

Salvia News

NUMBER 71



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group

www.salvias.org.au

Autumn 2018

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
4. Maintain our Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park for the Group and the general public
5. Manage our website and Facebook page

The Group is a Not for Profit Organisation. Any monies received are used to run the Group's activities and for the planting and maintenance of our GPCAA (Garden Plants Conservation Association of Australia) registered garden collection. ('Plants Trust' has been a shortened, more comprehensive name for the GPCAAA and has been used for quite a while now).

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SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT EDITION

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

Beth Gilchrist - Editor 'Salvia News'
13 Williams Street, Temora NSW 2666

Please note there is a new email address don't forget the dot after 'editor'
email: **editor.salvianews@gmail.com**



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP
Website: www.salvias.org.au

Welcome, Autumn is already here and with it another edition of Salvia News. It seems such a long time since, but hope you all enjoyed your New Year, that it brings good health for all, and much happiness too.

Please note that there is a new email address for Salvia News;
editor.salvianews@gmail.com

This will enable mail regarding Salvia News and our personal emails are kept separate, to hopefully ensure no mail is overlooked or misplaced, and also its an address that is easy to remember for everyone. Don't forget the dot after editor.

It really is an excessively hot summer season this year for most areas throughout Oz. It takes a gardeners passion to manage the strains on the garden by the extremities. Its worth it in the end but here in Western NSW we really are hoping the promised showers later this week really materialise. And not just a few spots. Hope you too get the break you are hoping for, that you are managing and any losses are minimal

We have a bumper edition this season, 24 pages with some great articles, hopefully something for you all. It would be great if we could also include some articles or letters to an edition of Salvia News this year from new writers or someone who has not written for a while. It could include likes and dislikes, visits to one of the many great venues this year booked for your enjoyment, or what is happening in your garden and how you are managing

our weather, what you do to keep your plants, salvias especially, thriving. Please give it a go!

The Calendar of events not only has details for the first half of the year but a taste of what's to come in the latter half. Don't forget to diarise these events now so that they aren't forgotten. Lyndi and the Committee has certainly been busy chasing up these events for your enjoyment.

Meg Bentley's News from Gruyere includes what she uses successfully for a propagating mix, page 6. Lyndi has outlined her annual review of the past 12 months on page 9.

Barb Wickes from the Perennial Poppies Group Inc brings you this season's Salvia News from SE Queensland page 10, always a great read.

Commencing on page 12, Pat's article on 'Several Reasons for going Potty' not only will many relate to but as always there is a learning curve to the article too.

Later in this edition she has written the promised article to follow up on last seasons, 'Last chance to buy salvias', with 'Will Salvia Stay United' a must read for everyone commencing on page 16.

The Committee has published a brochure and there is a preview on pages 18/19.

These are just some of what's included inside, hopefully something for everyone, happy reading.

Until next time, happy gardening,
Beth Gilchrist

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**COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION
SALVIA NEWS**

No 72 Winter 2018 edition

17 April 2018

NOTE new email

editor.salvianews@gmail.com

Events Calendar

*Remember to check the website regularly for any changes and additional information.
wwwsalvias.org.au*

March 10/11 Sat/Sun 9am-4pm both days

**Ferny Creek Horticultural Society
ANNUAL PLANT COLLECTORS GARDEN EXPO**
100 Hilton Rd, Ferny Creek **Mel: 75 D1**

Come and find those unusual Salvias you've been looking for. A great variety of Salvias available. Come early to get those bargains.

Bring your lists, but even better, email me your lists so you don't miss out. Your plants will be put aside and waiting for you.

Salvia books and seeds will be on sale.

March 18 Sun 11am

PAT ANDERSON'S GARDEN VISIT
98 Bradley's Lane, Warrandyte **Mel: 23 C11**

Join us wandering around a magnificent Salvia Garden – everything is labelled. So much more than just Salvias, native vegetation and a wonderful vegetable garden. Pat will be demonstrating and discussing the art of sowing Salvia seed.

