

Salvia News

NUMBER 64



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

Winter 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.
Copy Deadline for the next edition is on or before 15 July 2016

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SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Hi, what a long, long dry season we have endured. There have again been catastrophic bushfires, some areas are in drought which is obvious when we go to purchase meat for the table, and dam levels have fallen considerably. For gardeners, we have to continually find ways to ensure our gardens can survive and salvias have proven that the majority will survive with minimal water and still give us a wonderful display. The Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald is never watered. During the hotter months Lyndi often receives calls of concern asking if they can water the display garden. She is adamant that it must not be watered. Plants are watered at the time of planting and that is it. Of course it looks dry at the end of the hot season but then with Autumn rains it bursts into flower and becomes a sight for sore eyes.

On Saturday 16th April, the garden of Barb Wicke of Brisbane's garden appeared in all its glory on Gardening Australia's television program. Barb is one of the founding members of 'Perennial Poppies' garden club (an article from a member of the club appears in each edition of *Salvia News*). Patrick Hogan emailed *Salvia News* subscribers of the details. Hope you got to see it. It was a wonderful segment. Such a magnificent garden, and as presenter Jerry Colby-Smith said, is like a Botanic Garden

with the amount of varieties of plants within.

Congratulations Barb, just magnificent!

We had a visit to Wendy Smith's garden in April. She has moved from the Peninsula to a Retirement Village. Her previous garden was very special and we were very eager to see what she could do after dramatically downsizing. We weren't disappointed, see for yourself this issue page 9/10.

Another Barbara, this time from Canada who found VSSG through the website, shares her story about gardening in the wilderness and her love of salvias.(page 14/15).

A few years ago, Heather Lucas shared a story about planting in a wheelbarrow. She gives us an update, she now has quite a collection, finds them a great way to start off her cuttings as well a beautiful display as they grow.

These and many more articles will hopefully give you a great read. Would love to hear your thoughts.

May it rain where its needed. Until next time,

Happy Gardening,
Beth

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Remember to check the website regularly for any changes, and additional information www.salvias.org.au. Take your plant lists to events or email your list to Lyndi prior to the event to ensure you don't miss out. Should you have any queries phone Lyndi Garnett, VSSG co-ordinator on 9803 4534 or email lgarnett844@gmail.com

May Sun 15 – 11am

Lambley Nursery Visit

‘Burnside’ 395 Lesters Road, Ascot.

Mel: Touring Map 973 B3

Come and visit this most interesting Nursery just outside of Ballarat. Talk to David Glen, walk through his beautiful laid out gardens and pick up a few plants from the nursery.
Bring Lunch to share and a chair. Phone Lyndi if coming on phone 9803 4534

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 Thur 16 – 1.30pm

KNOX LIBRARY

Knox Community Library,

Knox Shopping Centre

Mel: 63 K11

Speaker: Lyndi Garnett VSSG

Plants and books for sale. Bring plants to be identified. Any plant requests, please email Lyndi beforehand.

lgarnett844@gmail.com

June Sat 18th – 9am

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 26th - 11am-3pm

WORKING BEE AT NOBELIUS

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crichton Rd, Emerald, under Packing Shed

Mel: 127 G4

Have you made it to one of the working bees at the Nobelius Display Garden in Emerald 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. All welcome. Phone Lyndi if attending. Ph 98034534

July Sun 10 – 11am

TELOPEA GARDENS visit

80 Beaconsfield Emerald Road

(OPPOSITE Paternoster Road)

Emerald Mel: 311 9A

Visit this 10 acre garden set in a natural amphitheatre just 2.5 klm from Emerald. Meander through the numerous paths with its diverse range of exotic and native trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs and succulents. Tea and coffee provided. Bring lunch to share, a char, your camera and notebook.

Don’t worry about the weather, just come prepared.

Garden Entry \$8.

Ring David Hoskins on Phone 03 5968 6458 if attending

Aug Sun 14 – 12.30pm
SALVIA NEWS SUBSCRIBERS
LUNCHEON AT NOBELIUS

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

12pm Lunch under the Cherry trees.

Lunch and Tea/ coffee will be provided

This is a new event for all Salvia News subscribers, a great day to meet other subscribers at the VSSG Display Garden. Bring a chair, rug and don't forget a plastic bag to take home some salvia cuttings.

All subscribers very welcome.

For catering purposes please phone Lyndi if coming 9803 4534

Aug Sun 21 – 11am
VIRGINIA HEYWOOD GARDEN VISIT

50 Linwood Road, Seville Mel: 305 B2

A beautiful Spring garden to visit full of roses, camellias and perennials. Bring a plate to share and a chair. Ring Virginia on phone 5964 3767 if attending.

Sep Sat 17 – 2-4pm
PRUNING SALVIAS

**Held at the Salvia Display Garden
Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald.
Crichton Ave below the Puffing Billy Line
Mel: 127 G4**

Watch how to prune Salvias, hear *when* to prune Salvias.

Tea and coffee provided. Call Lyndi 9803 4534 or email lgarnett844@gmail.com if attending.

Go home with renewed enthusiasm for pruning your own Salvias and lots of cuttings to take with you.

Sep Sun 25 – 11am
VAL JACKSON'S GARDEN 'THE NOOK'

**5 Tavistock Road, Monbulk.
Mel: 122 F12**

Visit this beautiful, formal garden filled with trees, bulbs, roses etc. Often seen in the Open Garden Scheme, was open in April.

