

Salvia News

NUMBER 63



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

Autumn 2016

THE VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

A BRANCH OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

THE AIMS OF THE SALVIA STUDY GROUP ARE:

1. To grow and collect Salvias for the purpose of enjoyment and study
2. Promote and encourage the growing of Salvias
3. Correctly name existing and new Salvias.

The group is a not for profit organization. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and for the planting and maintenance of our GPCAA registered garden collection.

LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE; www.salvias.org.au
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SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS

All copy must be received on or preferably prior to copy deadline.
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Please post your copy to:

Editor VSSG

3 Creebank View, Pakenham. Vic 3810

or email:

beth.c@bigpond.com (don't forget the dot between beth and 'c')



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Happy New Year!

March already, hope the new year is already proving to be something special.

Its been an excessively dry start and so many bush fires. Our thoughts are with those in these areas.

This issue, Lyndi reminisces on the year just closed. The Calendar of Events in the newsletter doesn't include all speaking events at the different Gardening Clubs throughout the Melbourne and often further afield. She works tirelessly for VSSG. If you didn't catch up with the Group last year, hopefully you will be able to make the time later this year.

As homes are becoming larger with much smaller yards or people are living in apartments and townhouses, gardens in some areas are disappearing. There is still room to garden both flowers and edible, and Salvias are included in pot gardens. Although some are too big for pot culture such as the winter species of Salvias, there are still many that can successfully be potted with a little care. We really hope those who have potted Salvias or those giving them a try after reading this edition, you will photograph them and give us some thoughts on how it works for you.

Pat Anderson shares some great news about some of the new Salvia crosses available in 2016.

These and other items should keep you reading for a few hours. Hope you enjoy.

Australia Post mail postal delivery changes means that it will take at least a couple of issues before its realised how long it will take for the distribution of the newsletter. Normal mail that used to be overnight, is now approximately 7 days. Please note that for the time being, coming editions of Salvia News copy deadline has been brought forward nearly a week so that we can still endeavour to get the newsletter out to all subscribers on or before the 1st of new season. Please let us know if there is a problem.

Its been excessively dry in Melbourne, and even more so in Pakenham where I live. Hopefully the skies will have opened before you read this. Hope you havent lost too much this season. Share with us how you and your garden have coped Summer 2015/16. Until next time, happy gardening, Beth

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**Copy Deadline for next edition
Salvia News
No 64 Winter edition
15 April 2016**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Remember to check the website regularly for any changes, and additional information www.salvias.org.au
VSSG also attends many speaking engagements for Clubs and Groups, book early, see the website for current bookings. Enquiries phone Lyndi Garnett, VSSG co-ordinator on 9803 4534 or email lgarnett844@gmail.com*

March Sun 6th, 10am

WENDY SMITH GARDEN VISIT

240 Berwick/Cranbourne Rd, Cranbourne East Mel: 134 E6

Blue Hills Rise Retirement Village 17 Albion Park Drive

Not to be confused with Blue Hills Residences on opposite side of road. In village, turn left at first turn, parking along the right side. Please ring Wendy Phone 0429816380 if attending.

This is a beautiful small garden with lots of ideas of what can be achieved in a small space.

March 12/13th Sat/Sun, 10am-4pm both days

Ferny Creek Horticultural Society

ANNUAL PLANT COLLECTORS GARDEN EXPO

100 Hilton Rd, Ferny Creek. Mel: 75 D1

Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale. Bring your list, bring plants to be identified.

Email Lyndi your list to avoid disappointment. lgarnett844@gmail.com

March Sun 20, 11am-3pm

WORKING BEE AT NOBELIUS

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald, under Packing Shed Mel: 127 G4

It really is a fun day working in the Display Garden with other Salvia enthusiasts. No experience necessary, there is always loads of support. It is also a great opportunity to see how Salvias grow, a chance to identify the Salvias growing in your garden and you get to take home lots of cuttings. Bring a plate to share, a chair, gardening tools, wet weather gear if necessary, a hat and large plastic bag for those cuttings. Tea/coffee provided. Please call Lyndi on 98034534 if coming up.

All welcome

April Sat 2 & Sun 3, 10-4pm both days

TESSELAAR PLANT EXPO

357 Monbulk Rd, Silvan Mel: 123 B5

Huge range of plants and products, demonstrations and displays. VSSG stall includes plants, books & seed for sale. Bring your list, bring plants to be identified.