Bring a plate to share, a chair, a hat and bags for cuttings and seed.

Phone Pat to let her know that you are coming Ph 98443442

April 7 Sat 10am-4pm

JINDIVICK RARE PLANT FAIR
Jindivick Public Hall, Jacksons Track, Jindivick **Mel: Touring Map 916.U6**

Salvia plants, books and seed will be on sale.

Huge range of plants available, some new, some good time oldies, come and find that colour to suit the shrubs and plants in your garden.

Bring your list and plants to be identified

To avoid disappointment, email me your list so we can put those Salvias aside for you, so you don't miss out. email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

April 14/15th Sat/Sun

TESSELAAR PLANT EXPO
357 Monbulk Rd, Silvan **Mel: 123 B5**

Salvia plants, books and seed will be on sale.

Over 130 Salvias will be available, some new, some good time oldies, come and match colours to suit the shrubs and plants in your garden. Bring your list and plants to be identified

To avoid disappointment, email me your list so we can put those Salvias aside for you, so you don't miss out.

email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

June 16 Sat

RHSV Gardener's Day Out
Deakin University, Burwood Campus,
Burwood Hwy, Burwood. **Mel: 61, B5**

Great speakers and presentations throughout the day

Salvia plants, books and seed will be on sale. Many other stalls too.

If you haven't attended this event before, it's a great day out for all gardeners.

Book early, not to be missed.

Contact The RHSV Secretary on 03 5367 6363 or at plantzia@bigpond.com

Calendar of Events

Remember to check the website regularly for any changes and additional information.
wwwsalvias.org.au We have given below a hint of coming events, well worth diarising now to ensure its not overlooked.

Remember too to 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 03 9803 4534 or email lgarnett844@gmail.com

In addition to events open to the public, on the website under *Calendar of Events*, you will find Garden Clubs where Lyndi Garnett is speaking and a contact number for further information.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS FOR 2018

July 15 Sun -

Leslie Edmonds, Lang Lang

August 26 Sun -

Daylesford Wombat Hill (Baron Von Mueller), **Monastery & Tea Rooms**
7 Daly Street

Sept 16 Sun -

St Erth, 189 Simmons Reef Road Blackwood

Sept 30 Sun -

Jillian's Garden

Oct 6/7 Sat/Sun -

Macedon (Bolobek)

Oct 20/21 Sat/Sun -

Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens

Oct 21 Sun -

Ivanhoe Garden Club Fiesta

Oct 28 Sun -

Emerald Prof John Raynor,
12 Charman Avenue Emerald

Prof John Raynor is a senior lecturer in Horticulture at Melbourne Uni's Burnley campus. A VSSG subscriber shares...sounds like a garden visit not to be missed! John Raynor's 2 acre garden, Brookdale Farm at Emerald is a burst of tingles and surprises. Most of the garden plants are structured around form and texture, low maintenance and no irrigation. He has a scientific approach to design using the right plant in the right place. He advocates dividing and massing (for spectacular effect and to save money). His edible garden includes espaliered fruit trees and imaginative approaches to old ideas. This is a rare treat to learn about John's own garden.

Nov 10/11 Sat/Sun

Rose Show

Nov 18 Sun

Annual Salvia Plant Sale at Nobelius, Emerald

Editor's Note:

There are a number of events that I would have particularly enjoyed, even those that I have been fortunate enough to visit another time. In particular Pat Anderson's garden- Pat often writes for *Salvia News* including this edition; Jillian's Garden - Jillian is very knowledgeable and active committee member- who also grows much of the stock we purchase at the different VSSG venues - these two gardens are exceptional; St Erth's- I am a member of Diggers but have never visited; Prof John Raynor's garden sounds exceptional?; Gardeners Day Out- I have attended several and am never disappointed; VSSG Annual Salvia Plant Sale - this is an event none of us should miss if we are looking for more salvias. I am hoping you will email me about all the events you attend with photos so that I can be reminded what I have missed out on and allow me to print for others too to enjoy. Please remind me (and others) what we are missing - editor.salvianews@gmail.com

Notes from Gruyere

Autumn 2018

Meg Bentley, Gruyere, Vic

Summer has been rather kind in as much as hot days have been ‘spaced apart’ with nice cooler weather in between. We have been lucky enough to get a bit of gentle rain which has helped and has lessened the constant watering of contained plants and pots of salvias.