Bring a plate to share and a chair. Tea and coffee will be provided. September weather can be fickle, so come prepared.

Phone Val Jackson if attending – 9756 6562

Oct Sun 9 – 11am
SUE STEVENS GARDEN VISIT

11 Forge Road, Mt Evelyn

Mel: 118 C11

Visit Sue's beautiful garden full of roses, Spring perennials and gorgeous trees. Don't miss this lovely garden. Bring a plate to share and a chair. If attending please phone Sue after hours 0425 667 173.

Oct Sat 22 – 12-4pm
IVANHOE GARD CLUB FESTA

Bellfield Community Centre,

Cnr Oriel Rd & Bell St, Ivanhoe

Mel: 31 E2

Wonderful flower and plant display, community vegetable garden and so much more. Salvia plants, books and seeds for sale. Bring your list, plants to be identified. Email your list to avoid disappointment.

lgarnett844@gmail.com

Nov 6 & 7 – Sat 1pm, Sun 9am
ANNUAL ROSE SHOW

Mt Waverley Community Centre,

Millers Rd, opposite the train station

Mel: 70 E1

Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale. Bring your list and plants to be identified. Email your list in advance to avoid your disappointment.

lgarnett844@gmail.com

Nov Sun 20
ANNUAL SALVIA PLANT SALE

Nobelius Heritage Park,

Crichton Road, Emerald

Mel: 127 G4

More details next newsletter, or keep checking the website for updates.

APOLOGY *Pat Anderson*

In the article entitled, "Some new Salvia crosses in circulation in 2016" which appeared in the autumn 2016 edition of Salvia News, the author, Pat Anderson, uncharacteristically omitted to cite her source material. Information came primarily from the newsletters of the Salvia Association of Australia, namely: two articles by John Fisher in the September 2014 and March 2015 editions and a description by Sue Templeton in January 2015 of her visit to Orange to see John. There was also an article in the Weekend Australian in May 2015 which made reference to the development of *Salvia 'Love and Wishes'*. Salvia News and Pat in particular apologise for this omission.

HOT TIPS for GROWING SALVIAS

Meg Bentley

1/. Plant salvias' deep, like you would a tomato. This is recommended for shrubby salvias, but not necessarily the herbaceous perennials which die down over winter or plants with low basal growth. Best method is to dunk the plant in a bucket of diluted seasol or maxicrop and allow to drain into the hole, then when planted pour remaining liquid over and around the plant. Mulch well.

2/. Pruning: Best by 1/3 to start with especially if not sure where to prune to. If the plant is still flowering then just cut out the spent flowering stems for a continued display. If the plant is quite bushy you can cut down to about 1/2 the plant size and if the plant has many stems and not much growth at the base then take out alternate stems. Cut the stems down to where there is leafy growth. Remember...cutting below any foliage growth can lose the plant as many salvias don't always recover from harsh, down to the ground pruning. If unsure, then prune by 1/3 and wait to see new growth appear along the stems and at the base. It is safe then to cut down to where this good strong growth appears.



3/. Propagating: Vegetatively is always the best way to get the 'true' replica of the plant you want whether it is a species or a cultivar. Cuttings approx 8-10cm. long, from firm young growth, not too sappy. They can be side shoots, tip cuttings, heel or basal shoots. Remove lower leaves from base of stem, exposing 1 or 2 nodes and push firmly into the propagating mix up to the next set of leaves into the pot. Label the plant, water and place in a shaded protected spot.

If propagating a batch of cuttings from the same plant, have a dish or bucket with diluted seaweed liquid to place the cuttings in as you go then pour the remaining liquid over the cuttings afterwards. You can always plant several of the one kind into one pot but always label as you go.

Herbaceous perennials: Propagate by division of the plant, usually after winter, when the plants are re-shooting at the base.

Seed: I personally don't recommend growing from seed because of cross pollination which in turn produces many more cultivars. But if some folk don't mind mixed blessings, then give it a try.

4/. Feeding: What to feed your salvias? Best method is to put Blood and Bone into the base of where you are planting mixed with some soil or spread it around the top of the plant but keep away from the stem. Rooster Booster, pelletized chicken manure or old cow manure can be all used in the same way. Slow Release fertilizer can also be used. Seaweed solution is more of a tonic than a feed and can be used when planting the salvias to assist transplant shock. **One last tip...**sometimes it helps to place a stone or rock at the base of the plant which helps to protect the roots from hot sun until settled in and the plant label can also be buried under the rock for safe keeping. Mulch the salvia well after planting which helps keep the soil cool.

Photo: Patrick Hogan – Meg giving a propagating demonstration at Nobelius

Notes from Gruyere Winter: 2016

Meg Bentley, Gruyere, Vic

I actually wonder whether we will get a good wet winter, especially when there is only one month left for the Autumn and you hear it everywhere, not much rain has fallen! While I feel it will be very cold I still don't think we will be blessed with really good downpours of rain. It reminds me of those terrible drought years we all had to endure. I guess if any planting is to be done it is best to do it now so plants can settle in and acclimatize, well before the next summer.

I have had some delightful folk visit the gardens here in Gruyere recently, some having travelled long distances and in spite of my own harsh, dry conditions and water supply running very low, the salvias on the whole didn't look too bad but you hear of others' stories and just how dry they have been then you start to think, well, things can't be all that desperate here, even though we all have to struggle on! Mind you our water tanks are quite low with little or no rain and they have not been topped up for many months.



