more water? I’ll cut the water back this Summer.

Here’s hoping this year’s Charity Open Garden weekend won’t be cancelled again. (30 and 31 of October). Stay safe everyone.



*Salvia ‘Pink Musk’* with crab apples. *S. ‘Karl Foerster’* in background

## Website Update

Just to bring you all up to date with my progress on the Salvia Website.

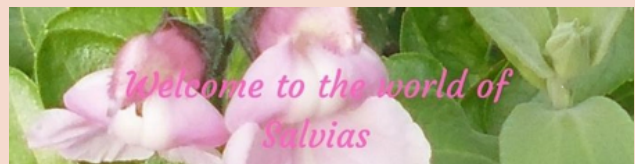
For those who often look at our website or those that don’t often go on, you would have realised that the pages look a little different. I’ve finally worked out how to place a “header” at the top of each page with a flourish of a heading or text to make the subject more appealing.

I’ve tried to make the header appropriate to the subject of the page by choosing a photo and the script to compliment the page.

It is so interesting dabbling with photos, as to what works and what doesn’t, what you think might work, only to find that really doesn’t look good after all. The number of scripts (fonts) are fascinating, so many, so much choice, but I found I wanted something with a flair, a flourish, nothing that was boring or mundane and again, playing with colours was an interesting exercise, finding out what colour could be read easily and what colour went with what background. The

good part about these headers is that the photo doesn’t need to be perfect, it could be slightly blurred or off centre, but there needed to be enough of the subject that could be stretched and enlarged to make a nice background.

I really like the “headers”. I think they make the pages attractive and more appealing, making the pages more inviting to be read. Please note that not all pages have been updated in content, photos etc. yet, but this is a work in progress as you all know, as is each variety of Salvia. While you’re waiting, you can at least enjoy the look of the page, the photos and find the information within the page interesting.



# A Place for Toughies

By Geoff Crowhurst

The Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in Victoria, and probably second only to the Melbourne General Cemetery as the oldest in the metropolitan area. It covers 31 acres and slopes to the N-E, thus well open to the sun. The first burial listed is for 1859. Laid out as a garden cemetery according to the principles of Englishman John Loudon, with curving paths following the contours of the site, the cemetery now has many fine established trees. These include Bhutan, Italian, Bunya Bunya and Canary Islands Pines, Camphor Laurel, Lilly Pilly and the rare Golden Funeral Cypress. In the years after the cemetery was established it became a popular place to visit, then at the tramway terminus, and with tearooms opposite.

From the 1950s maintenance became difficult owing to the cost of labour after World War 2, so grass grew and there was re-emergence of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Introduced plants like pelargonium, agapanthus, gazania and bulbs became naturalized, with ivy and the rootstock Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*) taking off. But in the 1990s efforts to 'tidy up' and the use of herbicide betrayed the intent of the original designer and earlier workers.



*Salvia 'Hot Lips'*



*Salvia aurea*



*Salvia discolor*



*Salvia corrugata*



*Salvia semi-atrata*



*Salvia leucophylla*

Fortunately, herbicide is now little used, so that a huge variety of plants now flourishes, among them a number of salvias.

An enthusiastic group of volunteers has weeded, planted and mulched, though covid-19 has called a halt to their activity. In spring there is plenty of colour, with the old purple *Iris germanica* 'Nepalensis' seemingly everywhere. The clay-loam soil is moisture retentive, plus the old grave sites with their surrounds prevent rain run-off. Nearly all grave sites are no longer visited or maintained by relatives of the deceased, so permission to plant is not an issue.

Easily the most common salvia to be seen is *S. aurea* (syn. *africana-lutea*), followed by 'Hot Lips', but *muirii*, *discolor*, *corrugata* and *semi-atrata* can also be found. A plant of *S. leucophylla* which I planted a couple of years ago has done very well and is now in flower. It will probably benefit from a moderate prune a little while later. The volunteers have put in a number of *microphylla* and *greggi* type salvias, but on my most recent visit I didn't get to see them. No doubt there are more shrubby salvias which could cope with the 'plant and forget regime' at the cemetery, which is well worth a visit, with the main entrance open to vehicles (9.00 am– 5.00pm) being just off High St in Parkhill Rd.

