

Salvia News

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Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc

www.salvias.org.au

Winter 2023

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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Website: www.salvias.org.au

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of Salvia News. Thank you to our contributors who have served up another rich menu of information and inspiration. And, especially for new members, two recipes have been reprinted from previous editions – Meg’s to tempt our taste buds, and Norm’s to prompt our salvias to flower their little buds off.

Lyndi’s photos and description of what’s happening at Nobelius remind us that this is a very good time to visit our Display Garden which, by the way, has the honour of being a Plants Trust registered garden collection. Any members who would like to participate in maintaining the garden can come along on the first Wednesday of the month when Jillian and Lyndi and their band of happy helpers are busy with pruning, planting and generally keeping the garden at its peak best. As well as, of course, having a good laugh and a chat while they work away. Just ring Lyndi on 9803 4534 for further details.

As I sit here typing, I’m waiting for four little

spinebill visitors to flit in for their usual lunch-time tour of my flowering salvias. I’ve noticed that they and my other nectar feeding visitors, the noisy miners and wattle birds, like to perch on the various plant supports and stakes I have around the garden while they sup on the nectar produced by those ever-generous salvias. Happily, this habit tends to reduce the damage (aka pruning) the bigger birds cause to the plants while they are getting their lunch or breakfast or dinner.

And finally, it is with much sadness that we say good-bye to Irene Robinson, a valued, long-time member and former Treasurer of the Victorian Salvia Study Group. All those who knew Irene comment on her kindness, her commitment to good causes, how they valued her friendship and much more. Vale, dear Irene.

Enjoy what’s flowering in winter and happy gardening.

Andreina

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Copy deadline for the next edition of Salvia News is

1st August 2023

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

Cover Photo is *S. involucrata* ‘Bethellii’. Photo by Lyndi Garnett

Read more of what's happening this winter on page 22.

We began 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. So come and join us.

JUNE SUN 4TH | Propagating and Potting Up Day | Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald (Crighton Rd. Beneath the Packing Shed along the Puffing Billy Train Line. On the lawn in front of the Emerald Museum)

Learn how and when to propagate Salvias, take cuttings of difficult Salvias, and pot up those cuttings or repot plants to take home.

Bookings essential.

Email or phone Lyndi if coming – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com

JUNE SAT 17TH | Gardeners Day Out – back again! | Rusden Theatre, Deakin University, Burwood Hwy, Burwood – 9.30am-4.30pm

The Royal is back again for a great day, full of speakers about your garden.

Come and seek out those winter flowering Salvias, so full of colour that attract the birds.

Salvia books and Salvia cards by Meg Bentley will be available.

Bring flowers to be identified.

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

Email or phone Lyndi with inquiries or order – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com

AUGUST SUN 20TH | New Members Lunch | Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald (Crighton Rd. Beneath the Packing Shed along the Puffing Billy Train Line. On the lawn in front of the Emerald Museum) – 12.30pm

All new members are invited to come and enjoy a lunch to welcome and thank them for joining the Group.

What to bring: Nothing, except a chair and a smile.

Lunch, tea/coffee will be provided.

Email or phone Lyndi if coming – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com

SEPT SUN 17TH | Janice Peeler's Garden Visit | 749 Orrong Rd, Toorak – 11.00am

A beautiful old world garden in the heart of Melbourne.

Come and wander to find secret garden areas.

Bring a lunch plate to share and a chair.

Tea/coffee will be provided.

Phone Lyndi if coming – 9803 4534 (before the day) or 0412 867 994 (on the day).



Notes from Gruyere

By Meg Bentley

I'm sure Winter arrived a few weeks ago, but was it just a cold, wet Autumn. Funny weather we have been having and I'm sure even the plants are a little confused but gardeners are always inspired no matter what the weather to be able to get out into the garden.

Whilst the weather has been up and down, (hot and cool) I have been putting cuttings in and doing much pruning. Areas in the garden that are overgrown and not been pruned for a few years are being tackled and opened up, this will be great when fed and mulched to plant new salvias and a few native plants for the birds. Salvias are the mainstay for all the birds here and because they use so many areas for nesting and sipping the nectar, I cannot prune all areas in one go.

Areas of pruning and clearing out are done on a rotation basis, this in turn leaves certain shrubby areas still intact for the birds and wildlife. There have even been Scrub Wrens nesting under the salvia's leafy foliage, at the top of some of my pots, this of course prevents the pots from having a good watering but who wants to disturb little birds that have made a home for their young. I know that the plant will hold on long enough until the birds have fledged the nest.

With the approach of Winter, many of the cooler climate salvias will come into bloom, these are usually ones with larger leaves, in my garden anyway. Some may already be at bud stage or in full bloom from late Autumn like *Salvia gesneriiflora*, *S. gesneriiflora* 'Tequila', 'Pink Parfait', 'Timboon', which flower right through to the end of Spring and sometimes into Summer. And added to those are *Salvia karwinskii* and *S. involucrata* and all its relatives and mixed cultivars. These are just some of the many salvias that will grace the winter garden. There are of course many that will continue blooming on and off, right through most of the seasons, one good example here is *Salvia bullulata* and much loved by the birds.

It's also a great time to see the large pink flowers of *Salvia dorisiana* the Fruit Cup Sage. Many people don't like the yellow-green of the

leaves of this plant, especially when the pink flowers are showing, most people will find that the leaves go slightly yellow-green when planted in too much sunlight. The trick I've found was to grow it in part shade, away from direct sun which keeps the foliage a darker green but morning sun is good. The fragrant foliage of this superb salvia is ideal to use in fruit salads along with the flowers and also in cordials. This salvia can also be used in baking which I have tested out, making my 'Fruit-Cup Sage Tea Cake' with Dorisiana Syrup.

This has been a hit with many people and often requested for morning or afternoon teas. You may remember that it was featured on Gardening Australia, a few years ago now when Jane Edmanson and crew came to visit my garden. This cake can also be used as a dessert and served warm with cream or ice cream. I shall include the recipe here for all to enjoy. One thing to remember is to pick small to medium leaves, remove the main stem and place them with veins facing up to you, then place a bread board gently on top to flatten them for about an hour, this way they sit nicely in the cake tin.

The recipe follows!



Salvia involucrata x karwinskii crosses

Notes from Gruyere (cont..)

Meg's 'FRUITCUP SAGE TEA CAKE' with 'Dorisiana Syrup'

Tea cake using the leaves of *Salvia dorisiana* for both cake and syrup.

Originally published in the Salvia News Winter 2019 edition, we thought new members might like the opportunity to try out Meg's delicious cake.

TEA CAKE

Ingredients

- 3 large eggs
- 150g castor sugar
- 150g butter or margarine, soft but not melted
- 150g self-raising flour
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel (zest)
- 4 or 5 leaves of *Salvia dorisiana* (Fruit Cup Sage) wash and gently pat excess moisture with paper towel

Instructions

Beat eggs then add castor sugar and other ingredients, mixing gently to combine then beat on high until smooth and creamy.