LEFT:

**Picture of a salvia with compound leaves
*Salvia bowleyana***

I have been surveying the Asian Salvias and can't help noticing just how many species have compound leaves, meaning leaf stems that comprise either 3 to 5 leaflets, compared to the general run of salvias like *S. karwinskii*, *S. greggii*, *S. microphylla* and *S. chiapensis* with simple leaves, meaning a single blade. The compound leaves can be seen in many of the Japanese salvias like *Salvia koyamae*, *S. japonica*, *S. ranziana*, *S. glabrescens* and *S. nipponica* 'Crug Cream' just to mention a few and these, apart from *S. glabrescens*, all have varying shades of lemon flowers. The Chinese species

with compound leaves are *Salvia meiliensis*, *S. trijuga*, *S. miltiorrhiza*, *S. bowleyana*, *S. paramiltiorrhiza*, *S. plectranthoides*, *S. chinensis*, and *S. nanchuanensis* and their flower colourings range from purple, lavender, lilac and lemon. There are other Chinese species that produce a simple blade and these leaves are found mostly on basal growth salvias. These species are *Salvia dolichantha*, *S. przewalskii*, and *S. campanulata* and produce flower colourings of lemon yellow, purple and bluish purple.

It is interesting to see too that most, if not all of the species with compound leaves prefer a partly shaded position, somewhere protected from the wind and hot sun. From experience here in my garden, I would say that the Asian species on the whole, do grow much better in a cooler climate with only morning sun or filtered light and respond to some moisture over the summer months without being dried out. It would be interesting to know how other salvia growers have fared with their Asian Salvias. Winter doesn't seem to be a problem since they do die down and reshoot in the Spring.

Salvias in southeast Queensland

Lynn McAllister, Lawnton, Qld

Welcome again to Lawnton and to my northwest facing, suburban garden. It's the 'autumn end' of what seems like a long hot summer, perhaps the more so, due to much lower than expected summer rainfall. We have had less than 2 inches of rain, in what should be our wettest months of the year. My beloved salvias co-habit with a range of flowering shrubs, a few small palms and more trees than should probably be planted in one backyard! Since November, when the tanks ran dry, everything has had to endure town-water, with all the chlorine and fluoride. Surprisingly, most of the garden is looking quite happy. I have not yet lost any salvias to the dry. I expect some may go when we do get rain. In the past, I have found that while an extended dry spell is manageable the next rain event can ring the death knell for my smaller growing salvias, the greggii and microphylla hybrids. To date, I haven't found a cure for this. However, my strategy of planting the same type of salvia in different parts of the yard has resulted in at least one specimen surviving inclement weather events.

At the moment my microphylla and greggii hybrids 'Garron', 'Penny's Smile', 'Blaze', 'San Carlos Festival' and 'Desert Blaze' are looking very happy and have been flowering non-stop through summer. I have three lovely white-flowered, small-leaved but unnamed salvia specimens which I bought as the same plant, from a Toowoomba garden. The bushes now vary in size, 30cm x 30cm, 50cm x 40cm and 60cm x 1m and while the flowers are the same shape and size, they are three distinctly different shades of white, if that's possible. I can only assume the different positions in the yard give rise to the variation in bush size and colour shading. 'Mrs Bucket' who I just love for her beautiful mid-purple colouring died back completely last winter and I blamed the rainfall at the time. I thought she had gone for good, but just after Christmas a few green shoots appeared and sure enough, she is back, not hale and hearty yet but hopefully will be.

The dry weather has brought out the best in *Salvia mexicana* 'Lime Calyx'. It would normally be suffering in the humidity of summer but this year it is looking wonderful and has grown to a spread of nearly 1.5m. The lime calyces are positively iridescent. *Salvia* 'Mulberry Jam' is one that often 'disappears' for months on end to escape our humid summers and this summer has been a more vibrant cerise and a lusher velvet than usual. Happily, these

salvias have performed beautifully but not everything in my garden actually prefers the dry.



Salvia 'Mulberry Jam'

Most years, my large winter flowering salvias, 'Pink Icicles', 'Timboon' and *Salvia involucrata* x *karwinskii* are by far the 'stand outs' in the garden. They keep the noisy miners occupied for hours. At the moment, they look as though they will be little more than half their usual height and spread. I assume this is due to the drier conditions and sparser than usual watering. I hope they will flower as freely as they usually do. It's only a metre or so tall this year, but already *Salvia* 'Madrensis' is adding a light, bright yellow glow to the garden. Is it my imagination or is it even brighter than usual? (I do believe it is). I wouldn't usually see this flowering till late May.

I hope your salvias are gearing up for a wonderful display in your winter gardens... until next time best wishes.

Wendy's garden in a Retirement Village

Beth Clisby – Pakenham Vic

Having visited Wendy Smith's garden on the peninsula just prior to she and husband Brian moving to a retirement village in Cranbourne, I was eager to see what her new garden was like, how she was managing after having a large, magnificent garden on the Peninsula where the soil and climate were so different even though the two areas were only about 100 klm apart.

It was a lovely Autumn day, a great day for a garden visit. It was very easy to recognise the Smith's home even though it was obvious that garden was a passion for many in the Village, but still Wendy's garden stood out. The front yard is small but so full of colour which was like a large welcome mat for anyone fortunate enough to wander the short path to the front door, or even passing down the street, it would get many admiring glances.

