

Salvia News

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Victorian Salvia Study Group

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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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All copy must be received on or preferably prior to copy deadline.
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(Don't forget the dot between beth and 'c')



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Hello everyone,

By the time you read this I will have married my long time friend (of more than 3 decades!) Norman Gilchrist and moved to Temora NSW, a lovely country town north of Wagga Wagga.

It was a complete surprise but as seniors there was no reason to wait. It's a special man who takes on a person with a lifetime disability! We are very happy; it's been a very busy and exciting time getting married and moving interstate, moving from two different states. We married quietly in a local park in front of close family and friends and gathered afterwards to celebrate before making the move less than a week later.

After contacting the Agricultural Department of NSW, I took many cuttings mostly of salvias and potted up to take to our new home. The stipulations were no garden soil, only potting mix, and no food plants. Over coming issues I will share news of our new garden which is from a blank canvass. Although Norman isn't a gardener, he does enjoy a nice garden and over the years has assisted me often with the heavy work. I will be able to share climatic comparisons like many before me who have made a move. Thank you to those special people who have already warned me about the heavy frosts in the area. As a person in an electric wheelchair, the garden will have to be a variation of a no dig garden as previously which suits me because most of the maintenance too is then within my reach.

It has been agreed for me to continue as editor of *Salvia News*. The email address at least for now will remain the same, as is my mobile number.

I believe we have another good read this issue and hope very much you enjoy.

Lyndi has shared some photos of her verge, what a picture! See page 5, perhaps you too would like to try and let us know how it goes.

Meg Bentley has a visitor in her garden but won't be doing anything about this at least for now even though her roses and other plants are being badly nibbled. Check page 6/7 to see what I am referring to. We know that Pat Anderson has returned from a wonderful trip overseas and she has taken considerable time to share with us – pages 10 to 14.

Our friends in SE Queensland always keep us up to date as to what is happening in their region and this issue the writer is Viola from *Viola's Patch* page 15.

It is with regret that I have to share that Patrick Hogan has stood down his position/s on the Committee of VSSG. He has worked tirelessly for the Group for a very long time & will be very much missed.

Happy Gardening, Beth Gilchrist

Christmas & New Year Greetings to all of our readers and their loved ones!

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email to; ..
beth.c@bigpond.com

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

November 15 Tuesday - 1.30pm

BAYSWATER LIBRARY Bayswater Library

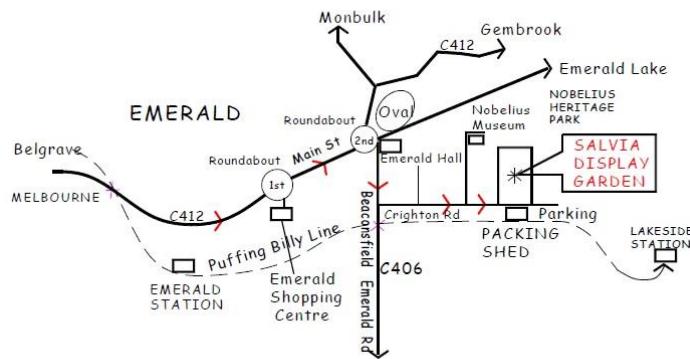
Bayswater Library 26, Ground Floor, Mountain High Shopping Centre, Bayswater
Lyndi will be speaking about the world of Salvias
Salvia books, plants and seed will be for sale
Bring flowers and plants to be identified. Email her a list of plants to bring

Nov Sun 20 - midday to 3pm

ANNUAL SALVIA PLANT SALE

Nobelius Heritage Park, Crighton Road, Emerald Mel: 127 G4

DIRECTIONS TO SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN



Under the Puffing Billy train line is our huge end of year salvia sale. All plants only \$5 each.
Hurry, be early, plants only available until stock runs out. Salvia books and seed also for sale.
Bring your list, email to avoid disappointment to lgarnett844@gmail.com
Don't forget to bring plants to be identified

December 4 Sunday

VSSG CHRISTMAS LUNCH – 11am

Annabel and Rob Evans - 7 Fuchsia St, Blackburn.

A gorgeous shady cottage garden, a large lawn under a huge oak tree.