Line base of 20cm cake tin with baking paper and place the cleaned leaves of *Salvia dorisiana* in a pattern across the base. Make sure that the top surface of the leaves face the baking paper and the undersides with the veins are closest to the cake mixture, facing you.

Cover with the cake mix and place in a moderate oven 180 degrees, cook for 35-40 minutes approx. Allow to cool in the tin before inverting it onto a cake plate.

NOTE: I have at times substituted the recipe with Gluten Free self-raising flour and Nutalex (dairy free margarine) whenever needed, for those with diet requirements.

Serve with the Dorisiana Syrup and a dollop of natural Greek Yoghurt.



DORISIANA SYRUP

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup castor sugar
- 2 shaved strips of lemon peel without the pith
- 3-4 *Salvia dorisiana* 'Fruit Cup Sage' leaves (washed)
- 2 leaves of *Salvia elegans* 'Pineapple Sage' (washed) optional if you have them

Instructions

Dissolve the castor sugar in the water over low heat then bring to the boil.

Add sage leaves and lemon peel and boil gently for about 5 minutes.

Allow to cool, then strain contents into a small glass jug, ready for use.

Delicious served warm or cold over the cake.

Visit to Antique Perennials Nursery, Kinglake

By Yolande Murray

Antique Perennials Nursery in Kinglake provides rare and unusual perennials and grasses to nurseries and landscapers. The owners Matt Reed and Michael Morant have spent years collecting and importing unusual and rare plants from around the world. Recently we were delighted to learn that the nursery had opened their doors as a retail outlet from Thursday – Sunday and as a group we took this opportunity to visit.

It was a beautiful sunny day in February and Mike took us on a tour of their landscaped display gardens showcasing tall grasses and many colourful perennial plants suited to specific conditions i.e., dry soils, some irrigation and semi shade. The gardens are integrated seamlessly into the landscape capitalising on natural resources and seasons and striking a balance between perennials, natives, shrubs, grasses and trees.

Many of us were taken by the strikingly tall elegant grasses, particularly those not requiring irrigation and the myriad of colourful rare plants.

The nursery is certainly worth a visit.

Afterwards we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Kinglake Larder, so it was a wonderful day out. Needless to say, many left laden with plants wondering how we will ever squeeze them into our already laden gardens.



An Ideal Salvia Garden

By Norm Winn

On Sunday 26th March, 20 Salvia Group Members journeyed down to Mr. Peter Clark's dwelling in Mornington.

Entering the property, we were greeted by an English style garden with beautiful roses of numerous genera. All designed to give the observer a delightful view of a peaceful front garden from all aspects.

Walking around the rear of the dwelling being greeted by Sue, one of Peter's carers, informing us that we were very welcome to Peter's home but, on the day, he was of inclement health so couldn't join us.

Entering the rear garden, we were greeted by a superb display of Salvias of many types, colours and density. The garden gives a feeling of peace and quiet, while providing an overview of the richness Salvias provide when planned.

Later, Sue asked would I like to speak with Peter prior to my departure; my response was yes, of course. Entering his quiet retreat shaking hands we bonded immediately. Peter



was very open, answering my many questions, I was really taken with his simple philosophy in garden planning. "My garden planning is to have plantings resulting in no soil or mulch visible to the eye, resulting in all plantings joining together, consideration being given to height and width spread of each plant". It must be said that the result of this simple but dynamic approach confirms what an eye-catching result can be achieved.

Maintenance is a minimum of work just pruning each plant as and when required after flowering.



Fertilising is a minimum handful dose of pellets following pruning.

As can be seen the extensive lawn area was shaped with curves, around existing trees. Salvia plantings under a large Acacia illustrated the diversity of selective positioning of appropriate Salvias providing a bevy of colour in quite dense shade.

Remembering we visited in March, at the end of a reasonably warm summer, the obvious question was, how often do you water your garden? The response made a lot of sense to

me – having plantings leaving no soil open to sunshine at any time after the first two summers has resulted in minimal watering needed. The installed watering system is not used on a regular basis as the foliage cover acts as further coverage to the mulch that performs its role of moisture retention.

The Salvia Committee thanks Peter for making his garden open for us to view, be inspired by his approach and enjoy a pleasant visit extending our understand of the beauty that can be achieved with Salvias.



A TEA for TWO!!

By Norm Winn (This contribution was first published in *Salvia News* Winter 2021)

Remember the 'ol song – Tea for Two cha cha? Well I've experienced a fabulous activity to increase the growth and flowering capacity of plants – Salvias in particular. Therefore you and the tea make two!!

About 6 months ago when visiting a friend's house I noted an ice cream container with a heap of discarded tea bags swimming around in some very dark water. Intrigued, I asked 'what is that mess for? Why don't you discard your used tea bags into the compost bin?' 'What, and destroy the best liquid plant fertiliser I know of!'

It was then explained that tea leaves, therefore liquid tea is a great food for plants. One cupful of tea per plant does wonders. Being somewhat inquisitive, the next step was to approach Dr Google to establish why tea leaves are such an effective fertiliser.

It is reported a cup of tea (no milk or sugar) contains 4 to 5% nitrogen, 2.5% potassium, 0.8% phosphorous, 0.6% calcium and 0.5%

magnesium. The report suggests high levels of nutrients exist in tea.

Therefore tea leaves contain tannic acid and nutrients that are natural fertilizers for a garden," states Natural Ways. As the leaves and bag decompose they release the nutrients into the soil, creating an ideal growing area. They help retain water and many gardeners plant them next to the roots of their plants.

Reviewing further the 'perfect' cup of tea for plants is 2 heaped tablespoons of tea (loose from a packet) to 2 litres of water is a great plant fertiliser for plants shrubs and indoor potted plants. So, I ratted the kitchen cupboards finding a 1 cup measure – I was in business!

My experience has been to water your salvias that are struggling a bit in the dry; then the next day pour one cupful of liquid and tea leaves onto the base of the plant; stand back, and in under two weeks' time the plant will be flowering and looking very healthy.

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Methodology

- Obtain an old 2 litre ice cream container.
- Put 2 heaped tablespoons of tea leaves into the bottom of the container.
- Boil the kettle of water – enough to pour about 50-60cms of water into the container.
- Allow it to steep until nearly cold giving it an occasional stir with the table spoon. When cold fill the container with cold water.

There you have it, ready to fertilise your favourite plants!



2 litre ice cream container with boiling water added to let it steep.



When the brew is cold fill the container with cold water. The 1 cup pinched from the kitchen cupboard lives hooked to the container.



Salvia 'Mystique'



Salvia 'Hot Lips'

Naturalistic Landscaping with Salvias and Charity Open Garden 28th & 29th October

By Julie Campbell

At Birchwood, Gary and I have recently become interested in landscaping with Salvias using Naturalistic planting ideas. Gary and I are enthusiastically attempting naturalistic effects within our borders. We still have areas that have different salvias in mixed borders with no particular repetition however we have introduced group and mass plantings with, we hope, a “naturalistic” structure in several borders.