It was an impressive Retirement Village from the very entrance, the Smiths home was lovely. The open plan living room, dining, kitchen, with a double door opening from the dining area onto a glass enclosed verandah or garden room overlooking the garden. There we stopped in our tracks, the view was magnificent, so much colour, so much to see. The embankment at the rear had been terraced. There were natives and other shrubs including 18 salvias, some hidden by other shrubs at the rear along the fence line with more natives over the fence which gave a great background, and deceived the eye as to how deep this garden really was. Along one side was passion fruit vine and other fruits. Wendy told me that she had about 125 Salvias, fantastic especially considering the space, and the landscaping was just right to anyone privileged to visit. Additionally there are a couple of deciduous trees, fruit trees, a vege patch, 2 small green houses full of cuttings and seed pots, a shade house, a shed, a couple of water features, one fully solar operated and ever so much more. There was even a small lawn which was perfectly manicured and showed off the garden to perfection.

We spent time wandering and were allowed to collect some seeds, and Wendy ensured many went home with cuttings too. When we went inside to a wonderful shared morning tea Wendy told us a little more about her garden.

After welcoming us to their garden, Wendy then apologised for it not looking its best. (Check the photos?). She said that it desperately needed cutting back but she had another *Salvia* group visit about six weeks earlier and then VSSG today and she wanted to leave as many flowers as possible for easy identification and so that everyone could see, as well she wanted to collect seeds from many of her plants. It has also been a very hot and dry season.

Wendy shared information about the fantastic life style at the village, gardeners do the lawns, edges and front gardens, except Wendy does her own. She told us that she and Brian were lucky to have more space than most. Soil is very different than their last home in Rosebud which was sand. This Village in Cranbourne is solid clay with no top soil on the bank. They have rabbits and hares, lots of wattle birds and New Holland honeyeaters, wrens at times and sparrows. The sparrows that visit take the flowers off the stems to get to the seed, especially the yellow and white toned salvias. She is interested to know if other salvia growers had seen sparrows in their gardens do this.

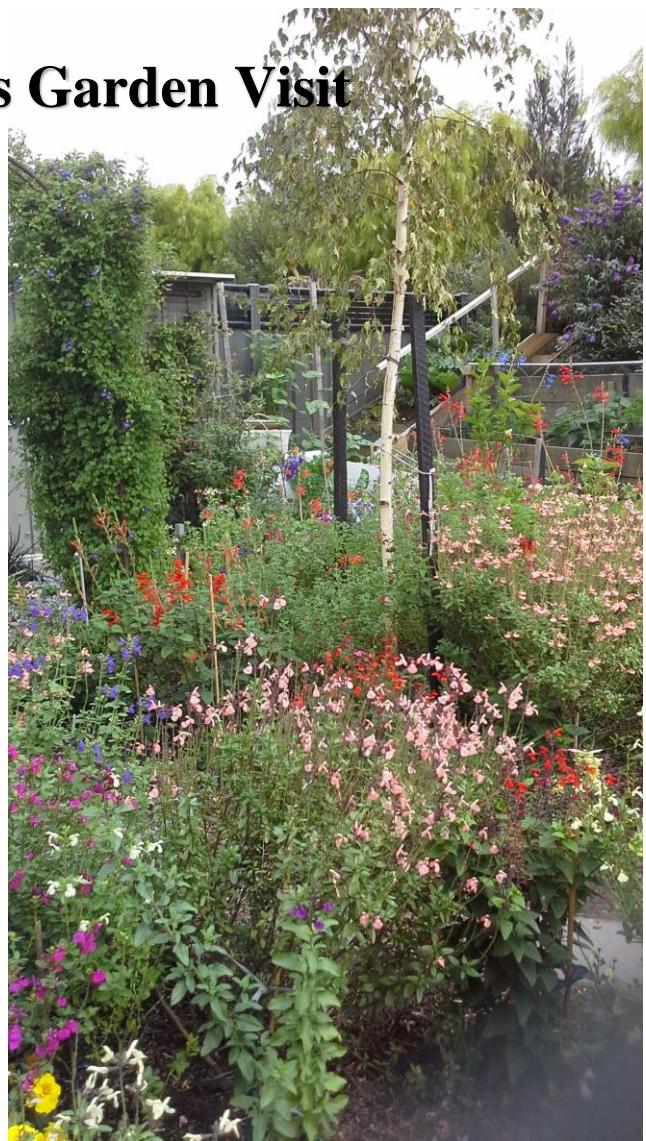
(If you have witnessed this, let us know. Perhaps you have even managed a photo).

Brian showed us their pruning tool for *greggii / microphylla* salvias, a battery operated hedger with a special comb. Wendy said that these days Brian helps out a lot more in the garden, mulching the prunings to put on the bank and terraces, as well as pruning.

This spectacular garden has been completed in just two years and its landscaping and presentation were superb. It just shows that with a little thought and a lot of hard work, even a small space can hold many plants and even feed the owners too. The pleasure of just being there was amazing and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. I think many will rethink Retirement Villages after this visit. Thankyou Wendy and Brian, what a pleasure it was and how very much we enjoyed the day.

Continued over page, Photos page 10

Wendy Smith's Garden Visit



Don't forget to prune your Semiatrata.....

*Lyndi Garnett, Mt Waverley Vic
Photo – Patrick Hogan*

As I write this, it's the cool period just past in February 2016 (the year is one to remember as it's usually stinking hot). I'm looking at my *S. semiatrata* and as I'm studying it, I notice that there is a lot of long new growth, that the bush is too top heavy and congested, so I decide to prune it.