Bring a Christmas plate to share, a chair, any plants to give away and some good Christmas spirit!

Phone Annabel 98771612 or Lyndi 98034534 if coming, or email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

The VSSG Christmas luncheon is celebrated in a lovely garden each year and is always a great day. If you only manage one garden visit this year, this is the one not to miss. Come along and celebrate the Christmas Season in a beautiful garden with other Salvia enthusiasts, make new friends, catch up with old friends too. This year enjoy this special garden and the hospitality of Annabel and Rob. Seasons' Greetings everyone!

Early Spring and already brimming with interest..



For anyone visiting Lyndi's garden in Glen Waverley, it's easy to find even though it's a very long street, as her garden spills beautifully onto the verge, such a wonderful compliment to her spectacular garden. In early September it was already brimming with colour and much interest, the bees were already happily visiting and her garden is always full of birds, they just love Salvias. Lyndi has forwarded some photos of her verge and front garden for sharing.



Lyndi's garden faces north west so that the front yard receives all the hot westerly winds and hot afternoon sun in the heat of the summer, but also receives the first sun and any warmth in Winter. It has a gravel mulch over clay soil to assist these harsh conditions. Water is from whatever falls from above and shower water in a bucket.

Many Councils today allow verge plantings, even though they may have some strict guidelines to follow. It may be worth contacting your Council so that you too can have a go. It certainly adds interest to the street, what is often usually quite an eyesore because of poor soils and Council trees, and where the power isn't underground, a lamppost too. You too can achieve this colourful verge.

Notes from Gruyere. 2016 Summer

Meg Bentley, Gruyere, Vic

My, how time flies – Summer is upon us and what a long, hot and dry one it will be for us all. Spring didn't seem to last very long at all, especially since all the bulbs flowered early and blossoms came and went. Masses of yellow daffodils and jonquils, golden wattles in bloom – entwined with the purple flowering *Hardenbergia violacea*. Flocks of White-naped Honeyeaters have dispersed now that the Pittosporums have finished flowering but the New Holland Honeyeaters continue to flit through the garden and have adapted well to the varying salvias and the continual nectar supply.

The idea to plant salvias amongst the natives has paid off – or was it really planting natives amongst the salvias, there are so many more, anyway there has been a continual supply of nectar and insects for the many resident and visiting birds throughout the gardens here in Gruyere.

One particular visitor of late, no it's not a bird but a Swamp Wallaby who stands and looks at me as I go about my work. She is not very big, about 80-90cm high but quite happy to be there and rather gentle amongst the salvias as she hops through the garden and delicately prunes off the new growth on my roses. I say 'she' because as she reaches up for the higher branches, a little head pops out of the pouch and nibbles at a few lower leaves...yes, it's a joey!

Whilst it was disappointing to lose the new growth on the roses, I know they will re-shoot and flower at a later time but well worth it to see such a beautiful healthy creature in the garden with its young, I've known my roses to be pruned in years past and now I see the 'culprit' at work. Following the wallaby around the garden one day to see where she went and what else she does, I found her eating the sticks and prunings that were piled ready for

collection, I guess a bit of roughage was needed in the diet. It did diminish the heap to be collected.

Where does she sleep at night you ask (so do I), well I'm sure a spot has been made comfortable up under the large Norfolk Pine where the needles create a cushioned bed.



Salvia nanchuanensis

Now, back to the garden! I have cleared a large bed of *Salvia 'Timboon'* in readiness to utilize this area for a garden of all my Asian salvias. It was once used as a fenced-in vegetable garden until I planted *Salvia 'Timboon'* in it and it rather 'took-over' the whole bed after about 4-5 years, they can develop a huge root-growing area which is great if you want a permanent blockage in the garden to blot-out a shed or such. Many of these smaller rooted clumps were dug up and re-planted elsewhere in the property where I needed taller cover and blocking barriers. The garden will then be given a good feed in readiness for planting all the salvias of the Asian persuasion like *Salvia miltiorrhiza*, *S. paramiltiorrhiza*, *S. japonica*, *S. koyamae*, *S. meiliensis*, *S. bowleyana*, *S. campanulata*, *S. nipponica* 'Crug Cream', *S. koyamae* 'Yamagata', *S. nipponica* 'Fuji Snow' and so on. These particular salvias are not large growing plants and will be set out with a good space between and hopefully I can find enough large rocks and stumps with interesting formations to help set them off and give a bit of character to an otherwise 'flat' bed.