# Smoking Trial for Salvia Seed Germination

By Stephen Carlin

There are a few tricks to germinating *Salvia* seeds. The main one is to sow on the surface and give them the light they require to germinate optimally, and for me the corollary of that is to sow before a rainy spell to prevent a wet/dry cycle for the exposed seeds. Another suggestion is to expose the seeds to smoke.

Smoke is often a stimulus for germination in plants from Mediterranean climates, where Summer fires precede mild wet Winters. Many plants take advantage of ash beds and reduced canopy to regenerate. The *Salvias* from California, the Mediterranean, and South Africa are thus good contenders to have a smoke response. *Salvias* from other areas tend to have high germination rates in my experience, so coaxing isn't necessary.

I did a small test a couple of years ago where I first sowed 10 seeds each of 13 *salvia* species. Five species germinated easily, leaving 8 to test whether they could be coaxed to germinate with smoke. Of those, *Salvia aurita*, *S. canariensis* 'Alba', and *S. leucophylla* seemed (from 10 seeds of each treatment) to germinate better after smoke treatment. This year I gave it another try with higher numbers (either 100 or 70 seeds each treatment), and a few varieties of *S. canariensis*.

The results are in the table below.

Salvia	% germination	
	unsmoked	smoked
<i>S. canariensis candidissima</i>	23	50
<i>S. canariensis</i> 'Alba'	17	44
<i>S. canariensis species</i>	36	24
<i>S. leucophylla</i>	47	48
<i>S. aurita</i>	71	83

Surprisingly, smoking improved germination in 'Alba' and *candidissima* cultivars of *S. canariensis*, but not in the species form. Unlike my previous trials, smoking had no effect on *S. leucophylla* and *S. aurita* germination, both of which germinated well.

My conclusion from this is that smoking can improve germination in selected *salvia* cultivars where it is otherwise low, although for a particular

cultivar other factors (i.e. possibly seed age) introduce variability. Due to the extra process and risk of overheating the seeds, I would only use it when necessary, although if you have smoked water to spray on at sowing, like dilute Epsom Salts it won't hurt and may help.

One last observation is that a duplicate early trial had woeful germination overall when the days took a hot and dry turn. Watering just doesn't cut it. In my conditions the trick is to sow when a wet week is forecast; those rainy days are special.



Salvia seedlings showing set-up, smoke treated on right

## Methods

I used a home (fish) smoker, a large metal box that you can smoulder wood chips in at one end, and sit seeds on a rack at the other end. I put the seeds on ceramic spoons, and smoking took about 10 min, with lots of smoke and frequent checking the box didn't warm too much. The treated seeds smelled smoky when I opened their storage bags a couple of days later. In my early trials I left seeds to imbibe overnight on kitchen paper soaked in smoked water, which had a similar effect but makes the transfer to seed raising trays tricky.

My seed raising set-up is trays of sieved potting mix on a outdoor raised platform under 50% shade cloth (to keep grazers away and let the sun shine in).

# News from South East Queensland

By Carol Kerkin, The Perennial Poppies Group Inc

Both autumn and winter this year brought unseasonal but much appreciated rain to many parts of southeast Queensland so our gardens have been thrown off-balance somewhat. Here in the northern parts of the Gold Coast hinterland we saw good falls in all but June and August which still received a couple of light showers of 3-5ml each time. Having no access to town water this was a real bonus for us as it has kept the tanks topped and the dam at a healthy level. Our garden has responded accordingly and given us such delight.

I know that I am not saying anything that you haven't heard probably hundreds of times over the past 18 months or so but during these uncertain times we have been spending a great many hours keeping busy and tending our acreage garden. While many garden events have been postponed or cancelled those that

have gone ahead have given us the opportunity to splurge a little on new and exciting plants. When restrictions have been allowed, we made visits to nurseries and 'the big green shed', coming home with treasures to fill a gap or two in the garden. And among these treasures have been the odd salvia or two.