I had lost my previous *Salvia semiatrata* plant because I didn't prune regularly – the KEY to the success of many Salvias is to prune/ tip prune regularly.

I've started by cutting back the young new growth by at least half on all stems. I want to keep the bush compact and not allow it to get straggly.

I cut out the middle stems on each branch, including old flowering stems to allow more light and air in to the lower areas. I also cut out any cross branched that are causing a lot of congestion to the middle (almost like pruning roses). I noticed that quite a few lower stems were becoming twiggy and old looking, so these were trimmed and cut back to any new growth or a good pair of stems.

Of course many flowers and buds were sacrificed in this cull, but not to worry, they'll be back in 4 or 5 weeks. This is all for the health of the bush and the surrounding plants (it was beginning to shade too many under plantings). I never worry about cutting off the flowers from the small leaved Salvias as they'll be back within a few weeks. They have such long flowering times.

By regularly pruning / tip pruning you are:

1. Removing any old, dead or twiggy branches
2. Reinvigorating the shrub, so that it will produce more flowers
3. Promoting new young growth
4. A bushier tidy plant



Salvia semiatrata

If you don't prune/ tip prune

1. Your plant can lose vigour and die a slow death. I'm sure you don't want to lose this beautiful plant.
2. Becomes twiggy and may prove hard to prune to invigorate the plant at a later time.
3. Gradual loss of flowers.

Even if you regularly cut off the flowers, you are helping the plant.

Other Salvias that I group as being similar in their growth habit are *S. lasiantha* and *S. melissodora* - same sort of leaves, twiggy growth if left unchecked and flowers. They may be related.

S. lasiantha is difficult as it generally has a central leader that can get out of hand; this has to be sacrificed by half and lateral stems pruned as well. *S. melissodora* is one that definitely needs regularly pruning. It's hard enough to propagate so you don't want to lose this plant from lack of pruning or neglect. It clips quite well, especially if started when young, it should bush up nicely, remain compact, new growth appearing as well as more flowers.

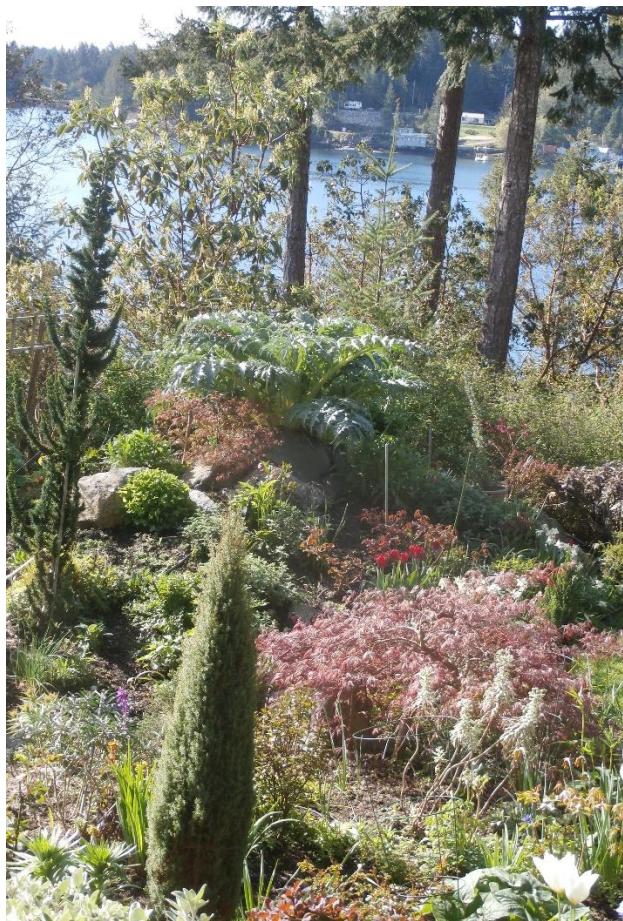
Don't forget that it is the NEW growth that is taken for cuttings for all three spp, so if you want to propagate these shrubs, prune regularly.

Gardening in Garden Bay, British Columbia

Barbara Nield

Garden Bay is about 60 miles north of Vancouver, on what's called the Sunshine Coast. We are on the north side of a very large harbour called Pender Harbour, an area that is sparsely populated and with a mild, maritime climate, USDA Zone 8b. We very rarely have snow, generally receive only mild frosts and get about 45" of rain, mostly during the winter months from November to March. It is a great area in which to garden, except is it quite mountainous and rocky, and it is BESET WITH DEER!!! And that is why I latched onto the website of the Salvia Study Group of Victoria with such mad glee - deer do not like salvia!

About six years ago, when we first moved up here permanently from Vancouver, in our retirement, I had decided I would just have a natural garden and give up the ongoing battle everyone has with deer. However, because we have a small Norfolk terrier named Hattie, who like all terriers is completely inattentive, we needed to put up a fence. Well. If you are going to put up a 2' fence to confine a dog, you may as well put up a 6' fence and exclude the deer! So suddenly I was no longer constrained to deer-proof plants and could go a bit nuts.



Because we live in such a privileged climate and can grow almost anything non-tropical, I may not have anything useful or interesting to tell you about gardening in BC that hasn't been written about by any mild-maritime gardener.. However, I have some

plants that I am particularly pleased with and that give me very great pleasure. I have a cardoon, for example, not an unusual plant or difficult to grow, but one which has such a dramatic architecture and grey-green-leaved exuberance that it has pride of place and a dramatic impact in the garden. It is vigorous and happy just now, and will be until next winter.