These salvias are rather hard to place in a mixed bed of other salvias without being overcrowded or smothered but in a bed of their own they can grow to their full potential. It also gives them a chance to spread their roots into the ground instead of being confined to a container.

Hopefully they will go through our hot Summer without any struggle....and let's hope the Swamp Wallaby doesn't find my Chinese Rose planted in the middle of the bed or the rare, ever-green Chinese Blueberry *Vaccinium gaultheriifolium*.

If you have salvias just newly planted in the garden and not yet big enough to cope alone in an open sunny position, then here is a handy tip you might like to try: cut off old tree-fern fronds and cut into several sections (if it is a large one) or just in half and bend that over the top of the plant needing protection and see how it creates a filtered light, then, as it breaks down will add a nice mulch around the plants. Actually any leafy stem can be used so long as it is stiff or firm enough to hold up over the plant to protect it from the hot sun.

Right: *Salvia paramiltiorrhiza* with yellow flowers just finished



A hot tip for those folk who want to go away for a short break but have potted plants to look after; ...line a polybox with sheets of newspaper and place all your pots into the box , put the box in a semi-shaded spot then give a good watering and leave the plants to re-absorb the moisture. This will keep them damp enough for about a week or two. This works better too if the pots are already damp before placing into the box. Mind you it is not recommended for the 'grey leaved' salvias which can develop a white mould on the leaves if too damp or compacted as in 'close encounters of the leafy kind'. The grey-leaved salvias don't have the same level of water requirements as the larger leaved, lush growing salvias. Spring has been a good time for seed propagation and also for cuttings and division of plants so it has been a large job potting up all the newly rooted plants and seedlings. Quite an undertaking when one pot of cuttings becomes 6 extra pots or a tray of seedlings becomes a dozen extra pots... but who would be without the garden and all its wonderful joys. Hoping we all get through a drought and fire-free Summer.

Footnote from Meg:

It has been a delight to read articles and information in the 'Salvia News' about other people's gardens from as far away as Canada, UK and even Queensland. Interesting too, reading how their gardens grow in different climates and the trials they have to endure whether it be with certain weather conditions or the wildlife within the area.

While I laxed lyrical over seeing such a beautiful Wallaby come into my garden with its Joey in the pouch, and out of it, I didn't mind one bit that some of my roses were eaten ...or should I say 'pruned'. Now of course young Joey is growing bigger and bounding around all over the place and the appetites of them together is quite voracious, especially the Mother.

While I have enjoyed these native visitors, they can become too adventurous in their taste for foliage and start to try all manner of plants including salvia flowers and a few leaves, just to get the taste right and its usually the fruity fragrant microphyllas.

I have to say that I do feel sorry for folk who have to deal with wallabies at the best of times when they become a burden within and around their gardens and any other wildlife that enters the garden

and establishes itself for the duration of fresh new growth. But to me, in spite of losing so much in the garden, it has been such a delightful experience to have wildlife feel so relaxed and unafraid, to come and visit the garden.



Lyndi's Committee Update

In case you haven't heard, Patrick has resigned from the Committee of the Salvia Group to concentrate on other interests, writing books being one such interest. I believe he's not a bad author.

Everyone who came in contact with Patrick would have enjoyed his Irish humour. Those who received his reminder emails and photos will be sorry to see him leave.

But on the bright side, we are very fortunate to be able to welcome Norm Winn as our new Publicity Officer. Norm certainly knows his way around a computer and often gives PowerPoint presentations to many small and large businesses around Victoria.

Although Norm has huge shoes to fill, I'm sure he will do a great job, bringing his own Aussie sense of humour to the post, so please welcome Norm to this very interesting position.

Thanks a mil Patrick!

Patrick has been an active committee member of the VSSG for quite some time. Not only has he been the Group's photographer and Publicity Officer, but many of you may have attended his photographic and computer classes.

He and Eileen have attended many of the events on the VSSG Calendar and he has been generous enough to host our Christmas luncheon at their home.