They include: mass plantings of *Salvia nemerosa* (type); and have selected salvias that grow on a “Root run” to provide the “colouring in” effect between larger salvias, e.g., *S. chamaedryoides*, *S. coahuilensis* and *S. microphylla* ‘Pink Musk’

We have encouraged self-seeding of *S. argentea* in the “dryish” area that has hardy, grey leafed salvias. This drier area is near Casuarinas and is home to grey leaf (hardy) Salvias and herbaceous Spring and Summer flowering salvias.

In another area we established an effective sight screen with a line of *Salvia* ‘Amistad’ on

the high level. We love that people are unable to look through a garden bed to see the next one. *S. involucrata* ‘Joan’ is on the lower side of this “Green Wall”.

We are attempting to clip some *S.* ‘African Sky’ into balls. A lot of fun but must confess our balls are still a bit wonky! Overall, our main strategy is to have groups of medium height salvias providing “structure and cohesion;” for example, *S. melissadora*, *S.* ‘Kisses and Wishes’ and *S.* ‘Annie B’ to name a few.

I am still addicted to Spring bulbs but am now introducing wild tulips! It’s a lot of fun. I am learning to select our Summer perennials to succeed the Spring annuals and bulbs. We are really enjoying learning as we go. I am a great believer in shifting plants and usually (not always) getting away with it.

Open Weekend

We are opening our garden for the Cancer Council Victoria this year, along with our two local hospitals, Benalla and Wangaratta. We really hope for a big turnout as we have strong personal reasons to support these Charities.

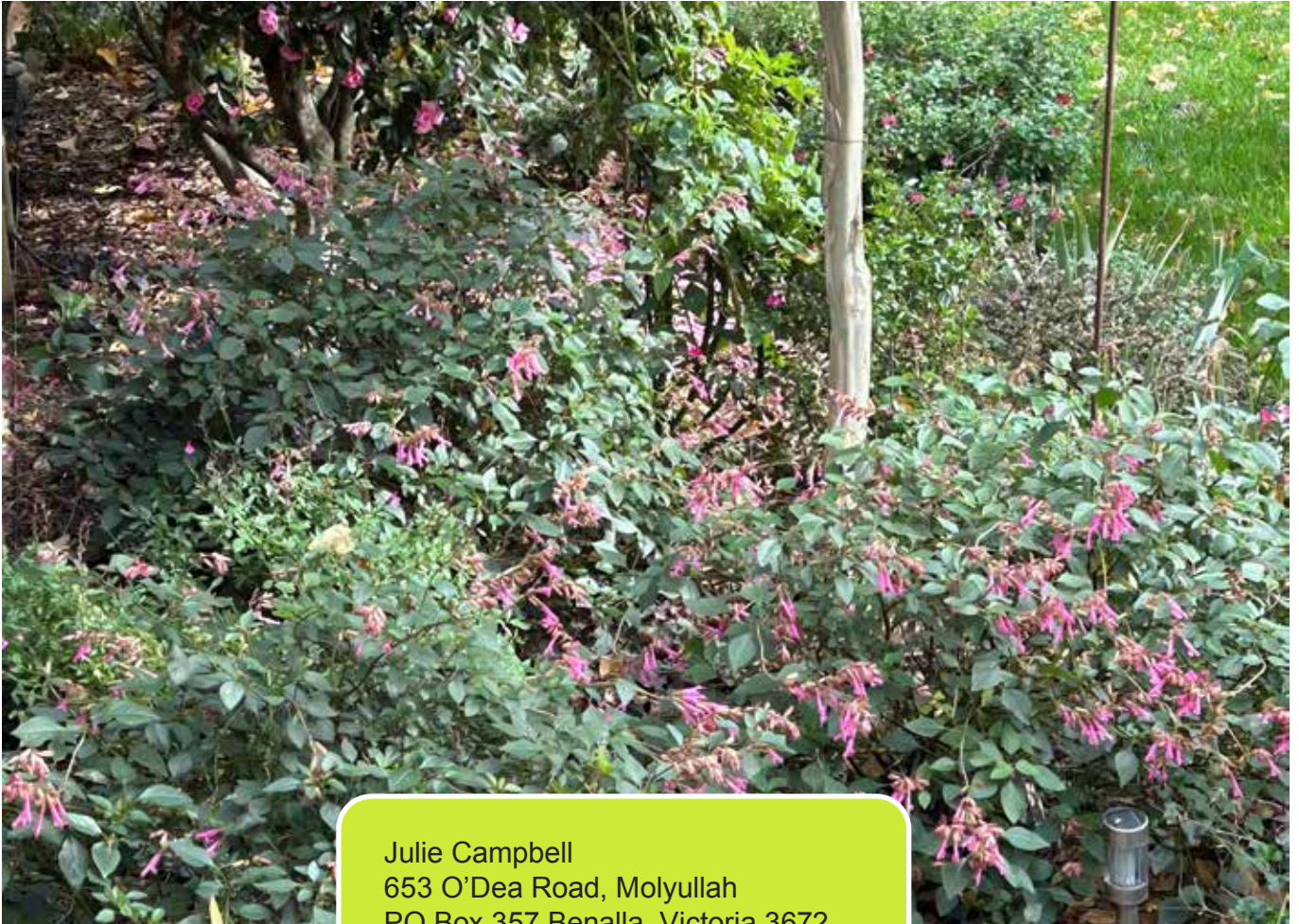
There will also be some lovely Art and Crafts and plant sales here in the garden. Artisans donate commission to the charities. The volunteers are also making lunch. 100% of the gate and refreshments is shared between the charities. Hopefully you can save the date and make it to Benalla for the weekend or a “Short Break”. Book accommodation early.

Benalla Festival is also occurring at this time. There is potential for an exciting weekend away! We have a great Silo Art Trail.

If you are involved with a local Garden Club, or social group would you be so kind as to pass this information on, or, let me know some contact details? Publicity of charity events is quite challenging and Gary and I would be grateful if the Salvia Study Group Community was able to help.