Email Lyndi prior with your list to avoid disappointment. lgarnett844@gmail.com

April Sat 9th 9.30 am-3.30pm

JINDIVICK RARE PLANT FAIR

Jindivick Public Hall, Jacksons Track, Jindivick Mel: Touring map 916. U6

Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale. Huge range of plants and products, demonstrations and displays. Bring your list, bring plants to be identified. Email Lyndi your list to avoid disappointment. lgarnett844@gmail.com

April Wed 20th 11am-3pm

MID WEEK WORKING BEE AT NOBELIUS

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald, under Packing Shed Mel 127 G4

Come and join in the fun of maintaining our Display Garden. It's your opportunity to see how Salvias grow and a chance to identify the Salvias growing in your garden, and you get to take home lots of cuttings.

Bring a plate to share, a chair, gardening tools, wet weather gear if necessary, a hat and large plastic bag for those cuttings. Tea/coffee provided. Please call Lyndi on 98034534 if coming along. All welcome

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April Sat 30th / May Sun 1st

AUTUMN WEEKEND TOUR

Beechworth & Stanley Area. More details available soon. Check VSSG website regular for updates. Contact Plant Trust Don Journet 0439 034 194 for details.

May Sun 15, 11am

LAMBLEY NURSERY VISIT

'Burnside' 395 Lesters Rd, Ascot Mel: Touring Map 973 B3

Come and visit this most interesting Nursery just outside of Ballarat. Talk to David Glen, walk through his beautifully laid out gardens and pick up a few plants from the nursery. Bring Lunch to share and a chair. Phone Lyndi if coming 98034534

June Sun 12, 11am

VISIT MACEDON GARDENS

Macedon Rd, Macedon Mel: Touring Map 909 G10

Wander the magnificent garden of 'Forest Glade'. The opportunity to visit Stephen Ryan's Nursery, with unusual and rare plants available for purchase. Bring a plate to share and a chair. Phone Lyndi if coming 98034534

June Sat 18, 8.30am-4.30pm

RHSV GARDENER'S DAY OUT

Rusden Theatre, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood. Mel: 65 B5

Includes speakers Sophie Thomson from Gardening Australia, Chloe Thomson from the Garden Gurus and Craig Castree on a new approach to Edible Gardening. A great day out, not to be missed.

Cost \$10, lunch available for \$15 must be pre-ordered with booking. Contact the Secretary RHSV on 03 5367 636 or email secretary@rhsv.org.au

Many nurseries and other stalls will also feature. Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale

Bring your list, bring plants to be identified. Email Lyndi your list to avoid disappointment.

lgarnett844@gmail.com

June Sun 26, 11am-3pm

WORKING BEE NOBELIUS

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald, under Packing Shed Mel: 127 G4

Have you made it to one of the working bees at the the Nobelius Display Garden in Emerald as yet. It's a great day working alongside others with a Salvia passion and a great opportunity to see how Salvias grow.

Of course there is the chance to identify the Salvias growing in your garden and take home lots of cuttings too. Bring a plate to share, a chair, gardening tools, wet weather gear if necessary, a hat and large plastic bag for those cuttings. Tea & coffee provided. Phone Lyndi if attending 9803 4534. All welcome

Aug Sun 14 at midday

SALVIA NEWS SUBSCRIBERS LUNCHEON AT NOBELIUS

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Rd, Emerald, under the Packing Shed Mel: 127 G4

12pm Lunch under the Cherry trees.

Lunch and Tea/ coffee will be provided

This is a special event for all Salvia News subscribers, a great day to meet other subscribers at the VSSG

Display Garden, more details next newsletter, or you may wish to check out the website for the latest news.

VSSG ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

Lyndi Garnett, VSSG Co-ordinator

Some think that Annual reports are dry, but others like to follow the events and our progress during the year, I like to be able to report on a whole year, rather than part of the year, which why this is being published in the Autumn issue. In fact 2015, has been our most successful year to date, with every event producing a better result than the last few years, which is such a pleasant feeling that the Group is still performing well.

Throughout the year quite a few Garden Groups, both in the country and suburban areas have asked us to speak to their members about Salvias. On occasions I've been able to delegate this wonderful task to others within the group. I'm sure they had just as much pleasure as I've had, especially when meeting all sorts of very interesting and knowledgeable people from within these garden clubs.

Our year really started in March as February is usually too hot to do anything except water and try and keep cool. Our Ferny Creek, Rare Plant Sale weekend, was very successful with good numbers of discerning Plant's people wanting to buy those rare plants not available at Bunnings and other plant nurseries.