Gardens in general have been able to cope well and have flourished in the mild weather. There has been one little garden scene that is delightful not only for me but the birds as well, both in colour and texture and so floriferous. Tall spires of *Agastache* ‘Blue Fortune’ in full bloom with *Salvia sclarea* var ‘Turkestanica’ of equal height close by and intermingled with *Agastache* ‘Aztec Rose’. Other salvias in this area are *Salvia dolichantha* with purple flowers, *S. staminea* with its snowy white blooms, dusky pink of *S. lanceolata* mixed with hues of blue and white of *Salvia muiii* and ‘Greek Skies’. It is a constant job nipping out the spent flowering stems so that the next side shoots that carry buds can start putting on their show.

Pruning and nipping have been a priority, along with the abundant and constant weeding. Whenever pruning takes place I find it difficult to throw all the material into the compost, one always looks for

juicy little cutting pieces to propagate, I am sure there are many folk out there that feel the same. “If it looks good then propagate it” And yes, it is a good time to take cuttings, be it from trimmings or deliberate propagating material.

The Yellow Robins have now fledged the nest in the *Murraya* outside the lounge window and the Grey Fantails too have fledged their nest from the plum tree along the kitchen pathway. It has been quite a joy to watch all the goings on and how well the mum and dad birds work together in feeding their young. Now I can put ALL my attention into the garden proper. It has been marvelous weather for the birds and gardening and repotting has been a priority of late with cuttings rooting well over the summer months which are now in need of potting up.

People have asked me “when is the best time to put cuttings in” and should I wait till after summer? I think because this summer has been so mild (so far) I have continued to propagate some specials. The best method I find has been utilizing the perlite mixed with fine potting mix in a ratio of 2 pots of perlite to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pot of potting mix, combining both and placing the cuttings into this mix and tamping down firmly, don’t forget to label the plants as you go. Each pot of cuttings I place together in a receptacle or tray that holds water then water gently over the top with a weak seasol or maxicrop .

The best method I find has been utilizing the perlite mixed with fine potting mix in a ratio of 2 pots of perlite to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pot of potting mix

Continued on page 7 ...

Notes from Gruyere.

Autumn 2018 *Meg Bentley*

..continued from page 6

solution or use plain water. I then leave the pots in this tray usually overnight and place in shade or a cool position out of the sun, the liquid should only cover the lower side drainage holes of the pot. If you are propagating grey-leaved salvias they need to be well spaced in the pot and not overcrowded which could result in mildew or leaf-drop. I like to have a coarse well drained propagating mix and using the perlite will encourage roots to form, this mix is good to use at any time of the year for propagating. I have also used straight potting mix in small tubes and push my finger down into the centre of the pot then fill this void with either perlite or quarter minus which is a fine gravel. I place one cutting per pot which will give the plant a moist well drained centre core to start rooting, then without any disturbance to the new plant it will grow into the soil surrounding the perlite core. This method has always proved very satisfactory for all my cuttings.

Naturally much depends on the size of the cutting material as to what size pot you will use and the amount of cuttings you wish to produce. Compact sizes are usually better than over sized pots. A note of caution though, whatever size pot you use don't let the perlite dry out if you are using it on its own; it takes a lot out of the plant material and weakens the inner fibres and always remember to label the plants as you go and keep the plant cuttings in a cool position in part shade. These hints are recommended for summer and autumn propagation so go to it and happy propagating.



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

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

Postage rates given is for within Australia

Available at all VSSG functions and stalls.

Mail orders phone Lyndi 9803 4534 or send to

*VSSG
844 Highbury Road,
Glen Waverley Vic 3150*

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..... *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 \$.....