While visiting one of our favourite garden centres in the Toowoomba area early this year I glanced briefly over their selection of small pots of perennials on the off chance that something might catch my eye, and it did. A salvia that was vaguely familiar but that I couldn't quite recall and the name on the label meant absolutely nothing to me. So out came the phone and I trusted Google to prompt my poor failing memory. Lightbulb moment, no wonder it seemed familiar. 'Boundary Creek' is a seedling believed to be a cross between *S. scabra* and *S. 'Finn Grove'*. Pale mauve flowers very much like *S. 'Finn Grove'* and gorgeous foliage closely resembling its other parent made an attractive compact plant in its pot, but I wondered how it would do in the garden. So, the 2 pots that they had on the nursery bench were destined to come home with us. One went straight into the garden while the other had a little tip prune before being potted on into a 10 inch pot where it would live for the next 3 months. Both plants did extremely well and have not been without flower ever since. The potted specimen (and the tip prunings) went along to our Salvia Study Day to be oohed and aahed over. Those who have been trialling this plant in the past 6 months have all said that it has passed with flying colours. Ours are planted in 2 very different parts of the garden but they are both getting full sun with late afternoon shade. Their performance hasn't differed and so far, they have reached a tidy 1m in height.

Another newish addition has been *S. 'Amante'*, sister of the unstoppable *Salvia 'Amistad'*. Seeming to be a more compact grower this plant had a definite break in flowering over the winter months, its beautifully hued blooms beginning to appear again in early September held high above the lush foliage. One of these plants has shown a tendency to sucker ever so slightly but



*Salvia 'Rockin' Fuchsia'*

I am really not complaining as yet as it simply means more plants for elsewhere in the garden. I will just hope that over time it doesn't decide to take on the habit of some of the other suckering salvias such as *S. oxyphora* and *S. guaranitica*.

Has anyone else been literally dazzled by *Salvia* 'Roman Red'? We entered the garden centre and our eyes were immediately drawn to a table down the end of an aisle that was ablaze with colour. We made a beeline for the table to find it jampacked with *S.* 'Roman Red' in 6 inch pots at \$15 and one just had to come home with us. Ten minutes later, at the back of the store, a markdown table had half a dozen of the same plants (finished flowering of course) but for \$3 each. The \$15 one went back on the bench and three of the reduced ones went into our basket. They were planted that afternoon and within weeks they were back in full glowing flower and haven't stopped since.

We had a huge cut-back and revamp in the main salvia garden at what I thought was a time much too early in the season. But because our autumn/winter flowerers had come and gone much earlier this year possibly because of a milder season and as it was a matter of when we had the time to do it, we took the bull by the horns and attacked. It did look a little sparse once we were done but we knew that it would be only a matter of time before we would not be able to see where we had been. As a mixed planted bed there was still plenty of interest. Self-seeded poppies, Queen Anne's lace and cleome were popping up after John's generous application of horse poo. Dianthus and pelargoniums were coming into their own and last year's feverfew had been generous with

their offspring, even if mostly on the gravel paths rather than in the garden itself. Clearing out also allowed us to take stock of another couple of salvias that had only been planted within the last 10 months and had become lost beneath the more mature established plants. *Salvia bullulata* was purchased simply as a whim and because I loved the thought of something a little different with its turquoise flowers. It was planted in filtered light under an *Ichroma* where *S.* 'San Carlos Festival' would riot at its feet. Two longish branches flopped lazily and gave us a token flowering which was a bit of a disappointment. As part of the big clear out I took the wayward growth back quite hard to where I could see new growth budding and I am pleased to say that it is now growing strongly upright and bushing out. Hopefully this coming season will do it proud *S. westeriae* was a gift from a friend (another salvia nut) and was planted a bit further along and on the other side of the path. Here it jostled for space surrounded by *S.* 'Matilda', *S.* 'Omaha Gold' and *S.* 'Follett's Folly'. Growth habit seems to be narrow so far, but it has reached 80 cm in height and seems healthy enough. If over the coming months it becomes swamped and overshadowed by those surrounding it, we may have to think about transplanting it just to give it a fair go.

We have been lucky enough when visiting the Big Green Shed to come across some of the newer series of salvias, 'Mirage' and 'Rockin'' (from Proven Winners) for a couple of dollars each so have bought them home for a little TLC. Some have done better than others, but you get to expect that.