A thoroughly lovely weekend was had in Benalla in a country garden, visiting a beautiful garden which is really a showcase garden that is often used for weddings. They do a wonderful job keeping their garden looking good, especially as it is still quite dry in that area.

Jindivick in April was again very good with good weather and lots of interesting stalls. It seems to be getting bigger every year.

The Tesselaar weekend was again huge, with us almost selling out and having to restock. This would have to be our biggest selling event for the year.

All through this time we've had good attendance at our working B's, especially when we were spreading compost at our Display Garden at Nobelius. We had it all done by lunch time, which was amazing as it's quite a task to spread 8m of compost over 14m of garden. It really was a matter of "many hands make light work". It's so heartening when we have a good number of people turning up for the working B, these hard working souls help with raking out leaves, weeding, slashing and pruning. At the end of the day, it's a good result when you could see where they had been, which is most satisfying when looking over the garden.

A few more gorgeous quirky garden visits, where people wondered around and usually took home loads of cuttings and ideas to be adapted to their own gardens.

The RHS 'A Gardener's Day Out' was well attended, especially as we were in the new venue of Deakin University. Everyone enjoyed the celebrity speakers, with many people taking home prizes from the very generous raffles that were held.

Patrick Hogan showed his usual flare when conducting his digital photography and computer day, trying to impart that knowledge to a group of not so knowledgeable people who were fascinated by his close up photos of flowers, bees and birds.

Although cold, a very interesting Plant I.D. Day was held in August, with lots of plants donated to be identified and compared and quite a few fires to keep everyone warm.

The Red Hill Spring Festival, although quite a distance to travel, was very successful with good weather and a number of selective plant stalls as well as all the entries from schools and the public for the flower arranging.

Our New Subscriber's Lunch was a great success. We were able to show these newcomers our display garden at Nobelius (Nobelius Heritage Park), how the various Salvias grow and what they look like, and assist them to identify many of the Salvias growing in their own gardens as well meeting others in the Group. The New Subscriber's appreciated being welcomed into The Group.

The Ivanhoe Flower and Garden Show in October, which was a lot of fun especially as we again almost bought out their White Elephant Stall, their home produce, garden produce and plants, fresh flowers and good quality handicrafts. They did very well from our group last year and again this year. I think they saw us coming!!

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VSSG ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

Lyndi Garnett

.. continued from page 6

The Annual Rose Show in Mt Waverley in the first week in November was again very well attended, we did exceptionally well this year, obviously the marketing and good weather helped to attract the public.

Our Annual Salvia Sale later in November, was a huge success. A lot of the credit must go to Patrick who was able to strategically place promotional posters and around Emerald. The radio promotions certainly helped to alert the

public as well as the locals that the Annual Sale was on in Nobelius where all the Salvia plants were selling for \$5.00 each. A lot of good bargains were taken away that day. Our best year to date, making up for those years of bad weather.

Xmas was held in Tine Grimston's beautiful quirky garden; with good mild weather and a good turn up of Salvia fanatics, we all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas feast and catching up with old friends.

Most went home with armfuls of plants, pots and cuttings as well as a few Christmas delicacies. It was a fantastic way to finish the year.

This year will be full of surprises, so I hope you can join us.



*Salvia patens, Salvia roemeriana, Salvia microphylla var neurepia,
Salvia gesneraeflora 'Tequila', Salvia leucantha*

SALVIA CARDS by Meg Bentley

only **\$10** pack
(5 single flower or 5 assorted)
plus \$2.50 pp / pack posted

Available at all VSSG functions and stalls.

Mail orders phone Lyndi 9803 4534 or send to

VSSG
844 Highbury Road,
Glen Waverley Vic 3150

MEG'S SALVIA CARDS ORDER FORM

(please print)

Name

Address

..... Post code

Day time contact no

Email

packs Assorted

or Single Flower packs -

- *Salvia patens*
- *Salvia roemeriana*
- *Salvia microphylla var neurepia*
- *Salvia gesneraeflora 'Tequila'*
- *Salvia leucantha*

..... Total packs @ \$10 per pack \$

Plus \$2.50 per pack posted \$

Total cost of order: \$

SALVIAS IN POTS

Beth Clisby, Pakenham Vic

Salvias do best planted into gardens and there are so many different size Salvias for most situations in a garden. Today gardens are becoming smaller and there are many homes without a garden, perhaps only a courtyard or a balcony. Some Salvias can be planted in pots, some even into a hanging basket. Just remember that Salvias do not like being water logged, so that even though they need additional water in a pot, if you over water or leave them with water in a saucer, they won't survive.