Patrick's Irish humour was a great asset especially at the cash register at the various Salvia events, always laughing, always willing to give a helping hand, and always bringing a smile from those he was helping. Unfortunately for the VSSG his other interests are holding a great stand. We very much hope he will attend the occasional event. We thank him most sincerely for all that he has done for the Group. He will be sorely missed, but we wish him well and success in his future endeavours.

Best wishes from all of us.

Lyndi and the team at VSSG



Salvia patens, Salvia roemeriana, Salvia microphylla var neurepia, Salvia gesneraeiflora 'Tequila', Salvia leucantha

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only **\$10** pack

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send to*

VSSG
844 Highbury Road,
Glen Waverley Vic 3150

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..... Post code

Day time contact no

Email

packs **Assorted**

or **Single Flower** packs -

..... *Salvia patens*
..... *Salvia roemeriana*
..... *Salvia microphylla var neurepia*
..... *Salvia gesneraeiflora 'Tequila'*
..... *Salvia leucantha*

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

Plus \$2.50 per pack posted \$

Total cost of order: \$

VAL JACKSON'S GARDEN 'THE NOOK'.

Heather Lucas – Heathmont Vic

Once in a while you get blown away by an event that occurs in your life and take away from it heaps of joy and information to help you. Sounds good, well it was an absolute delight. I'm talking about the SSG garden visit day to Val Jackson's garden aptly called 'The Nook' on Sunday, 25th September in Monbulk. This was a delightful garden, full of plants, ornaments and structures that all came together to produce one of the best gardens I have seen. Val Jackson, herself, was so generous with her information on plants and constant topping up of her kettle and milk for the many cups of coffee or tea that we all drank. The array of food this day was marvellous, everyone seemed to have brought something really different, so it was like a smorgasbord and the ambience and conversations between all who attended, was very uplifting. One went home feeling like one had not only had a great garden day visit, getting new ideas for the garden and new plants you wanted to add to your garden, but also a very good day with friends.

Val's garden was immaculate (I don't think you could spot a weed), from the plants, to the soil and the areas with tables and seating where you could sit and contemplate. This garden has a huge range of plants, amongst them salvias (of course), azaleas, roses, succulents, aubrietias, euphorbia, iris', aquilegias, convolvulus, clivia, clematis and various alpine plants, to name a few.

The front of the house has a large gravel driveway with carport and then garden beds around the gravelled area with the house behind. You then come around the side of the house and through a lovely wooden entrance with a gate and picket fencing into the back garden, which has a brick pathway that winds up and around the back garden, to the back of the house. Truly entering through this gate and looking at the back garden made many of us gasp, the view of the back garden full of plants, rocks and ornaments was stunning. Hopefully Beth (the editor of the Salvia News) will be able to put a photo with this article which shows the back garden, so that you can get an idea of what I'm talking about.

One of the more quirky and interesting items in the garden, was a maple tree that was growing out of the side of a tree fern. Apparently it must of self seeded into the side of the tree fern and Val decided to let it grow there. It is now a tree of about 1 to 2 metres growing out of the side of this tree fern. There were also various coloured watering cans (cornflower blue, red), perfectly positioned around and in the garden beds. With the many ornaments and areas of seating (benches) and table and chair areas, this garden was indeed a delight to behold.

Luckily for me, I will be returning to Val's beautiful garden next week (21st October) on a Secret Gardens of the Dandenong's tour day that I have booked, so I will get to see her garden almost four weeks on from our VSSG garden visit and will be able to see what has changed/flowered. I am really looking forward to both seeing both her garden and herself again.

Till next article, happy gardening.



A Salvia Odyssey around Europe, 2016 – PAGES 9-13

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Vic

In May/June this year, I was lucky enough to visit several Botanical Gardens, nurseries and salvia collections in Europe. What began as a five day reunion in Munich, with some friends with whom I graduated 50 years ago, blew out to six glorious weeks of varied places and experiences and catching up with old friends, planned around some wonderful botanical destinations. I visited the famous Botanical Gardens in Padua, the Munich Botanical Gardens, the Leipzig Botanical Gardens, and Salvia collectors: Frank Fischer in Germany and Robin Middleton, William Dyson and Lynsey & John Pink in England, as well as seeing some salvias growing wild and others planted in public gardens. I also visited gardens in Leicester, Northamptonshire and Yorkshire.