## Another Name Change

*Salvia rubiginosa* = *Salvia mocinoi*

This has been confirmed by the RBG here in Melbourne and Kew Gardens in London.



# Salvia Sale Day 2021

Well, we did it again, we sold out! Fantastic! We had sold out by 11.30am, it took just 1 ½ hours for every plant to go from eight heavily laden tables full of Salvia plants. Quite a record to keep upholding. The last sell out was 2019 and again, it only took 1 ½ hours for all the plants to be sold.

Earlier in the week, I had gone up to distribute flyers for the day – What was happening this coming Sunday and all plants \$5.00. Flyers were given to businesses to put up in their windows or given out to clients, pinned to notice boards, stuck on Rubbish bins, bus shelters, attached to walkways and balustrades, public toilets etc., while A-frames were placed on each of the roundabouts, all advertising our sale on Sunday.

On Thursday Jillian, Christine and I went up to cordon off the garden along the trees on either side, using the trees up the top and a few stakes at the bottom. This then became a site with an entrance and an exit. Because of the flyers around the town and the garden cordoned off, members of the public thought we were having the sale then and there – how disappointed they were, as they knew they had to come early to grab some bargains, but perhaps not quite that early.

D day! Sunday dawned clear and dry, so that was a good start to our Salvia Day. Everyone

was up early, tables being sorted and erected, plants being disgorged from cars, all colour coded to help the helpers put whatever plant on the correct table and while the helpers arrived, I had to go and change the A-frames to TODAY, place more flyers by the bank ATM's and put up all the other banners.

When I arrived back, it was a hive of activity, still more plants were being placed on tables, the selling tables were being organised with all the pieces of information to be given out. (Thankfully we had a few volunteers to fold all the papers before hand, a lot quicker that way)

Umbrellas were unfurled to protect the tables, cups of coffee were given out to parched workers and the overseer at the entrance was settled with a table with a QR code, a notice to show double vaxxing and a sign in book as well as a person ready to click in each person – 113 people passed through.

Members of the public began lining up, some waiting patiently sitting in their chairs, all waiting for the starting signal.

With everything in it's place and perhaps a little early ( my watch is set 5mins early) 10am arrived and it was time to open the flood gates!.

People streamed in, picking up the baskets, they eagerly went along the tables looking and grabbing what ever bargains they could. Some wanted red, some wanted blue, others missed out on the whites and yellows, all a frenzy to find their Salvias. With every free basket, it was grabbed and filled with more plants.

Those who had seen sense, had placed orders, so they didn't miss out, the bags of plants were all picked up from a well organised Mary who ticked them off the list. While the first lot of purchases were had, some took the time to wander through the garden to find out how some of these Salvias grew, they found other Salvias flowering, some didn't realise that they grew so tall, others were flabbergasted as to how many Salvias we had in the



Mary, Geoff and Fiona helping at the Nobelius Sale



Public entering the Nobelius Sale



Public relaxing before the start

garden, they had no idea there were so many. So along the tables they went again in the hope of finding those other Salvias they had just seen.

All too soon it was coming to an end. Just as it was coming to 11.30am, we felt the first rain drops and as there were only a ½ dozen plants left, we gave them away to a couple of lucky girls.

Hurriedly, all paperwork was packed away, tables packed up, everything was tidied, the cordon was dismantled and all of a sudden the garden was cleared of all the excitement of the morning's hustle and bustle.

Helpers retired down to have a well earned cup of tea and something to eat. Then it was time to go out and retrieve all the flyers off the walls, walkways etc. banners taken down and A-frames collected and head back to say thankyou to all the volunteers who helped the morning go so smoothly. Without that help from our volunteers, the Group could not hold such an event, so a big THANK YOU to everyone who helped.

Let's hope that next year it will be bigger and better. So if anyone wants to be part of that wonderful workforce, please just put up your hand and come along.



Helpers at the Nobelius Sale

# WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT YEAR

We're beginning the year by visiting the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne. A beautiful restful place to begin the year and we will continue to visit more wonderful gardens throughout the year, so come and join us.