Salvia News

Victorian Salvia Study Group

A branch of the Herb Society of Victoria Inc.

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Annual Salvia Review 2017

Lyndi Garnett, Co-ordinator VSSG

2017 has been a very interesting and successful year for the Salvia Study Group.

All the Garden Events seem to get bigger and better each year, from the layout of the tables to a greater variety of plants being provided, many new and some good time oldies.

The varieties that we can now offer is staggering, with over 130 varieties on offer at any event during the year! We can no longer fit them all on the tables, but the discerning public are always eager to find these new and different varieties. This increase in availability is probably due to most of our propagators using the Perlite Mix, which gives a better result more easily and quickly. So, a 'Big Thankyou' to all those propagating or donating plants which are always welcome and very much appreciated.

I must apologise for the mix up in some of the Calendar dates in the last few weeks. We were unaware that a few dates had been changed and unfortunately these changes were found after the Salvia News went to print.

While we make every effort to ensure the dates are correct, occasionally these things happen. I/we do advise everyone to keep checking the website for updates, for the occasional extra event added or in the unlikely situation that an event has to be cancelled, which did happen this year.

On a more sombre note, we unfortunately saw the death of two of our founding fathers. Our oldest member Bill Whitehead and Ray Boatman.

It was Bill with the help of Ray, both being big members of the Herb Society, who instigated the inaugural meeting so many years ago in which I had the pleasure of participating, at Trudi Fry's big dining room table.

Both men were passionate 'Herbies' and Salvia growers. Bill in his tiny backyard collected every Salvia he could and Ray with the help of Gus (the curator of the Emerald Museum) created our first experimental plot at Nobelius which we soon outgrew. Ray went on to grow and provide many Salvias for sale at his Village and his Community gardens. These two gentlemen have left a great legacy for us to follow.

A very exciting component this year has been the publication of our Salvia Brochure which did take a while to produce, with many members of the committee helping to proof read numerous times – to get the punctuation and the correct spelling of plant names!

This is our major method of promotion for the Group and Salvias, showing the public a glimpse of the world of Salvias, indicating that Salvias are both bird and bee friendly.

Another initiative has been the suggestion of creating the 'Friends of the Salvia Garden at Nobelius'. It has been painfully obvious that although we have a number of Working Bees throughout the year, they certainly are not enough to cope with the continual upkeep and maintenance of our Display Garden.

Without regular help, Jillian and I just cannot keep up with the weeds, getting rid of leaves and pruning etc..

We are hoping that there may be a few locals or other interested people who might like to help maintain the garden, spending a few hours on a Wednesday, to keep the Display Garden a worthwhile place to walk through and to compliment the rest of the Nobelius Heritage Park.

Anyone interested please contact Lyndi Ph 98034534.

One last note: A Big Thankyou to all of those who came early and helped set up at our Annual Salvia Sale in November and to those who stayed and helped throughout the day and later, helped pack up. It was a good day with good results, well organised and the public went home with some great bargains.

Finally, another 'Big Thankyou' to all the hardworking committee for all their help during the year, especially those behind the scenes to help with our website, social media and printing or those who work constantly in the background; such people as our subscription officer, Meg Gadd and our Editor, Beth Gilchrist and of course my right hand person Jillian Barkell. All their efforts, ideas and enthusiasm for Salvias are gratefully appreciated.

I hope you all enjoyed a safe and happy Christmas before starting again in the New Year 2018
Lets all enjoy a great year ahead!

Salvia news from southeast Queensland

Barb Wickes
The Perennial Poppies Group Inc

It is the 9th of January as I write this and I report that southeast Queensland has had a long, hot and humid period since before Christmas. It certainly has been a trying time for gardeners! For me, it's time to prune and the dilemma when pruning salvias is that should a hot, wet and humid period follow, they can sometimes not respond well. When pruning *microphylla*, I usually take the lower branches down first and wait for them to shoot before taking the tops out. I am finding this difficult to do at the moment as they are all flowering so well but with a holiday planned for all of March, I must get this task done soon! There are some members of our salvia group that frequently trim theirs with hedging shears and they look good most of the time but I never seem to find the time to do this.