The Botanic Gardens in Padua had long been on my bucket list. They are famous for being almost the oldest gardens in the western world, formally growing medicinal plants (established in the 1530s). I believe Sienna and Bologna are slightly older, but those at Padua are the first to have been established by a University, I think.

The garden is circular, surrounded by a high wall and kept in beautiful order. Clearly the plants aren't 500 years old, although there is a pretty old gingko, a plane tree and a palm, among other old trees. The various segments were divided up into neat, narrow beds, enabling easy access up and down between the well-labelled plants. The poisonous plants were given a rating of +, ++, +++ etc to denote the degree of danger.

In among the various plants, I saw a number of European salvias, including: *S. argentea*, *S. transsylvanica*, *S. pratensis*, *S. verbenaca*, *S. verticillata*, *S. glutinosa* as well as *S. koyamae* from Japan. I was excited to see *S. candidissima*, but on close inspection, I believe I was looking at *S. cyanescens*. There was also an oddly-named plant, labelled *S. coerula*. I'm not so sure about this one. It looked like *S. guaranitica* in leaf and bud and very unlike anything European, but was listed as being from Asia Minor!



S. argentea (at Padua Bot Gardens)



S. buchara (at Leipzig (looks v. similar to *S. tingitana*)

The Botanic Gardens in Munich was quite extensive with some areas planted by plant families. I saw *S. patens*, *S. austriaca*, *S. nitida* and *S. verticillata*.

We were in Leipzig to attend a couple of concerts in the Bach Festival, but found that our hotel was within walking distance from the Botanic Gardens – also established very early by the University, copying that of Padua. These

gardens are very extensive and well worth a visit. There were three main areas, the first being a “Sensory” Garden. All the plants were in elevated beds and the labelling was also in Braille. Plants were chosen for perfume and texture, for example. Within this garden, I saw *S. sclarea*. There were several salvias in the second garden, The Apothecary’s Garden, in an area labelled as plants containing atherische öle. But in the Systematic Garden, I saw the following salvias in the Eurasian Steppe section: *S. sclarea*, *S. buchara* (pictured above), *S. deserta*, *S. verticillata*, *S. ringens*, *S. amplexicaulis* and *S. nemerosa*.

Frank Fischer’s display garden, in a village just out of Freiburg in SW Germany, was absolutely splendid. By bringing in tons of gravel and sand to create well- drained beds, he has created conditions suitable for growing those tricky Turkish, Mediterranean and Californian salvias, many of which were in flower, being late spring. In the open, I saw, *S. carduacea*, *S. ringens*, *S. nutans* x ‘Saxdorf’ (gorgeous), *S. candelabrum*, *S. recognita*, *S. multicaulis*, *S. cedroensis*, *S. huberi*, *S. hypargea*, *S. yogadensis*, *S. bracteata*, *S. smyrnia* and *S. kuznetsovii*. Also, a beautiful *S. officinalis tricolor* in flower. I have never seen that before. The cold winters and hot, sunny summers, combined with this excellent drainage, provide the ideal conditions for these plants. Frank’s strict attention to organic principles, his encouragement of habitat for native bees, and food to keep predatory mites going over winter, also contribute to his success. I would love to see his late summer display in the open, but many of the later-flowering plants were still in the glasshouse.



S. carduacea (at Frank Fisher’s - shows the sort of ground he has developed)



S. nutans x ‘Saxdorf’ (at Frank Fischer’s)

I should also mention the various salvias I saw in public gardens. Unlike here, where ‘Bonfire Salvias’ are the ubiquitous bedding salvias, in Germany, it was common to see forms of *S. coccinea*, *S. patens* and *S. nemerosa/sylvestris*. *Salvia pratensis* was also seen growing wild.