I also grow a *Cystus battandieri* because I've always dreamt of living near the Mediterranean, and because I look forward to the day it will be in rampant bloom and fill the air with the scent of pineapples. It really isn't very happy here. We get fierce SE winds in the winter and this particular species of cystus seems to be very shallow-rooted and struggles to keep erect. It is tied to several posts. I notice that this Spring, however, that it has several sprouts coming up from the bottom, so perhaps it is going to get a grip on things. I bet they grow beautifully and effortlessly throughout much of Australia.

I also grow *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, given to me by a beloved friend who recently died, and this huge lily produces galaxies of flakey seeds that fly about on the breezes, settle and germinate all over the place, so I am reminded of my dear friend throughout the summer - large bright green spectacular leaves with flowers that will trumpet forth at the top of 8' high stalks. An astonishing plant. I can send pounds of seed to the SSGV if you'd like. Takes ages to mature, five years or so.

Another plant I have finally established in my garden, after trying to grow it for forty years or more in Vancouver where it rains much more, in fact a lot, is *Romneya coulteri*. I took innumerable cuttings over the years in Vancouver and although occasionally I would get it going for a short time, it would never thrive and eventually would die. I have now moved to drier romneya-friendly country and, having finally admitted defeat and bought three plants at a nursery, I now have a madly happy group of romneya which I can see are going to go berserk, which they can do, and perhaps cause me grief with

their mad enthusiasm for the gravelly ground of Garden Bay.

And then I have discovered salvias! Well, I was first seduced by *S. horminum* because it bloomed without let all summer long in a friend's garden and I just had to have it. A **most** satisfactory plant which just goes on and on and on, and I have forced it upon all my Pender Harbour friends as a deer-proof summer-long super-duper annual. I stick it in everywhere there is a bare bit of ground among my shrubs and perennials. I have pots of it germinating on my deck now. And when I started the garden, I put in lots of the salvias that were readily available in our local nurseries - *S. nemerosa* "East Friesland" and *S. sylvestris* "May Night" and "Rose Queen", *S. verticillata* "Purple Rain". I found *S. "Amistad"* last year and have taken cuttings; the purple is intoxicating. My *S. elegans* is struggling but may feel better when it gets warmer. I grow *S. patens* which gives everyone great pleasure with the intensity of the blue, and they all over-winter perfectly well, although I cover them with little mounds of soil just in case. And *S. argentea* which took some time to get established but seems happy enough now, and very satisfactory with its silvery-grey woolly leaves. *S. glutinosa* is a bit rambunctious and pushy for my taste but it certainly does like it here. And I have some *S. lyrata* which at first I cussed at mightily because it seeds so rampantly, but I now appreciate my version which has really deep red-purple leaves providing a welcome contrast to the pervading greenery. I'm looking forward to the germination of *S. pratense*, *forskaohlei*, *jurisicai*, *hians*, now gestating on my

deck and I have *S. repens* and *viscosa* coming soon by mail so that will be fun too.



By the way, our iconic native tree on this Coast is the *Arbutus menziesii* which, with its peeling red bark, is reminiscent of your eucalyptus so there are a few rare hints of Australia here, but mostly we live in entirely different worlds, don't we. I grew many roses in Vancouver and much admired your Alastair Clarke's introductions, most, sadly, too tender for BC. I would love to visit your wonderful gardening world one day, to see the salvias and the roses too! Bless you for your amazing website, and congratulations to the marvelous VSSG!

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SALVIAS IN WHEELBARROWS

Heather Lucas, Heathmont, Vic. – April 2016

Aah, follow up wheelbarrow article, promised to Beth, after original article!! How did I get so off track, well I can tell you, it is called seed madness. I loved my wheelbarrows with cuttings in them, especially when they took and became new plants, but somewhere along the way I got side tracked with my mad passion of seed growing. That of course is another story, as it is rather hit and miss, especially some of those pesky Mediterranean seeds that you just have to have, but they are hard to germinate and then even harder to keep going. Still back to wheelbarrows, mustn't digress.



I thought I'd look up when I actually did that first article, especially as I needed to be reminded of what I actually said. Wow believe it or not the article was written on 25th August, 2013, yes 2013!! I had 1 wheelbarrow done and was completing a second one. Now I have 5 wheelbarrows and they are placed around a tree in the back garden. Being asked to do this follow up article of course has focused my attention on my now 5 wheelbarrows and I must admit that the first 2 are now looking very neglected. I still have some of the cuttings/plants that were planted 3 years ago in them, i.e. 'Omaha Gold' and 'Fallax', but they really should have been repotted or planted into the garden.

So what are in the last 3 wheelbarrow's, which of course are still looking pretty good, taking into account that some of the cuttings I put in have died over the last 3 years. Wheelbarrow 3 still has 'Lilac Dreamin', 'Longistyla' and 'Miahuatlanensis'. 'Lilac Dreamin' was a salvia that I got from Annette

Bax, which was a Desley seed grown sage, very beautiful salvia with lilac flowers and purple calyxes. I have bought quite a lot of salvias off Annette; another one which is absolutely gorgeous at the moment is *microphylla* 'Orchid Showers', which has two toned flowers of coral pink and dark pink. This was a plant grown from seed from *microphylla* 'Orchid Glow', of which some photos have the same colour flowers as Orchid Showers and other photos have two toned pale pink flowers. Anyway we have so many different *microphylla/greggii* type salvias that it actually becomes hard to distinguish between them and even harder to find a place to put all of them, but this one is a beauty.