To grow a Salvia in a hanging basket, it may do better in a self-watering pot in case watering is overlooked as the hanging pot soil dries out very quickly.

Like all potted plants, use only the best quality potting mix. It must be free draining but needs to have some nourishment too. Before watering, check the soil; push your finger into the soil, if it comes out dry then it's time for another drink. Give it a thorough watering, then let it drain. If you are using a saucer, don't forget to empty after watering.



Plants in pots need regular feeding. It is suggested using light and regular water soluble organic fertiliser, this is perhaps the simplest solution. Seasol (soil conditioner) is recommended to water in the new plant initially to assist with root growth and then a fertiliser on a regular basis.

When planting into a pot, providing the plant has well established roots, it is suggested to cut back quite hard, taking off the flowers, feed and water in. This assists in making it quite compact, a good shape. It will take about 8 weeks for the flowers to come back and give a great flower show. Deadhead flowers as needed and prune as needed to maintain a compact shape. Prune more heavily at the end of the season.

Don't forget that the snails love Salvias and a preventative measure will need to be taken. Also that there are occasions when white fly may make a mess of them. Spraying thoroughly with eco oil when first noticed or as a preventative will prevent damage. Ensure this is done in the cool of the day to prevent any burn.

Salvia 'Love and Wishes' (Photo PGA)

As featured in the last edition of Salvia News, Salvia 'Love and Wishes' is an ideal choice for a pot as are the others in the 'Wishes' range. You may have seen some hanging pots of Salvias by VSSG on display at some of the venues. Not much has been trialled with Salvias displayed in pots so at this time, much is trial and error.

We would love to share some photos of your Salvias displayed in pots in an upcoming Salvia News. Please send the original size via email together with the Salvia used, its age when photographed, where you have it displayed, and your experiences with pot displayed Salvias. Please include your details – name, suburb/town and State.

Notes from Gruyere, January 2016

Meg Bentley - Gruyere, Vic

Welcome to our Summer of heat, winds, blazing sun, and in many areas the battle with fire and floods. Not to mention of course the rabbits that eat everything they come across and nature's little ploughs...the Echidna that takes delight in ploughing the ground in and around ant holes and upturning and splitting logs as they sniff out some tasty morsel... roll on Autumn!

Continued from the previous Salvia News No 62 re 'Grey-leaved' salvias and following up with Salvia's blancoana and lavandulifolia. Naturally these two like good drainage and plenty of sun and I have found that *S. lavandulifolia* will die off in stages if it gets too much moisture at the wrong time of the year, especially Summer or it has a wet root-run, sitting in wet ground for any length of time.

Salvia lavandulifolia has narrow grey green leaves and low growing, it can either be bushy or drape slightly over rocks. Height can be 30cm to 40cm, slightly taller at flowering with spikes around 15cm. Corolla is soft lavender blue with white bee lines at the throat, similar in shape to *S. officinalis* but smaller and calyces are light green. Leaves are quite narrow, slightly rugose and have a distinct eucalyptus fragrance when crushed.

Salvia blancoana has leaves that are more 'spoon' shaped by comparison and longer petiole. They are firmer in texture, grey with a hint of green and rugose. The leaves if rubbed emit a eucalyptus-menthol fragrance. It is rather low growing and compact, around 25cm. At flowering the spikes, usually on the tips, stand above the foliage and have a large gap between the nodes, the corolla and calyx stand erect up and out along the stems. Flowers are pale blue with a touch of white at the throat and may produce 2 to 4 flowers per each whirl.

The above two salvias are quite easy to distinguish from the other grey-leaved salvias, even if one goes by the leaf fragrance alone, whereas other *S. officinalis* types have a very 'herby' fragrance.

Growing Salvias in Pots and Containers:

While many salvias would be best planted in the ground, especially the large leaved taller growing species and cultivars, there are quite a number that can achieve equally good results in various containers or pots if given that little bit of extra care and attention. I have also found that the little 'rare beauties' or unusual salvias are best suited for a container, especially if you don't want to lose it to slugs and snails or even rabbits. One can control the needs of a plant much better in a pot, for example, it may prefer a slightly moist soil, a free draining gravel mix, an elevated 'airy' position or no overhead watering which is very hard to control if the plant is growing in the garden amongst other plants.