And so to England and to Robin Middleton’s wonderful collection of salvias, packed into a suburban-sized garden and glasshouse. On previous occasions when I have visited there, it has been later in the season, when everything has grown to enormous proportions and into massed colour. But even in early June, the garden was flourishing with an enormous range of *S. greggii* x *S. microphylla* types as well as an abundance of new (to me), exotic species and cultivars. The abundance of crosses is, of course, like ours in Australia, with maybe fewer people producing them in England, but with easy access to European growers in France and the Netherlands, there are so many, and all with different names, some looking similar to varieties that we have in Australia. A standout cross, to die for, is

S. 'Nachtvlinder' (meaning night moth) which is a gorgeous dark, velvety red purple one, which doesn't set seed. Perhaps this is just as well, as seed sent here would be unlikely to come true. (If only people wouldn't do this!) *S. 'Sungold'* from Christine Yeo in Devon, is one of the best yellow forms of *S. greggii* in England, but resembles a Dutch one called *S. 'Devon Cream'*!! *S. 'Blue Note'*, a nice bluey purple one from France, is probably a cross between a *S. greggii* and *S. chamaedryoides*. *S. 'Javier'* looks a bit like '*Mesa Azure*', but is a seedling from New Zealand, which, in turn, came from Robin's seed of '*Fuego*'. *S. 'Son of Javier'* is similar but darker.



S. 'Nachtvlinder' (Salvias from Robin Williams collection)



S. 'Alma' (seedling from *S. chiapensis*)

I saw the foliage of many new-to-me salvia species: *S. selleiana*, *S. brevipes*, *S. densiflora*, *S. tuerckheimii* and *S. retinervia* (from various countries in S. America). It was interesting to see how much better *S. patens*, grown from seed earlier in the year, was performing, than older plants that had over-wintered from the previous year. A lesson here perhaps? *S. 'Theresia'* was interesting to see. I thought this was going to be a thug, but I am clearly wrong. It came to England from Japan, via Germany, as *S. glabrescens*, which it is clearly not, and may be a cross between *S. guaranitica* and *S. splendens* (hence the thug potential). But it is compact and purple flowering and lovely.

Robin plays with seeds and produces all manner of variations, such as different coloured forms of things. He even has an indigo blue salvia that came from seed of *S. chiapensis*.



William Dyson

This is called *S. 'Alma'* and he has other plants that are being trialled for PBR. As always, it was a treat to see Robin's garden. However, that was not all, for I was generously taken to visit William Dyson and Lynsey Pink also.

William Dyson, source of our imported *S. 'Silas Dyson'*, is curator of the gardens at Great Comp near Sevenoaks in Kent. Naturally it rained, the day we



Part of the Dyson Nursery

visited, but the gardens looked splendid nevertheless, as did the nursery which was full of salvias. William has the largest salvia nursery in England I am told. I saw 'Dyson's Crimson' (compact form of 'Silas Dyson'), Dyson's 'Joy' (2 tone pink) and 'Dyson's Gem' (purple). They have a few of the 'Heatwave' series in England, which are much admired. The 'So Cool' series has also been imported from Australia. They think the 'Pale Blue' is excellent, the 'Purple' OK and the 'Violet' useless. So many names, too numerous to list. William Dyson pots his salvias in a mixture of loamless potting mix, John Innes no 3, grey something and Cornish grit in the ratio 8:1:1:1, and he uses an Osmocote, slow-release fertiliser that is high in potassium.



S. 'So Cool - Pale Blue' (this one is from Australia)



S. 'Dyson's Joy'

Lynsey and John Pink are the salvia collection holders in England now. Other collections have come and gone over the years. The Pink's garden is in southern England, near to Portsmouth, enjoying a relatively mild climate and also deep, reasonably well-drained soil. Since my previous visit some ten years ago, Lynsey has created a new garden area for Turkish salvias. I'm not sure if it was necessary to improve the drainage, but a microclimate has been created from the use of rocks and reflective white stone mulch. Many of the plants were still at the foliage stage, (behind those at Frank Fischer's), but all looked very healthy, including: *S. cryptantha*, *S. blepharoclaena*, *S. caespitosa*, *S. aucheri*, *S. willeiana*, (maybe a white form of *S. tomentosa*), and *S. multicaulis*.



S. greggii (the flowers had fallen off, but 1 retained for the photo)



S. languidula



S. aucheri (note the coarse white gravel mulch)



S. willeana



S. styrphalus

Like Robin, Lynsey had many new-to-me salvias, including *S. grewiifolia*, *S. albiflora*, *S. retinervia*, *S. orbignaei*, *S. styrphalus*, *S. sessifolua*, *S. leucocephala*, *S. languidula*, and, surprisingly for England, but in a sheltered spot, a 1.4m *S. raymondii* subsp *mairanae*, growing out of doors against the garage wall.