# 2022

## FEBRUARY – SUN 20TH

**Melb. Botanic Gardens (11am) | Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra | Meet at "D" Gate**

Come and walk through the gardens, visiting the new Cacti and succulent garden. Just opposite is the Volcano designed by William Guilfoyle which has a huge array of aloes and succulents and other very interesting plants that can be used in the garden.

Then wander down to the new sensory garden to fill your senses with delicate scents and a wonderful array of interesting plants for touching, smelling and again a beautiful restful place to wander.

Lunch will be on the lawn by the Lake Kiosk.

Phone Lyndi if coming.



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## MARCH – SAT 5TH & SUN 6TH

**Ferny Creek Plant Collectors Sale (10-4pm) | 100 Hilton Rd (south end) Sassafras**

**90th anniversary of the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society!**

Loads of stalls with so many different types of plants, worthy of a Plant Collectors Expo 2022.

See our fresh Salvia collection waiting to be found.

Salvias for every garden situation, for shade, full sun, tall screening plants, small balcony or patio plants, ground covers and hedges, tough hardies for the seaside or hotspots. We have them all waiting for you.

Salvia books and cards for sale.

Email or phone Lyndi to place orders now so you don't miss out. Pick up on the day.



## CONTACT LYNDI

Email: [lgarnett844@gmail.com](mailto:lgarnett844@gmail.com) | Ph (03) 9803 4534

## MARCH – SUN 20TH

### Geelong Garden Visit (11am) | 30 Cityview Dve, Wandana Heights

This is a magnificent garden with so much to see where ever you look. This is a garden not to be missed. Carpooling may be necessary.

Bring a lunch plate to share.  
Tea / Coffee will be provided

Contact Lyndi (details below) or phone  
Judy Medlyn on (03) 5249 1272 if coming.



## APRIL – SAT 23RD & SUN 24TH

### Yarra Valley Autumn Festival (10am-5pm) | 125 Quayle Rd, Wandin

Come and check out our autumn collection of Salvias. Salvias of every colour, sun or shade, tall or small. Salvia books will be on sale. Bring flowers/leaves to be identified

Pre order your plants NOW so you don't miss out. Pick up on the day

Loads of stalls with rare plants, garden tools and implements, garden structures, water features everything else you might want for a garden. Food and drink stalls available.

Email or phone Lyndi with inquiries or to order.

## MAY – TO BE ADVISED



# The Victorian Salvia Study Group. Inc

## NEW MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes Salvia News Annual Subscription

(NOT FOR RENEWALS)

Any queries, phone Tine Grimston – see details below

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Tine Grimston, Membership Officer

Victorian Salvia Study Group

4 Crimea Cls,

Rowville Vic. 3178

Ph. (03) 0466 285 542 Email: tinegrimston@gmail.com

Cheque / Money Order (payable to Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.)

Direct Deposit:

BSB: 633-000 A/c No: 116846122 Acc. Name: Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.

PayPal: online – vssginc1@tpg.com.au Website: www.salvias.org.au

**Surname & Initial (admin purposes only) please**

A form must be completed with all types of payment and sent to the Membership Officer

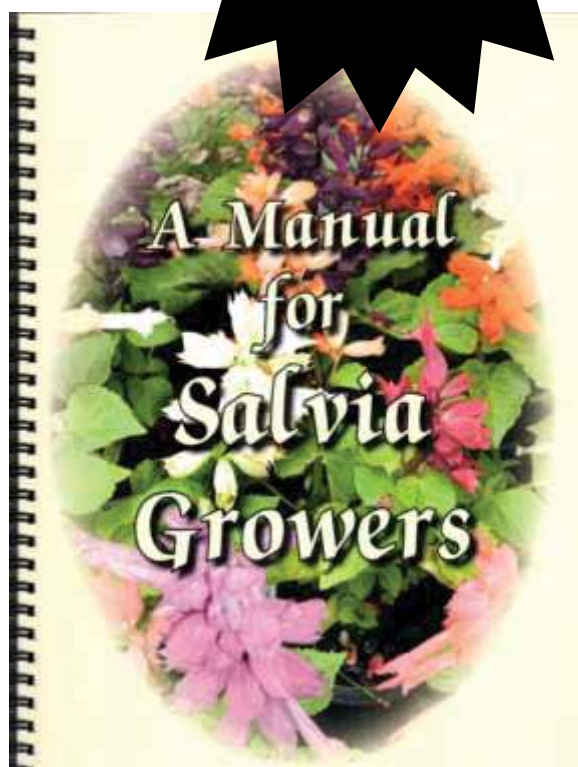
# A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

by Meg Bentley

There are now approximately  
370 Species and Cultivars represented,  
202 Photographs, Illustrations and Index