Back to the wheelbarrow's, Wheelbarrow 4 is my most successful cutting wheelbarrow, which has *Salvia Amarissima*, *Salvia aurita* var. *aurita*, *Salvia dombeyi* (another cutting, not the original cutting that was in Wheelbarrow 1 – that died), *Salvia* 'Ellie', *Salvia hirtella* (my original plant in the garden has died!), *Salvia iodantha* 'Pink Mink' and *Salvia squalens*. I do have a *Salvia dombeyi* plant in a pot that I have had now for around 4 years, but it has never flowered. I was told that you shouldn't move this salvia once it likes an area, so I am too reticent to plant it into either a bigger pot or the garden, as I don't want to lose it. I saw a *Salvia dombeyi* in flower when I went on a Melbourne Botanic Gardens arranged garden visit day to 2 gardens in Seville on 25th August last year. This *dombeyi* was in the garden of Virginia Heywood, whose garden is on our Calendar of Events for a visit on Sunday, 21st August, so put this in your calendar, as it will most likely be in flower then. It wasn't the first time I have seen *Salvia dombeyi* in flower, both Wendy Smith (in a pot when living in Rye) and Pat Anderson (growing up a trellis in Warrandyte) had wonderful examples of *Salvia dombeyi*, not sure if they are still going!! Let's hope I eventually one day get to see mine flower.

Aah, I've gone off on a tangent again – last Wheelbarrow 5 – had 'Annie B' (just one cutting has taken), *mexicana* 'Black Calyx', *Raymondii* subsp. *Mairanae* (all dead on inspection this morning) and *Salvia villosa*. I have just added some new cuttings last Sunday of *Salvia arenaria*, 'Holly' (*greggii*), *microphylla* 'Orchid Glow', *Kutznetzovii* (a salvia obtained from Craig Irving of Sunnymeade) and

continued on page 15 ..

SALVIAS IN WHEELBARROWS

Heather Lucas

..continued from page 14



(*a greggii x microphylla*, Pat Anderson found in her garden).

The *mexicana* 'Black Calyx' I obtained from Wendy Smith, over 5 years ago, which has now has been renamed *mexicana* 'Bill Whitehead'. I do hope that some, if not all (very hopeful) take, as I lost my *Kutznetzovii* that I obtained from Craig and have been after the *arenaria* for some years now.

Talking about Craig Irving, do also make time to go to his garden, Sunnymeade (I rate it as the most wonderful and best garden I have ever been to), it is just glorious, open tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday (16th & 17th April), I know too late for us now, but he does open again in spring/summer. I go every year for a long weekend and stay in their lovely little cottage accommodation, go into Euroa for dinner on both nights and probably drive Craig crazy either talking to him or asking him questions about the garden. This weekend I so look forward to each year; it makes me feel so good and it recharges the batteries and gets all the gardening desires going again.

Till next time, happy gardening.

Salvia Display Garden - Nobelius Heritage Park, Crichton Road, Emerald

Photo Patrick Hogan



Next issue of *Salvia News* will include a history of the Victorian Salvia Study Group Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park.

It not only shows about 100 different salvias in a garden setting, but what we can learn from it, about its upkeep and general maintenance.

Salvia News

Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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Putting *Salvia News* together – *Beth Clisby*

I often get asked how *Salvia News*, the newsletter of the Victorian *Salvia* Study Group, is put together. The newsletter is the work of many. Articles are submitted from regular, occasional and one off writers, who all enjoy their *salvias* to different degrees. There are those who love a plant that requires minimal water and has loads of flowers, those who want to know a little more, names of their plants, where they come from, how best to maintain, take cuttings, collect seeds. Then there are those who through their expertise, some who are horticulturalists, writers, professional landscapers and long time enthusiasts, are only too willing to share their knowledge as busy as they are, with other enthusiasts, whether it be someone new to the genus or a long time collector. As VSSG is a Study Group, we endeavour to collect material from our wonderful writers from around Australia and further afield to cover all areas, hopefully to ensure that everyone finds articles in each edition that they enjoy and makes them want to spend more time gardening with *Salvias*. The editor also writes the occasional articles and seeks more when there is a shortage for any edition. There are many ways to share information on *Salvias*, the *Salvia News* newsletter is just one. With all of the above, hopefully it will ensure the genus continues to be grown in Australia and further afield in generations to come. With every edition of *Salvia News*, a copy goes to both our State and Federal Library for the records.

There are always deadlines for submissions, because the articles have to be proof read, arranged in the newsletter for easy access and aesthetic reasons. The newsletter in its completed format goes out for proof reading. Proof reading not only includes spelling and grammar, but also that the information to the best of our ability is correct. I rely on long time enthusiasts, horticulturalists, *Salvia* writers and others for this information. Additionally it is often the writer's opinion, or how they do it, so it's not wrong, but there may be some who disagree which is good, because we learn more by sharing ideas of course.

We can't correct our own work especially when we have been many hours over several days on it because we start to read what we want it to say rather than what it actually says. When the newsletter comes back from proof reading, I go through it again, and make more adjustments and corrections as necessary. We are volunteers, not professionals, and do our darnedest to get it right but unfortunately mistakes still happen.

Copyright laws apply to everyone, and ignorance isn't a reason lawfully for not complying. This also applies to drawings and photos. Permission has to be got in

writing to use someone else's work. If there are photos in the newsletter that doesn't give the photographers name, then they are the work of the writer. *Salvia News* will always endeavour to print different articles to other publications as most of us don't want to read the same thing in everything we read.