To finish my wonderful trip, I spent some days with my neighbour from my teenage years, in Leicester, who at 87 is still a keen and active gardener. Together, we visited Coton Manor Gardens in Northamptonshire, where the curator is keen on salvias and grows quite a few. We also went on a bus trip to York, where we visited Breezy Knees, an enormous garden area created on a windy site from former farm land. This garden had a huge nursery with quite a number of forms of *S. nemerosa*, *S. pratensis* and the inevitable *greggii/microphylla* crosses, with more stupid names like 'Violin Music' and 'Salmon Dance'.

How lucky am I!
Pat Anderson

Viola of 'Viola's Patch' in Bahrs Scrub QLD

Viola Hamilton

Hello to all of us Salvia lovers. I'm Viola from 'Viola's Patch' on 8,000 square meters in Bahrs Scrub half way between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. I am a self taught gardener and the biggest impact by far on the knowledge I have gained of Salvias is belonging to the Perennial Poppies Cottage Garden Club for the past 16 years.

I encourage visitors to my garden to re-acquaint themselves with 'old fashioned' common plants. These plants everyone can grow. Plants that suit our sub-tropical climate. Visitors are encouraged to feel and smell the highly fruity and sometimes pungent scents of the leaves and flowers of salvias e.g. *S. dorisiana*, *S. Elegans 'Pineapple Sage'* and *S. muirii* to name a few.



Salvia 'Wendy's Wish'

I do not get frost and propagating cuttings of my own Salvias and those of generous friends has enabled the garden to keep a fresh look. This has been successful through Aug. Sept. Being blessed with 18mm of rain yesterday, very rare here as I live in a region between 2 rivers and often the stormy rain clouds bi-pass us. Upon walking around the fresh rejuvenated garden I decided to sit and write this article.

The relaxed style of my garden has plants that fit our sub-tropical rainforest and in the open sunny areas a "controlled" informal cottage garden. In these spaces are Salvias intermingled with many other perennials and some self sown annuals. Salvias abound in the area, giving many flowers all year round. The native and other bees, birds and butterflies are invited to feast on the nectar and seeds, also giving wildlife shelter. There are several shallow water dishes for them to drink from and bathe.

Many of my taller Salvias are planted en masse giving a gorgeously textured look and feel to the garden and this winter was heavy with blooms. Growing well in dappled sun over the past few months are *S. Timboon* with its vigorous arching nature and numerous long spikes of deep rose pink flowers. Under planted to the front of the border are pink *osteospermum* mingled with *helichrysum* "Limelight", *Alternanthera 'Little Ruby'* and purple flowering aster to name a few.

S. Costa Rica Blue planted nearby, after a good cut back has many large spires of purple-blue flowers, and is one of my all time favorites, ducking in and out of an Orange tree and *Solanum rantonnetii* with its yellow centered purple flowers. Tucked in filling spaces are bright lime yellow *Coleus*. To the front of the border *osteospermum fruticosum* with its ink blue center and clear white daisy like flowers rambles with *Dicliptera suberecta* that in the warm months has soft grey foliage covered in masses of fire-cracker Orange *Justicia* looking flowers. Other tall and arching Salvias still flowering post winter are *S. Pink Icicles*, *S. C.J.* (seedling found in Carol Kerkins garden), *S. dorisiana* and other *S. Involucrata x*. With more sun, flowering is now stunning on *S. Love and Wishes*, *S. 'Wendy's Wish'*, *S. 'Amistad'*, they fill much of the middle of the border. Coming to the front of the border many of the *microphylla*, *greggii* and their x are in full bloom. To name a few, *S. Di's Delight*', *S. 'Musk'*, *S. 'Angel Wings'*, *S. 'Pink Blush'*, *S. 'Blaze'*, *S. 'La Siesta'*, *S. muirii*. Intermingled in these sunny areas are more clumps of *Asters*, *Federation daisy*, *Orlaya*, *perennial Alyssum*, *Artemesia* and much more. These plantings "show case" these special and tough Salvias.