S. superba ‘White Hills’

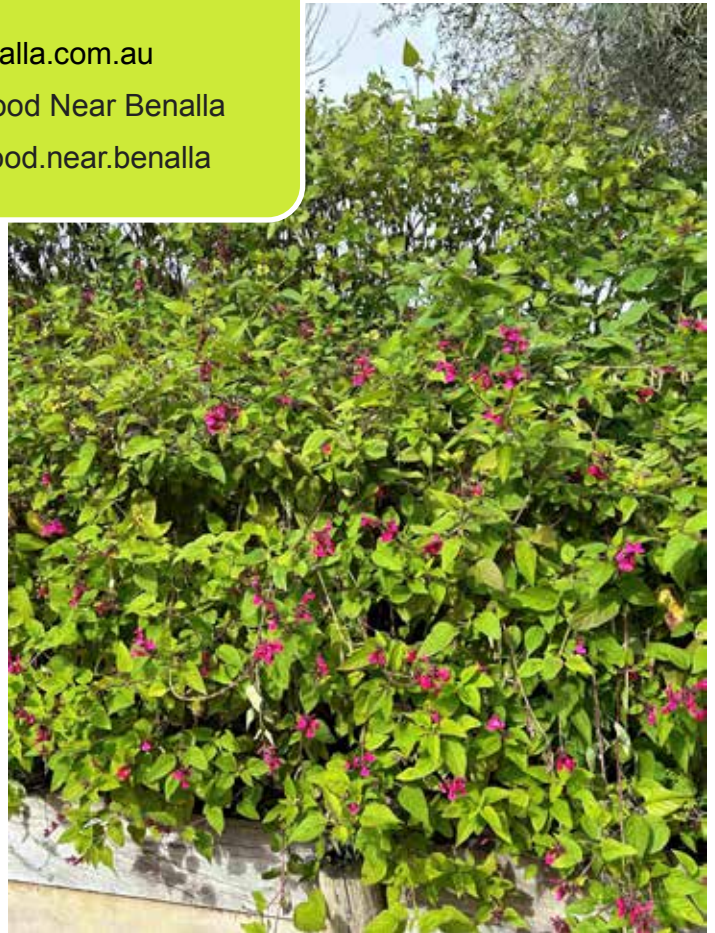


'Kisses and Wishes'

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S. Chamaedryoides for colouring in between shrubs



'Joan' and 'Amistad'

Two Interesting Salvias in my Warrandyte Garden

By Pat Anderson

Two salvias that are currently flowering in this garden, and that are relatively new are *Salvia cyanicalyx* and *Salvia* x 'Envy'. They are both very lovely plants, but both a bit frost tender.

Salvia x 'Envy' is a bit of a puzzle. I cannot discover how we come to have it in Australia. I am not aware of it being imported by the usual nurseries, so I assume it has come by seed, and being a hybrid, that would explain the fact that there are several forms with the same name of 'Envy'.

I am lucky to have had three forms, all three of which I have been given, although I have only kept the red and dark form – the third form was a sort of magenta colour, a bit like that of *S. chiapensis*.

I have trawled the internet to try to find out more about this plant and the best information I can find is from Rolando Uria in Argentina. Rolando indicates on his website that it is likely to be a hybrid of *S. haenkii* (native to Bolivia and Peru) and maybe *S. guaranitica*. Other sites that refer to it say exactly the same thing, so they have probably derived their information from Rolando's website too. All Rolando's photographs show flowers that are pinky red, hairy and with coloured calyces, with the corolla shape more like that of our dark form in Australia, except for the colour.

So, looking at the parent plant, *S. haenkii*, (and from my own experience in this garden where plants may not reach the stature they do elsewhere in better growing conditions), the plant grows to about 1.5m and the inflorescence is long – much longer than that of *S. 'Envy'*, no matter which form. The individual flowers are red, tube-shaped and narrow, with the lower lip folded tightly back underneath at the tip. The stamens, and especially the style, are exerted and the calyx is green. The inflorescence can be as long as 30cm, with false whorls of seven flowers, each subtended by an opposite pair of leaves (see Fig. 1) and spaced by up to 10cm near the bottom of the inflorescence. The

leaves are lanceolate, crenate and acute (lance shaped, with shallow, blunt dents along the edge and tapering to a point).



Figure 1

The form of 'Envy', closest in likeness to *S. haenkii* is the red form. (Figure 2). My plant is not as tall. The individual flowers are red and a similar shape although with a slight 'hump' towards the tip of the upper lip, but fatter and longer. The style is more markedly forked at the tip. The leaves are similar but the inflorescence is shorter and much more crowded – ie the distance between the false whorls is only 3cms at the bottom.

The colour of the lovely dark form of 'Envy', (Figure 3) is rather different – a rich, dark, red purple – and the corolla is much fatter, with a more pronounced 'hump', more like the shape of a *S. guaranitica* flower – maybe. The style is more forked at the tip, and purple, and the calyx is also partially coloured purple. Also,

the leaves, while similar in shape to those of *S. haenkii* and *S. 'Envy'*, have very fine, short hairs and glands on their upper surfaces.

Figure 4 shows the third form in Australia – the pinky one that I no longer have.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 5 shows the corollas of *S. haenkii* and the red and dark form of 'Envy' from top to bottom for comparison.



Figure 5

The website of the California nursery, Flowers by the Sea, has photos of *S. x Envy 'Elk'* (with parentage unknown), with pink flowers shaped more like our dark form and with the lower lip not turned back as much.

So, it is a bit of a puzzle, but both the red and dark forms are lovely plants and have also flowered for quite a long time from summer until now. They both survived the frost in this garden last winter – that is they were affected but sprang back to life when it warmed up. Since placing my dark form in the ground, rather than a pot, it has grown much taller and spread quite a bit sideways – maybe a hint of *S. guaranitica*, although no sign of tubers.

Salvia cyanicalyx on the other hand struggled a bit more in the frost. I lost one plant, but the other came back. It is just coming into flower now (late April) and has a stunning, crowded inflorescence of pale blue flowers and very dark, almost black, calyces. (see Figure 6). This is a lovely addition to the garden – in a sheltered spot!



Figure 6

News from Southwest Queensland

By Adrienne Starkley, The Perennial Poppies Group Inc.

A slow, scrutinising stroll through my garden this morning brings to light the fact that changes are required. One glaringly obvious fact is that the trees and larger shrubs have grown, creating shade too dark for the many perennials, especially salvias.

This is particularly evident on one steep bank where, for instance, *Salvia* 'Pink Icicles' is flowering beautifully now, but with stems horizontal in their reach for the light. *S.* 'Angel Wings', 'Di's Delight' and a newer one called 'Bloody Beautiful', are strong plants, but scarcely a flower to be seen. These have previously been wonderful flowerers, although they didn't perform well in the unseasonal wet winter last year.

Overall, I've lost many salvias, mostly microphylla and greggii types. I've now decided to grow these in large pots, in full sun, but sheltered from the westerly winds – yet another element to battle at my place. Two members of our group up here grow theirs in this manner, more due to the fact of living on a very small block, but it means they can meet the needs of the plants, almost pamper them.

I've started this with *S.* 'Easter Bonnet', 'Candleglow', 'Winning Spirit', 'Flare', 'Faye Shann' and 'Blaze'. I've also popped 'Mystic Spires' in a pot. Couldn't resist as it's my very favourite. All of these are underplanted with what I like to call "frills and lace", such as viola, perennial alyssum and even some small sedum. It's high maintenance, but much more

manageable than climbing on steep banks to prune. They are close to the house too, so can't be ignored or forgotten.

I think I'm actually making my own case for having a smaller property because upon some thought, all the salvias in gardens close to the house and more accessible are doing quite well. Pleasingly, all the "Wishes" are looking lovely, and are always in flower to the point of not knowing when to prune them. *S.* 'Harmony' also delights with its intense purple flowers. I've planted that amongst orange and yellows – coreopsis, gaillardia and later in the year, some gorgeous daylilies. The contrast is beautiful. I think 'Harmony' should be more widely grown, it repeat-flowers all year round here and its fresh pebbly green foliage mean it looks nice all year.