If the article is not from their own experiences, then the writer must say where the information was accessed. It is very rare for one of *Salvia News* contributors to omit this, and if this happens, it's a definite oversight. We know it shouldn't happen so we right it as quickly as possible after hearing of a mistake, with our sincere apologies.

Once completed, the newsletter goes as ready art to our Printers, Apple Print at Glen Waverley. They can't just drop everything because we are ready, some of their printing jobs take days to complete and thus deadlines are very important to complete all orders, therefore a booking is made and has to be adhered to.

The completed newsletter has to also be uploaded to the website for the online subscribers, and this is completed by the IT specialist.

Next the Proof Reader/Sub Editor collects the printed newsletters which then need to have address labels, be folded and posted. The labels are completed by the Subscription Officer who at this time also emails those who receive an online subscription.

It is time consuming, but for the editor it is also a great way to meet many people and therefore thoroughly enjoyed. Everyone to do with the newsletter except the printing company are volunteers even though many have full time work and a full life. I/we love hearing from you, even if it's because something that you believe is wrong, or don't agree with. If we don't know, we can't right it. It's always a pleasure to hear from you whatever the reason.

So you see there are many people involved, many hours of input in each edition, and not always the same people. Now sit back and enjoy this latest edition. Thankyou to everyone who assisted with this edition. Don't forget, we would love to receive your article for consideration too.

**DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING EDITION OF
SALVIA NEWS is
on or before 15 July 2016**

LETTERS

Good morning.

I live on the west coast of Canada near a small village called Garden Bay. Because we are heavily populated with deer, I am a salvia devotee and just recently stumbled upon the website for the Salvia Study Group and am AMAZED! Not to mention grateful. It is superb. Thank you for making all this information available to those of us struggling to garden in the wilderness. I have the Betty Clebsch book and went through it for salvias that will cope with USDA Zone 8 (we are 8 to 9), ordering four perennial seeds that arrived yesterday. But your website gives LOADS of frost-tolerant salvias and I will just have to go through them all and see which I would be like to - and be able to germinate here in Pender Harbour. Thank you so much. Please convey my appreciation and admiration to the Study Group for their dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

Barbara Nield

Editor:

All letters are responded to and Barb kindly sent back an article to share about her garden including photos, Magnificent, if you haven't already had a read, turn to page 12/13 this issue. Actually, she sent two emails, another to Lyndi regarding Salvia seeds. Thankyou Barb, lovely to hear from you.

As most of you would know by now, we have had an upgrade to the website and some areas are still being updated. Other areas need continual updating so its worth having a look on a regular basis. Apart from the initial layout and some other technical assistance, Lyndi maintains the whole of the website. Like Barbara above, we are very grateful for all the information available and easily accessible for the majority as a reference. If it doesn't have what you want, email us, maybe it's waiting to be uploaded, or there is someone who can assist you.



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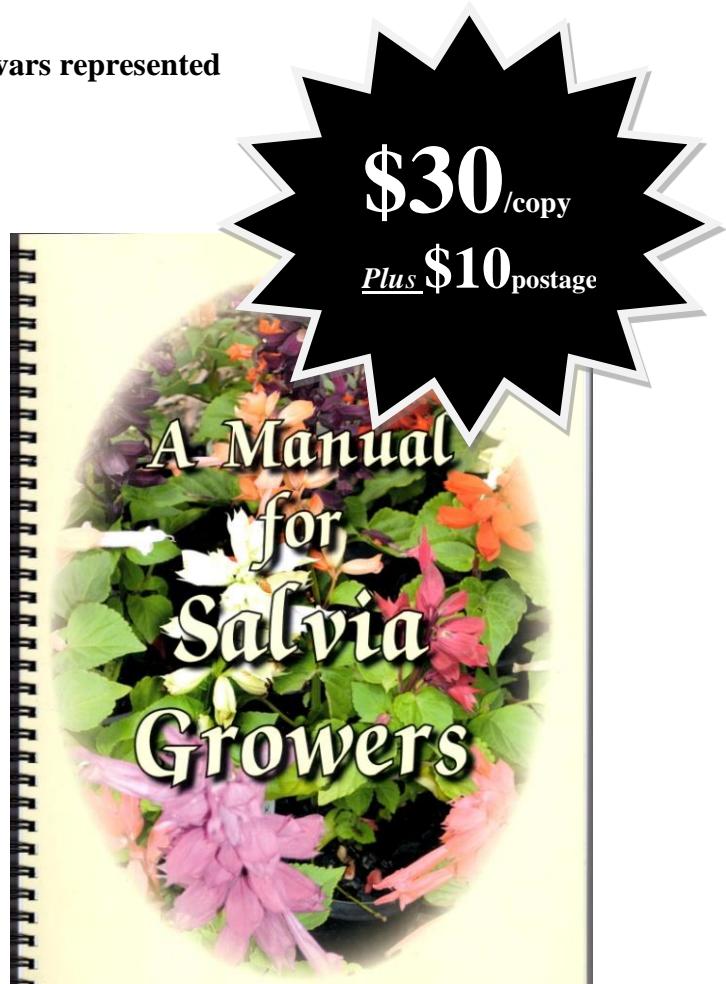
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Salvia News is printed by
Apple Print
702 High Street Road, Glen Waverley Vic 3150