Some of the best species and cultivars that I have growing in pots are *Salvia nipponica* 'Fuji Snow' with its lovely variegated foliage, others include *Salvia koyamae* and *Salvia koyamae* 'Crug Cream'. These look quite striking in containers, low and spreading they also look good in hanging baskets. With hanging baskets of course one has to be vigilant in keeping the soil moist since they dry out when exposed to sunlight and wind. These ones are best planted and hung in part shade or morning sun only. The beauty of pots and hanging baskets is that they can be moved around, providing they are not too heavy. The above mentioned salvias are also great for their foliage alone and the pale yellow flowers are an added bonus in Spring and early Summer.

When planting salvias into pots or containers follow the same principle as planting into the garden...set the plant deep into the soil which gives stability and enables rooting at the nodes thus making it compact and bushy, especially if cut back when planting unless of course it was bought from a nursery and it is in full flower and already bushy but planting it a little deeper than the original depth in the pot will help stabilize it.

Smaller leaved salvias seem to be best for floral display but need to be fed more often in containers and most likely watered frequently over the summer. Constant watering can leach out any nutrients but this can be helped with slow release food pellets and a weekly or fortnightly watering with diluted fish emulsion.

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Some new *Salvia* crosses in circulation in 2016

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Vic

For some years, nurseries have been churning out more and more series of hybrids of *Salvia greggii* and *S. microphylla*, some of which are excellent, while others resemble plants we have had for years. Then occasionally a really new gem like 'Wendy's Wish' has appeared to excite salvia collectors. More recently, new crosses are emerging in Australia, thanks to the dedication of retired agricultural scientist, John Fisher in New South Wales.

For some five years, John has been experimenting with hybridisation between selected members of the *Salvia* sub genus *Calosphace* (species from the Americas). Working in a very controlled environment, he selects potential crosses, and when the receptor species plants are at the right stage, he emasculates them (removes the stamens) and subsequently fertilises them using pollen from the selected donor species, all the while keeping meticulous records. In this way he has crossed hundreds of combinations, some more successfully than others. Sensibly, only the more worthwhile results are kept. Some of these will probably be patented down the track, but in the meantime, he has generously released a few worthwhile plants. I am fortunate to have received some of these, described below, from Sue Templeton and from Annette Bax.

Salvia 'Firecracker' has been created from a white *Salvia splendens* female parent, with *Salvia hirtella*. A similar plant, *Salvia* 'Petardo' is the result of a cross between a purple *Salvia splendens* and *Salvia hirtella*. I understand that 'Petardo' is Spanish for 'Firecracker'.



Figure 1: *Salvia splendens*



Figure 2: *Salvia hirtella*

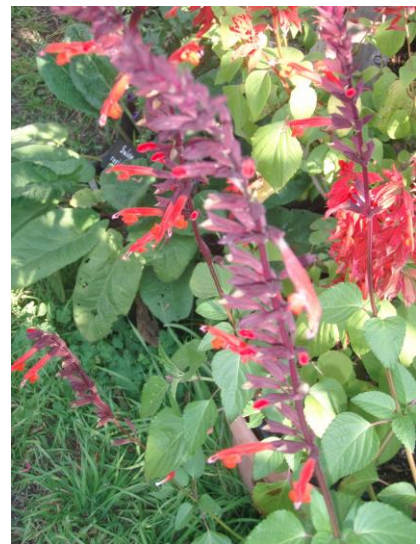


Figure 3: *Salvia* 'Firecracker'

Both plants are similar in appearance and after 12 months, my plants are approximately 60 cm high. The leaves resemble those of *Salvia splendens* but are slightly smaller, but the plants are much larger than any *Salvia hirtella* I have ever managed to grow. The tubular flowers of both are similar, with dark calyces (the attached photo is not very good), the corolla tube of 'Firecracker' being red and that of 'Petardo' being wine coloured. The most interesting outcome of these crosses for me is that, while *Salvia splendens* and especially *Salvia hirtella* suffer in the cold, frosty weather, the crossed plants are more resilient – a definite plus. One survived happily out of doors in a pot in a slightly sheltered spot, while I kept the other in the glasshouse – just in case! I have never managed to keep *Salvia hirtella* in a pot over winter before and *Salvia splendens* rarely makes it. Currently though, I have red spider mite on both plants in the garden, but they are crammed into a small space with no air circulation, with other plants which are also suffering, so this isn't unique to the crosses.