The *Salvia leucanthas* are looking great and apart from a timely prune, they can (and do) easily manage without too much fuss. *S.* 'Midnight' is the stand-out, looking nice next to *Gaura* Bellize - dark pink. The dry summer hasn't bothered them in the least. It may be that I need more of these tougher salvias and less of the microphylla types if I were to be very practical about things, but I can't bear the thought of not having the jewel box of colours that these smaller salvias bring. And I'm not practical.

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'Mystic Spires'



'Harmony'



S. leucantha 'Midnight'

My Favourite Salvia. What's Yours?

By Lyndi Garnett

My favourite Salvia for this time of year has to be the glorious *Salvia regia* with all its beautiful autumnal tones.



Salvia Regla

This is an upright bushy shrub to about 2mH with lovely bright green rounded leaves. It is one of our few deciduous Salvias, but here in the suburbs of Melbourne in Glen Waverley, it remains green and should be the case in warmer climes. But up in Nobelius and other colder areas, it may become deciduous. Don't worry, in Spring it'll be back with its rounded bright green leaves.

The flowers are a beautiful vermillion orange colour in clusters at the end of the stems. Gorgeous large vermillion tubular flowers and



Salvia Regla

when they drop off, you still have the lovely orange papery calyces to continue those autumn colours in your garden.

When in flower, it is a show stopper, so plant it where it can be seen, perhaps on a corner or in the middle of a garden bed. It also clips well to make a loose hedge.

Plant with purples, blues, whites which can really show off the beautiful orange flowers. It can be planted with other oranges, yellows and creams but planted with a rich coloured purple e.g., *S. mexicana* 'Bill Whitehead' or 'Anthony Parker' would really set it off nicely. Don't plant it with any pink Salvias or pink flowering shrubs.

Salvia regia is a hardy shrub, tolerating the summer heat and dry. It is cold hardy in the suburbs, becoming deciduous in colder areas. Feed in spring and mulch well throughout the year to keep the roots warm during cold spells and cool during the heat of summer.

This is a glorious shrub that should be better known but not as easily propagated as some other Salvias.

If you do have one of these brilliant flowering Salvias, enjoy the beautiful autumnal colours. They will brighten your garden on dull cloudy days.



Salvia Regla calyx

Yarra Valley Garden Expo April 22nd-23rd 2023

By Terry Ashton

The Salvia Study Group of Victoria was one of many plant stall holders for this year's garden expo in the Yarra Valley, which was held on April 22nd-23rd.

Stephen Ryan and Jane Edmanson made appearances over the weekend and the whole event was well supported by a number of expert plant growers.

Our stall was situated between Yamina Rare Plants and Vasili's Garden Stall and directly opposite the speaker's stage, so it was an excellent spot for us.

When I arrived on the Saturday at 8.30 am, Lyndi, Jillian and Gordon had done an amazing job of setting the trestles up with the plants and Annabelle and Marnie Leavold were also there to help. With an hour and a half to go before the public was allowed in at 10 am, there was still a lot to do. ID photos had to be placed along the outside of each trestle; plants needed a drink of water and printed information had to be folded for purchasers. By the time 10 o'clock came, we were ready!

Everyone worked so hard, answering a great many queries as well as selling a great many salvia plants. The Saturday was very busy and by the day's end, half of the plants had been sold. This allowed Lyndi to stock up and deliver many more plants on Sunday which was a quieter day but still very good and of course everyone wanted what was out of stock.

By weekend's end, the number of written pages with orders, was considerable, so Lyndi will be busy processing these.

There will be future selling days such as the "Gardeners' Day Out" on Saturday, June 17th from

8.30 am-4.30 pm at Deakin University, Burwood, so if you can help with our stall, that will be greatly appreciated.

We need more members to volunteer to help on future selling days. It's a great way of learning about this amazing genre of plants. You don't need to know the names, just come along to help with the public and you will have a good time working with like-minded people on the Salvia Study Group of Victoria's stall.



Nobelius in the Autumn

By Lyndi Garnett

Nobelius is wonderful in the Autumn light, being so much softer than the harsh hot summer skies.

It seems as everything has come into flower, all the small greggii and microphylla are still flowering madly with the reds of 'Red Beacon' and 'Navajo Red' and others standing out but being softened with the small purples of 'Mesa Azure' and *S. coahuilensis*. The yellows of 'Iced Lemon', 'Yellow Sunshine' and 'Flash' and the oranges of the Heatwave series all keep the atmosphere bright and warm as the days become duller and the clouds gather overhead.

But look around and you'll find the beautiful cerise Salvias of 'Hadspen', *S. involucrata* 'Bethellii' and 'Joan' all grouping together; not forgetting the delicate flowers of the ever-flowering *S. chiapensis*, next to the wild expanse of 'Christine's Surprise' and the tall upright stems of *S. curviflora*. All of these are paired with the different hues of purple from 'Phyllis Fancy', the vivid purple and white of 'Meigan's Magic' and the dark purple of 'Bill Whitehead' and 'Lolita', not forgetting the mounds of gorgeous dark purple buds of 'Anthony Parker'.

The bright true blues of *S. rumicifolia x macrophylla* and *S. corrugata*, *S. mexicana* 'Major' and the smaller *S. macrophylla*



'Red Beacon'



'Hadspen'



S. curviflora



'Phyllis Fancy'



'Meigan's Magic'



'Bill Whitehead'

all have their role to play in this kaleidoscope of colours found within the garden

All of these colours contrast and pair perfectly together, but are only really seen at this time of the year. It will soon be winter, and with it comes the tall "pinks" showing off their beautiful heads – if the birds don't find them first! So often these gorgeous tall winter flowering Salvias fail to impress because the birds have nipped off their flowers. But on the sidelines are also the mauves, blues and magenta flowers of *S. pupurea*, 'Bluebird' and *S. iodantha*.

But be quick! as it's also time for pruning, cutting down and cleaning out of the small leaf bushes. Although many of the small bright little Salvias may not be there for you to enjoy, there will be others such as *S. semiatrata*, *S. mellisodora* and *S. thyrsoiflora* to capture your interest.

No matter what time of year, there is always something in flower within our garden at Nobelius. Sometimes the flowers and colours are 'in your face', and other times, the colours and flowers are subtle, delicate and wonderful.

Remember, anything that flowers is beautiful. Enjoy your walk through the garden as you wander past all the Salvias with or without flowers.



S. rumicifolia x macrophylla



S. pupurea



'Bluebird'



S. semiatrata



S. thyrsoiflora

Vale Irene Robinson

I first meet Irene sitting at a table on a glorious sunny afternoon, at one of Pat Anderson's Salvia open garden days.

As I didn't know who she was, I introduced myself. She was really pleased that someone had noticed her as she was a new member and was enjoying this lovely garden, not realising how many Salvias there were.

She had noticed in the Salvia News an ad, advertising for a new treasurer as Bevan Whelan was no longer able to continue and thought she might be able to help. Well of course I was immediately interested and took her up on her offer to be our new treasurer. We sat and had a lovely conversation about the garden, the Salvia Group, and then I introduced her to Pat, and others that were still around. That was way back in 2007.