All new plantings are given a slow-release fertilizer and seaweed mixture well watered in. Foliar feeding with a soluble fertilizer with NPK for flowering plants is done intermittently throughout the year. Complete organic fertilizer (cow and chicken) is applied heavily to all gardens once in the Spring and again in early Autumn. Hand watering allows me to choose the plants that need water and thereby saving cost and water. My ever evolving garden will always include many tough Salvias. I do not have every Salvia that comes my way but do have a large pleasing variety that I enjoy. *Viola*

Beware of Spittlebugs

Lyndi Garnett- Glen Waverley, Vic

What are Spittlebugs, Frog Hoppers or Frothyman? These are all a form of Leaf Hopper, belonging to the family Cercopoidea, a group of Hemitera Insects.

These families are best known for the nymph stage which produce a cover of frothed up plant sap resembling Spittle – hence the name. The nymphs are commonly known as Spittlebugs and their froth as Cuckoo Spit, frog Spit or even snake Spit.

Once the Spittlebug has formed up a nice group of bubbles, they will use their hind legs to cover themselves with the foamy substance. The froth hides the nymph from view of predators as well as insulating them from hot and cold acting as a thermal and moisture control, as without the froth, the nymphs would quickly dry up.

Where can you find these little critters? In the leaf axils of young new growth. They are not fussy as to what plants they attack and the new young growth of Salvias are ideal plants to dwell. They have been known to attack Pine trees, Roses and other soft stemmed perennials at this time of year.

The Spittlebug lays it's eggs on old plant debris to overwinter. The eggs hatch in early spring, they attach themselves to the host plant and begin to feed.

Other than looking horrible, Spittlebugs do very little damage to a plant. They do suck the sap, but rarely enough to harm the plant, unless there are huge numbers of them.

How to get rid of them? Other than using a hose to give them a quick blast of water to knock them off, I usually just use my fingers to squash them, making sure I get the adult. Gloves are a must as the froth is very wet and not very pleasant to work with. In no time your hand is wet.

By inspecting your plants frequently, including looking underneath the branches, any spittlebugs can be easily detected and squashed.

The adults are a very, very small orange and black beetle looking insect. The adults are capable of jumping quite high and over some distance, giving it the name Frog hopper.

These bugs don't seem to be a native insect, they appear in North America, Africa and Europe, so who knows how it came to be in my garden – possible the eggs were in some debris in some imported fruits/ vegetables or nursery plant. I may have been given a plant that had eggs overwintering within the debris in the pot.

It is recommended that any debris under plants be cleaned up in the Autumn time, which is difficult if you have mulched your garden well, but excessive amounts of debris can be easily removed.

Keep a look out for any froth in the leaf axils of young growth, so you can quickly squash the nymphs and adults before they spread to other plants.

Ref: *Wikipedia*
Gardening know how – common plant pest problems

Simple Garden Solutions - Beth Gilchrist / Temora NSW

Earwigs



It's that time of year again. If you are having a problem with earwigs in your garden, this simple solution may work for you.

Earwigs love fish oil. I use the oil from a tin of sardines because it's so easy. Half fill a jar with water. Pour in the fish oil from the tin of sardines (minus the sardines of course). Tip the jar slightly and bury into the soil in the garden so the earwigs have no problem crawling in. They love the taste so dive and drown. Empty weekly or earlier if needed.

Possum damage in the garden

You too may have seen a recent garden show on TV where in one segment a gardener in South Australia tells of how she managed her possum problem. She hangs lots of wind chimes in the garden. After a couple of weeks the possums have moved on, they don't like the noise. She says that she did speak to her neighbours first, and has since taken most down and just left a few because she likes them. The possums haven't returned. Worth a try?

‘Salvia-ation for all gardeners!’



Left:

“Lyndi Garnett at our Club preaching.... ‘Salvia-ation’ for all gardeners”,

(Photo) by Ralph Slaughter of the Warragul & District Garden Club.

Lyndi Garnett, VSSG Co-ordinator often gives presentations to Gardening and other Groups. If you are interested in booking her as a speaker for your Group for the coming year, please book early.

For further information and to make a
Speaker booking,
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