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Some new *Salvia* crosses in circulation in 2016



Figure 4: *Salvia* 'Petardo'



Figure 5: *Salvia* 'Ruth'



Figure 6: *Salvia atrocyanea*



Figure 7: *Salvia splendens* x *gesneriiflora*



Figure 8: bud with purple bracts of *S. splendens* x *gesneriiflora*

Some new *Salvia* crosses in circulation in 2016 - Pat Anderson

..continued from page 10

Salvia 'Ruth' is another interesting cross resulting from a white *Salvia splendens* female parent and *Salvia atrocyanea*. The resulting inflorescence resembles that of *Salvia atrocyanea* somewhat, but the flowers are purple. Again, what is interesting is the growth habit. While *Salvia atrocyanea* is winter dormant and grows up to 1.2 metres (here) in summer, 'Ruth' has a lower, more sprawling habit and **isn't** winter dormant. It also flowers on and off for a long time.

Sue recently gave me a plant of another cross- *Salvia* 'Alice' - but I cannot comment on flowers and growth habit of this yet. I understand that the parents are a white *Salvia greggii* and *Salvia dorisiana* (a bit of a contrast in plant and flower size!). The leaves have the lovely fruit salad perfume of *Salvia dorisiana* although smaller, and I also understand that the plant will be a low variety with flowers similar to a *greggii* type, and pink.

One other plant that I am fortunate to have is a result of crossing *Salvia splendens* with *Salvia gesneriiflora*, although I have no details about the colour of either parent plant, nor which was the receptor plant. Unlike the plants described above, this one seems less robust than the parent plants (for me). I thought I had lost it over winter, but happily it bounced back in the spring. While the large flowers are red and the calyces brown (a bit like *S.* 'Red Rambler'), the colours seem richer. The leaves are closer to those of *Salvia splendens*. Also, while in bud, the plant has lovely purplish, almost iridescent, bracts. I have seen photos, but not the plant, of a similar cross with purple flowers too.

I understand that John has made attempts to replicate *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish' to try to establish the parentage. He came close with forms of *Salvia splendens* and *S. buchananii*, which is interesting and 'Love and Wishes' is one of John's plants, with royalties going to the 'Make a Wish Foundation' also.

Sue also mentioned that John is evaluating a cross of *S. miniata* and *S. buchananii* for possible commercial release. So while the AQIS may have slowed down the explosion in the range of *Salvia* species available in Australia in the future, the efforts of plant breeders/researchers like John will still give collectors a range of new, worthwhile plants to chase up. These will make a pleasant change from the range of *greggi* x *microphylla* plants that the commercial nurseries have bred to date, not to mention the plethora of naturally occurring variations that individuals are pushing around. I think my list of names of these is approaching 200!

Notes from Gruyere, January 2016

Growing Salvias in Pots and Containers – Meg Bentley

.. continued from page 9

A few suggestions for pot grown salvias are *Salvia muelleri*, *S. microphylla* 'Coconut Ice', 'Royal Bumble', 'Silas Dyson', 'x jamensis yellow', 'Snow White', 'Mystic Spires', 'Marine Blue' and even all the *Salvia splendens* types including the 'Wishes' group. Many of these can also be planted two or three to a pot and blending flower colours and foliage adds contrast or statement to where they are positioned. Other small draping plants like lobelia or allysum can help soften the edges of a container. There are so

many ideas and plants to choose from so give it a go and enjoy a potted garden.

NEWS FROM SE QUEENSLAND

Shirley Took, McDowal Qld.



Salvia 'Amistad'



I have a 1 1/2 acre garden on the northside of Brisbane. With some persuasion I hosted the Salvia Study Day last October.

Everyone arrived bright and early with their cuttings, plants etc. After a quick cuppa all 13 of us carpooled over to have a look at Dulcie's delightful cottage garden. She has a garden filled with roses, shrubs, bulbs and lots of salvias. Microphyllas, Heatwave series and many of the old favourites.

After lots of oohing and ahing we left taking lots of cuttings with us.

By 11am back at my place a lively discussion took place on the many varieties of salvias everyone had brought with them.

I had thought that I didn't grow many salvias but when I started writing down the ones that I have, the list seemed endless. I'm very fond of the winter flowering salvias; I have *S. wagneriana*, *madrensis*, Timboon, Pink Icicles and a large red one that I think is *S. adenophora*.

Some of my other favourites include Mrs Bucket, Indigo Spires, Mystic Spires, Phyllis Fancy, Meigan's Magic, Amistad, Love and Wishes, Embers Wish.....

The list just goes on.

All of these grow well for me.

We fitted in lunch along the way and by 2.30pm everyone was ready to call it a day. Another enjoyable day talking about our favourite subject; salvias.