Irene was a very good treasurer, keeping meticulous records of all goings and comings. She brought us up into the 21st C, by keeping records on her computer. Irene as mentioned was an excellent Treasurer for our small Group. She explained that she also kept the "Books" for a nearby restaurant and for her big interest The Cambodian Relief Fund.

Although Irene didn't like travelling very far, over the years we would pick her up to take her to various Garden Visits, which she really enjoyed. It was on such occasions that we had long chats about her family and what was happening, her involvement in the Cambodian fund. It was from these conversations that we learnt about "The Wells" that she was trying to put in for the local people.

Irene then invited a number of us to one of her "Dinners", to raise funds by auctioning off all manner of articles including pots of her favourite *Salvia dorisiana* for the Relief Fund and "Wells". She would go over to Cambodia every year to deliver pencils, exercise books, other stationary items to the orphans. She loved seeing their faces as she walked in to give them these few small articles, for them to keep.

In the mid 2000's Irene was bestowed with a medal from the King of Cambodia (equivalent to our OBE) for all her hard work helping others. She flew to Cambodia with her family. Looking lovely and very colourful in purples and golds, she accepted this medal. Irene was so proud as was her family.

If you had sat with Irene, she would have told you how she went over to collect her 2 daughters, the escape from the Khmer Rouge that was taking over and how her little daughter was smuggled out to safety. It was a scary story but showed how brave and determined Irene was and how she loved those two little girls. They were now her life and she brought them up beautifully.

Jillian and I were asked if we could attend her daughter's funeral. The service was beautiful and the grandchildren were so well behaved – a testament to how Irene brought up her family. Irene as stoic as always put on a bright face and her smile welcomed everyone.

By Lyndi Garnett



Heather's mum Shirley and Irene at Lesley's Garden Visit July 19.



Irene Robinson Award.

Irene, as she was always known to us, was a member of the Salvia Study Group for 16 years. From memory I got to know her from 2011 onwards after Lyndi and I had visited Cambodia in January 2011. Although we only spent 5 days there it was long enough to learn of the terrible conditions that many of the Cambodian people lived in. In particular the rural Cambodians were poverty stricken and did not even have free access to the basic necessities of life such as running water.

Irene, of course, was very familiar with Cambodia with deep family ties to that country. In more general terms she was passionate about refugees and she dedicated much of her time and energy doing something to help wherever she could.

When I got to discuss my Cambodian experience with her, Irene told me about the Refugee Relief Association. In particular how the RRA funded the provision of water wells to remote villages that had no access to a local running water supply. Lyndi and I had no hesitation about making a donation to fund our first wells. See attached picture that

features my well. Lyndi had one as well. Over the period to 2014 we supported Irene's cause with further donations. I know other members of the Salvia group also supported the construction of wells.



Unfortunately, the programme fell victim to local politics, and despite the indefatigable efforts of Irene to find a substitute and honest contractor, the project was regrettably abandoned. Because of the endemic corruption that exists there, no alternative project could be designed to take its place.

Despite the loss of the water project, I maintained a wonderful relationship with Irene and we always caught up at the Salvia Christmas lunch for an annual memorable conversation.

That is something I will greatly miss.

By Mike Peck

A truly remarkable, generous and beautiful lady with the most loving heart, who quietly went about her life whilst bringing up two adopted children on her own. She also was always willing to help other people, was Treasurer for the Salvia Study Group for many years and supported the water well

charity in Cambodia. My mum and I spent many happy times at salvia events, chatting and sharing life's memories and moments with her. The world was definitely a better place having her in it.

By Heather Lucas

I knew Irene for a long time.

Irene, Taiawa and Kandall were our neighbours in Bayswater Road some 30 years ago. Taiawa was a similar age to my children. When Irene was working, she would often drop Taiawa at our house to walk to and from school with our children.

I always admired Irene's independence and strength of character, adopting and bringing up Kandall and Taiawa on her own. We did lose touch for a number of years when we moved house.

Years later I recognised Irene's photo in my local paper, and read that she had received an Australia Day honour for her work with the Cambodian community, particularly in the field of developing clean water supplies for the locals. The article also mentioned that Kendal had passed away. I sent Irene a card with my condolences and congratulations. From then on then we caught up with each other frequently and became good friends. We had shared interests in each other's families, and in gardening.

Wayne and I were lucky enough to attend the last

of the famous fund-raising dinners and support a couple of wells in Cambodia

Irene loved to talk politics and books, both areas where I was a much better listener than contributor. I learned a lot, and borrowed a number of her recommended reads.

We discovered that we were both members of the Victorian Salvia Study Group. Irene was a past treasurer and I was a new member who later joined the committee. We looked at lots of beautiful gardens together and shared many cuttings and gardening ideas.

In more recent times we would enjoy a chat in the car on the way to Coldstream to get coffee and cake from my niece's shop, or share some lunch after an appointment.

She remained strong of will and independent to the end despite her body not cooperating as fully as she would like.

I will miss Irene's friendship and caring a great deal.

By Tine

Lambley Nursery – Cutting Back Perennials

David Glenn of Lambley Nursery has kindly given permission for his article on pruning Salvias to be reprinted in the Salvia News. Thank you, David.



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At this time of year Lambley gets lots of questions about cutting back plants.

It is a job to tackle only once the plants are thoroughly past their best.

If they are still flowering it is quite okay to wait. June and July are fine too.

Take Salvias for example.

1) The **Salvia nemorosa/superba/sylvestris** complex is one of the most important groups of plants in my garden both in the mixed plantings in the dry garden and the mass planting we had in Molly's Garden. These herbaceous Salvias are cut to the ground and I mean right to the ground twice a year, once in early May (mid-autumn) and again in late December (mid-summer). All of our Salvia

nemorosa drifts are under planted with bulbs. We have to get the Salvias cut back and cleaned up and any remulching done early as the bulbs start to put their noses out of the ground by mid-May (late autumn).

2) We treat the shrubby and twiggy **Salvia greggii/microphylla** and closely associated species and hybrids quite differently. At Lambley these are pruned or, more accurately, clipped during late autumn and early winter. We use hedge shears to do this and just cut about a third of the growth off making a ball like shape. This shape gives some architectural interest during winter. Growth soon recommences in spring and flowering is well underway by Christmas.

3) **Salvia leucantha** and its hybrids and **Salvia mexicana** clones flower with us until the first frosts. We then cut them to the ground and generally mulch them to protect the roots over winter. As we get late frosts here right into November (late spring) regrowth doesn't really get going until early summer. These plants flower for us only during February, March and April (late summer-autumn) whilst in warmer areas they flower nearly the whole year round. Even if they are still in flower for you during late winter it is probably as well to cut them to the ground so that you get a fresh start each year as all the old daggy stems are removed.