Contents include:

- Botany of Salvia
- Characteristics of Leaves
- Salvia microphylla & greggii differences
- Salvia karwinskii and cultivars
- Purple Majesty and Black Knight
- Salvia Maintenance
- Hardy Salvias and Shade Lovers
- Containers/Hanging Baskets/Hedges
- As an Accent in the Garden
- Propagating and Pruning
- Colourful Tints of Stressed Leaves
- Pests and Disease
- Where to see Salvias
- Cultivation Notes and Name Changes



Quantity	Item	Price per item	Postage per item	Total
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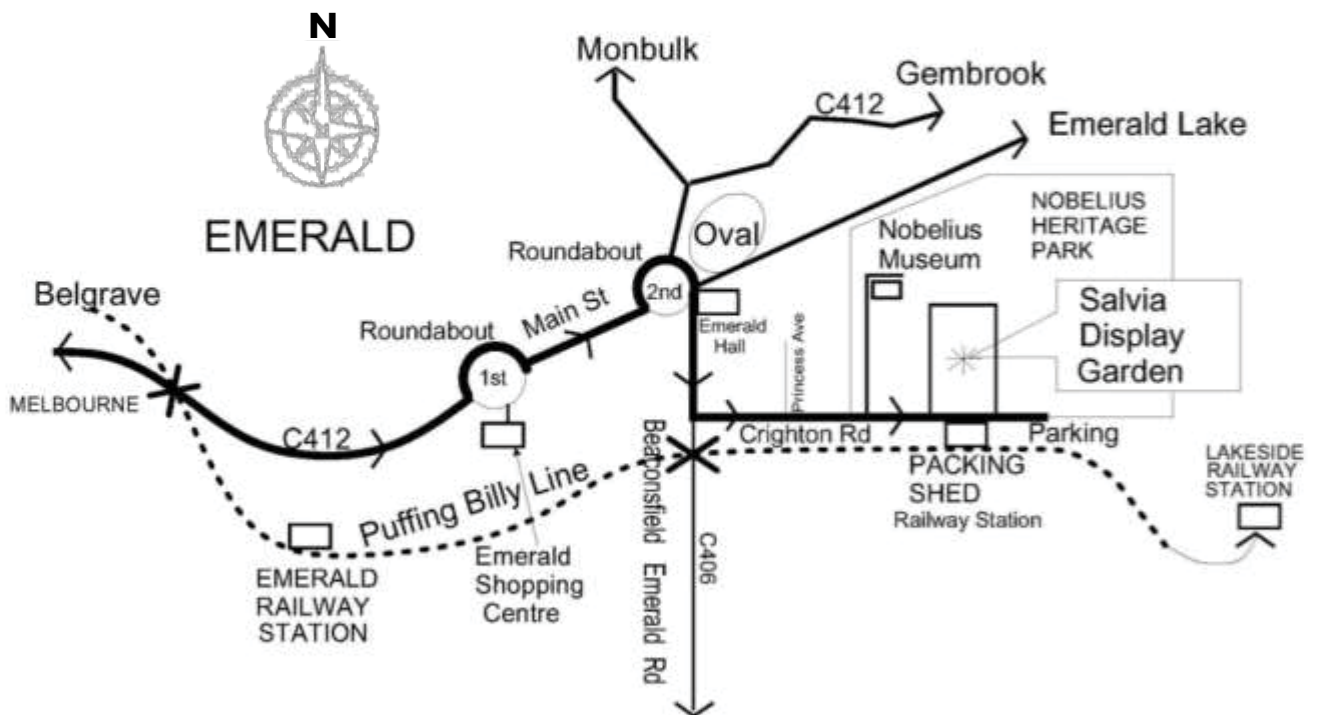
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Enquiries to Jillian Barkell (03) 9756 6361

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