Notation:

On checking with Shirley the name of the Salvia photographed, deep purple, with a dark calyx, she advised it is 'Amistad' and it is growing in the ground. (The pot is simply something in the garden behind).

She says that after the heat of the past few days (late January), said plant is looking sadly limp but if the worst should happen, she has a struck cutting in a pot and ready to go. Storms are forecast for this arvo so hopefully a bit of liquid relief on the way.

Salvia News

Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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VSSG Bookmark has a new QR Code

Lyndi Garnett / VSSG Co-ordinator

You might ask, What is a QR Code?, well it's that funny little square that looks like a small crossword that you can't understand.

It actually means a Quick Response Code which is a machine- readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, used for storing URL's - a type of two dimensional barcode that can be read using that new fangled thing called a Smart Phone. These QR codes can link you directly with websites, emails, text, phone numbers and more. They are huge in Japan and the East, and are slowly becoming known in the West.

Where can you find these QR Codes? Usually on the back of bottles, boxes, magazines, brochures, newspapers, business cards, inventory tracking to online ticketing, garden club festivals and on our bookmarks!!

Next time you buy a bottle of champagne or wine, have a look on the label at the back. You'll also be seeing them attached to the 'priority stamps', to track your letters, if this is the way you want to send your mail.

Who invented the QR Code? Denso - Wave – a subsidiary of the Toyota Group, way back in 1994. Originally it was designed to be used to track parts in the vehicle manufacturing industry, but its use has grown into all sorts of other areas.

Why did we place a QR Code on our bookmark? Of course you carry our Salvia bookmarks where you go, you have one always in your handbag – (or should have), one beside your bed, one in the car etc... so that when you are visiting gardens, nurseries, wandering outside in your garden, going for your daily walk, walking through the neighbourhood, you can then whip out the bookmark and be directly linked with our website, so that you can find the name of that Salvia that you just saw and go and buy a plant or write the name down, so you can email me and ask 'Have you got one'? It is for those who want to quickly go to the site rather than fiddling around remembering the website address and waiting for it to connect etc... A QR Code app can also be downloaded and uploaded to those who don't have a smart phone as well as for those who like carrying tablets etc. Next time you see us, come and get a few bookmarks so you don't have to wait to be connected.

Kathie Thomas, our IT contact and the person who setup the new website for VSSG advised in brief that 'a QR code can be scanned on a mobile phone. There is an app you can download for the phone to read the code. A code can lead you to a website, a special offer, etc.

Basically: it is a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a smartphone.'

A couple of websites for downloading the relevant apps for both iPhone and Android that may be of interest are listed below or you may wish to search QR Codes on the internet. Let's know how you go with using the new VSSG bookmark.

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/qr-reader-for-iphone/id368494609?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=la.droid.qr>

Editor

Christmas Luncheon at the Grimston's quirky garden

Although Christmas seems so long ago, memories of the Christmas 2015 Luncheon at Tine Grimston's wonderful garden in Rowville will stay with me for a long time. If there is one function subscribers should really push themselves to attend, it's the Christmas Luncheon. Not only is it a chance to catch up with old friends and new it's usually held in a lovely garden. Hosts go out of their way to make us welcome, everyone chips in with a Christmas plate of food to share, and the time of year means its celebration time.

Those on email already know that prior to Lyndi's annual talk this year, reminiscing on the year past, the people who have made it all possible, and lots of other news she shares, this year she had arranged a Birthday Cake for the 25 years that VSSG has been running and we all sang happy Birthday – luckily some voices were better than others! – before enjoying our lunch and a piece of this wonderful cake. Although there are many people who were instrumental in the Groups inception and success, Lyndi is not only a Founding Member, but is still a Committee member and remains Co-ordinator. Now who else would have thought of a Cake to finish our 25th year?

Our Hosts for the day, Tine and Wayne Grimston made us very welcome. The weather was perfect, and we sat on the verandah and enjoyed the view of just one section of her wonderful garden. As always, soon after arrival, some got their cuppa first, we had a tour of the garden. It's surprising how much can be fitted into a normal size housing block (old size, not that of the newer postage size pieces of land).

Loads of different plants including salvias, a vege patch and so very much more. Most went home with a few cuttings, mine are already well rooted and ready to pot up. I don't add new plants to the garden over Summer.

One can't help but be envious of her garden room at the corner of the house overlooking another section of the garden. It's much more luxurious than most potting sheds, it's also a place to sit and read or other gardening projects and I would guess a favourite spot. Tine tells me she can often be found there when her husband is busy on the computer and it's either too cold or too late to be out in the garden. It really is very special place.