4) **Salvia 'Poza Blue'**, **S. 'Allen Chickering'** and **S. 'Bee's Bliss'** are all hybrids or selections of *Salvia clevelandii* and *Salvia leucophylla*. They are evergreen or rather ever-grey shrubs grown as much for foliage

effect as for their whorls of lovely mauve-blue flowers. We don't prune this group in winter as they flower on the previous season's wood so winter pruning would seriously effect flowering. We do tidy them up when blooming is finished but this doesn't entail any drastic pruning just cutting off errant growth and spent flowering stems. The dramatic grey foliated shrub, **Salvia apiana**, with its 150cm tall flower stems is treated similarly.

Note

As well as the above, the Victorian Salvia Study Group recommends that another pruning method for tall Salvias and the *S. mexicana* group is to cut back to at least 2 nodes and, if necessary, cover with hessian or similar in frost prone areas. We also recommend that the small-leaf bushy Salvias are cleaned out of dead and twiggy stems when they are cut back.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WINTER

2023

JUNE – SUN 4TH

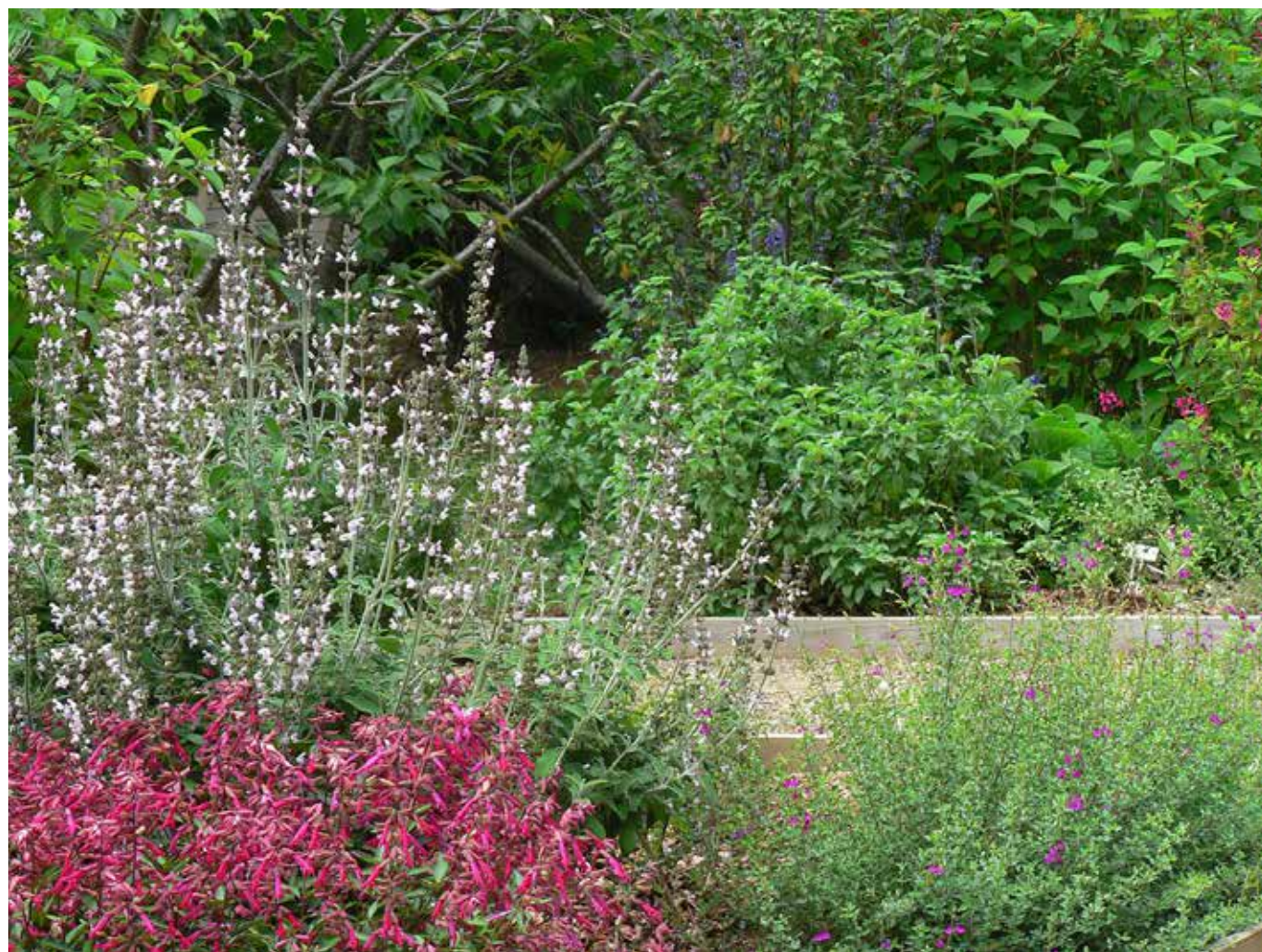
Propagating and Potting up Day –

Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald (Crighton Rd. Beneath the Packing Shed along the Puffing Billy Train Line. On the lawn in front of the Emerald Museum.)

Learn how and when to propagate Salvias, take cuttings of difficult Salvias, and pot up those cuttings or re-pot plants to take home.

Bookings essential.

Email or phone Lyndi if coming – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com



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CONTACT LYNDI

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

JUNE – SAT 17TH

**Gardeners Day Out is back again –
Rusden Theatre, Deakin University, Burwood Hwy, Burwood – 9.30am-4.30pm**

The Royal is back again for a great day, full of speakers about your garden.

Come and seek out those winter flowering Salvias, so full of colour that attract the birds.

Salvia books and Salvia cards by Meg Bentley will be available.

Bring flowers to be identified.

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

Email or phone Lyndi with inquiries or order – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com

**Royal Horticultural Society
of Victoria**

**GARDENER'S
Day Out**
Saturday 17th June
From 9:30am

FEATURING INSPIRING PRESENTATIONS BY:

JANE EDMANSON OAM AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURALIST, AUTHOR & MEDIA PERSONALITY WHO STRONGLY SUPPORTS GARDENING IN AUSTRALIA.

KAREN SUTHERLAND GARDEN DESIGNER, WRITER, TEACHER & SPEAKER. SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED.

ATTILA KAPITANY WELL KNOWN CACTI & SUCCULENT PERSONALITY, AUTHOR, PRESENTER AND SUCCULENT PLANT EXPERT.

CRAIG CASTREE 40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN GROWING EDIBLE GARDENS IN AN URBAN SPACE. PROMOTES THE HEALTH, QUALITY & SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS OF HOME PRODUCTION.

NICHE VENDORS - COMFORTABLE VENUE - VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE

**RUSDEN THEATRE,
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY BURWOOD,
BURWOOD HIGHWAY, BURWOOD.**

What's On (cont..)

AUGUST – SUN 20TH

**New Members Lunch –
Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald
(Crighton Rd. Beneath the Packing Shed along the Puffing Billy Train Line. On the lawn in front
of the Emerald Museum) – 12.30pm**

All new members are invited to come and enjoy a lunch to welcome thank them for joining the Group.

What to bring: Nothing, except a chair and a smile.

Lunch, tea/coffee will be provided.