There are many pieces of art throughout the garden. Tine is a collector and when she gets home and puts her pieces together perhaps with string or anything else to give them the finished form she can already see in her mind, her husband then very professionally makes them permanent, so that anyone invited into the garden can also enjoy.

Enjoy a peak into this special garden. Unfortunately, we can't share the photos in colour this time round as we only have limited colour in the Newsletter, unless you get your subscription on line of course.

We enjoyed a Christmas feast, great company and a very special garden to wander with so many nooks and crannies. Thankyou very much Tine and Wayne for a wonderful day.

SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS

All copy must be received on or preferably prior to copy deadline.

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Please post your copy to:

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or email:

beth.c@bigpond.com (*don't forget the dot between beth and 'c'*)



Christmas Luncheon at the Grimston's

Tine and Wayne Grimston's garden was such a pleasure to explore. Here is just a glimpse of what we saw.



Salvias in the driest months

Melbourne has experienced an excessively long, dry season with some very high temperatures at times. Although most Salvias thrive in the heat with minimal water, they flower better after the rains come. An excellent example of this is the VSSG Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald where plants are only watered at planting time. Many a visitor has contacted Lyndi after a visit on a very hot day and asked if they could water the garden and she is always adamant that it must not be watered. The Display Garden is to show that most will survive quite well and the wonderful display once the rains come is a sight for sore eyes.

Like any garden, especially if watering is to be kept minimal, soil preparation is important. Lots of compost and well decomposed manure dug well into the soil, or for those who use the no dig method, a heavy layer twice a year covered by a mulch that is thick enough to prevent absorption but not too thick so that rain or watering in your own garden can penetrate the layer. Many like to feed the soil (compost, manures etc) and let the soil feed the plants. Others like to add fertilisers. Salvias require minimal feeding except if grown in pots, heights will vary for well fed plants. Just a reminder not to fertilise in the heat of the day. Don't feed sick or struggling plants as they will probably burn and be lost.

Maintenance is still required during the summer months with regular trimming and deadheading being even more important to keep their shape and your garden tidy. Don't cut back hard if temperatures are excessive. Be vigilant in prevention of insect attack on weakened plants. Again don't spray in the heat or the plant will burn. I like to cut off the flowers of my roses before the worst of the heat so that they are in survival mode and by the time the flowers return, the worst of the heat is over. Don't forget if you have a special occasion looming, cutting back your Salvias quite hard 8 weeks prior to the special event will ensure a great show of blooms when required.

There are a number of sprays on the market to assist your most vulnerable plants from sizzling. Many gardeners don't like them, I personally use one by Yates (the same for frost and excessive heat) and have had some success. Other gardeners would prefer to cover these plants when they know that extreme weather conditions are imminent.

Autumn is here and hopefully by the time you are reading this, so are the rains and our gardens are in full bloom again.

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by Betsy Clebsch

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MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS

by Meg Bentley

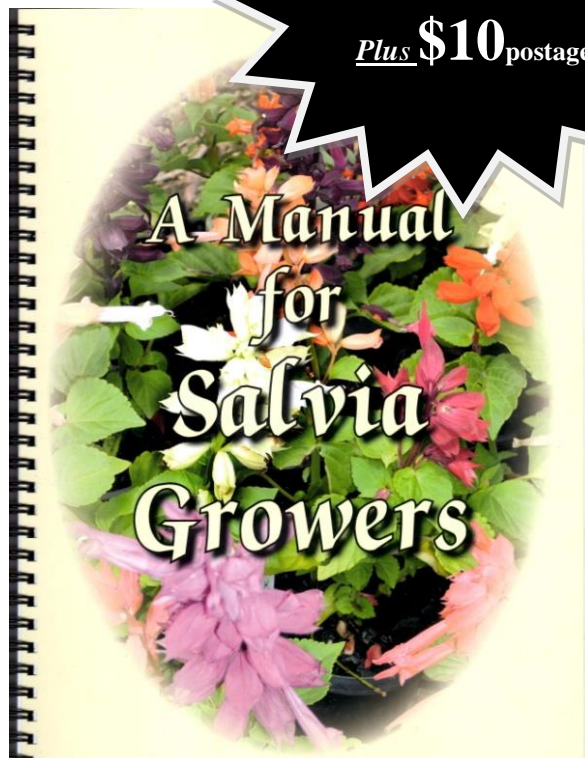
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A MANUAL FOR SALVIA GROWERS *by Meg Bentley*

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