Email or phone Lyndi if coming – 9803 4534 or lgarnett844@gmail.com



SEPTEMBER – SUN 17TH

Janice Peeler's Garden Visit – 749 Orrong Rd, Toorak – 11.00am

A beautiful old world garden in the heart of Melbourne.

Come and wander to find secret garden areas.

Bring a lunch plate to share and a chair.

Tea/coffee will be provided.

Phone Lyndi if coming –
9803 4534 (before the day) or
0412 867 994 (on the day).



What we don't know about Salvias

By Lyndi Garnett

Recently I happened to come across a YouTube programme about an English presenter, a lover of roses and considered a gardening guru.

She was showing some of the roses that she loves, mentioning that in recent years that so many roses have been spoilt by the cursed black spot – the bane of rose growers.

To combat this problem, she recommends growing Salvias beneath and in between her rose bushes, mainly the small leaf greggii/microphylla types. These can be used to complement or add a contrasting colour to the rose garden – this of course we already know. The presenter then went on to mention that most if not all Salvias have a pungent smell, a sagey smell, when the leaves are crushed. (I might remind you that all Salvia species have their own particular sagey smell) This she

believes is full of sulphur compounds within “their scent profile”. These pungent smells are often given off after a shower of rain or when it's a warm day; when the leaves heat up, they release these sulphurous compounds.

For those in “the know”, sulphur is a natural fungicide, so when the leaves are giving off their sulphurous scents on a warm day, they are in fact fumigating the garden, acting as a natural “home grown” fumigant and keeping the garden free from harmful diseases.

For this reason alone, the presenter thoroughly recommends planting Salvias not only among roses but throughout the garden, to help keep the garden as a whole safe from various airborne fungal diseases and to provide colour into the garden, especially when it's rose pruning time.



Lyndi also notes this name change

Name Change: *S. kopetdagensis* now = *S. atropantana*.

A small clumping groundcover 10 x 30cm with pale blue flowers in summer.

Tough and hardy for hot summers and cold winters. Ideal for rock gardens or edging of paths. Grown at Nobelius as an edging plant.

Salvia Cards Order Form

Created by Meg Bentley



BEAUTIFUL HAND
PAINTED CARDS

CARDS	QTY	SUBTOTAL \$
Individual cards only \$2.50 each		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia gesneriiflora		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia micro. var neurepia		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia roemeriana		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia leucantha		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia patens		
5 assorted flowers \$10.00/pack		

CARDS	QTY	SUBTOTAL \$
5 same flower \$10.00/pack		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia gesneriiflora		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia micro. var neurepia		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia roemeriana		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia leucantha		
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvia patens		
	TOTAL	

PAYMENT DETAILS Fill in the form and send to:

Lyndi Garnett (Victorian Salvia Study Group)

844 Highbury Rd Glen Waverley VIC 3150 Phone: 03 9803 4534 Email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

- Cheque / Money Order: payable to Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.
- Direct Deposit: BSB: 633-000 Acc. No: 116846122 Acc. Name: Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.
- PayPal: online – vssginc1@tpg.com.au Website: www.salvias.org.au **Surname & Initial please (admin purposes only)**

Name:

Address:

Suburb/ Town:

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The Victorian Salvia Study Group. Inc

NEW MEMBERSHIP

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(NOT FOR RENEWALS)

Any queries, phone Tine Grimston – see details below

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4 Crimea CIs,

Rowville Vic. 3178

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

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

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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

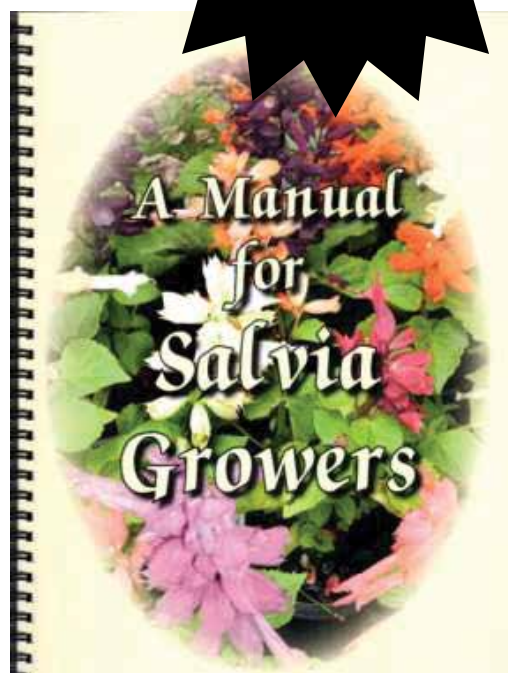
A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

by Meg Bentley

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

Contents include:

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- 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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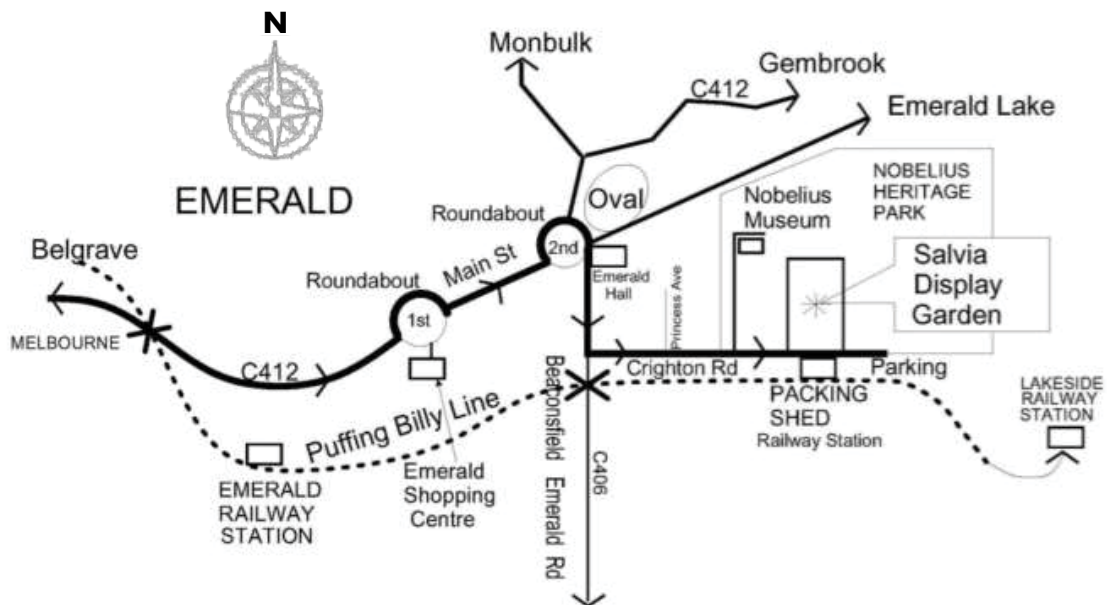
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Email: _____

Please return completed forms together with payment/proof of payment to:
Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.
6 Halcyon Avenue THE PATCH VIC 3792
Enquiries to Jillian Barkell (03) 9756 6361

Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
c/- Lyndi Garnett
844 Highbury Road
Glen Waverley Vic 3150

DIRECTIONS TO THE SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN



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