My aim at the moment is to reduce the workload in our large garden, so I am being quite ruthless ditching plants that are not special and focussing on those that provide colour for much of the year or those that require very little maintenance. I wonder if it will work! At the moment, I am cutting and dropping plant material that is not invasive and will then fertilise and mulch over the top. One has to be quick or the weeds are up again.

More recently I have moved some salvias from shady areas where they had been for years but were not performing well. *Salvia 'Violet Eyes'* is one and now in full sun is well over a metre high and looking wonderful with its bright blue flowers. I first saw this beautiful salvia in Trudi Fry's garden in Victoria, many years ago and was fortunate to be given a plant. It is one that not a lot of our members grow so I must get it propagated and handed around.

During November and early December, most of southeast Queensland had a lot of rain, something that hasn't occurred for many years. The growth has been incredible and in particular the winter flowering salvias. It is now that they require a heavy prune but I will be more cautious this year, as last January I pruned them quite hard and the flowering was not as good as usual. This time, I will stick with my usual method of a little at first and wait for some regrowth. *Salvia 'Joan'* is one that I do cut to the ground, twice a year, and I will do this in the next few days. It sounds harsh but it is a vigorous grower for me. *Salvia 'Finnsgrove'* is another plant that I moved to a new home about six months ago and it hasn't looked back. Sometimes a change of scenery is good for us all!

Salvia chiapensis is another that had a move and is twice as high as it had ever been. Perhaps it had something to do with the load of manure and mulch that was dug into the new garden bed! Last March, we moved our raised vegetable beds to a new destination and redesigned the area creating this flower bed. I had several roses and some salvias that were not thriving in their homes so it was an ideal time to move them as the weather was cooling down. All thrived so there is a message there that an occasional move is a great idea.

I find some of the 'Wish' family do very well in semi-shade. *Salvia 'Embers Wish'* would get 4 hours of morning sun and *Salvia 'Wendy's Wish'*, which is in two different places in the garden, is doing well in both full sun and semi-shade. *Salvia 'Love & Wishes'* is thriving in full sun. *Salvia splendens* seem to pop up anywhere in our garden and thrive in all conditions. Reliable old *Salvia 'Costa Rica Blue'* thrives wherever it is planted and is very happy in full shade in some parts of our garden. Two old faithfuls that grow in the shade and always look good are *Salvia 'Follett's Folly'* and *Salvia miniata*. Every six months or so I give them a really hard prune and they respond well.

Continued on page 11..

Salvia news from southeast Queensland



Salvia muirii



Salvia 'Amistad'



Salvia 'African Sky'

Salvia muirii is a plant that I must propagate and spread around the garden as it is rarely without a flower and stays compact. It is growing alongside agapanthus and hydrangeas, tones well and is very happy. *Salvia madrensis* is having a summer flowering which seems unusual. It is a vigorous plant and several years ago I moved it from the main garden to a strip of garden along our driveway. Here it can have its head and all I do from time to time is hack it back on the driveway side so cars can pass. It is such a lovely salvia one needs to have in the garden somewhere.

Salvia 'African Sky' and *Salvia 'Amistad'* have to be two of the most reliable salvias to provide continual flowering. I take at least a third of 'Amistad' every few months and it is back flowering within a few weeks. It is prone to a little suckering but isn't a problem at the moment. I have found that many plants will not sucker for years and then suddenly take off. *Salvia oxyphora* was guilty of this and now it is a battle to eradicate it. It is such a pity as it has a stunning flower. Perhaps in the cooler climates this isn't an issue.

Several reasons for going potty

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte (17:01:2018)

Have you noticed how the colouring in your salvia flowers can vary? I don't just mean that you can, for example, get a red form or a pink, white or mauve form of say, *Salvia coccinea*. I am talking about how colour in an individual plant varies with time and place. Have you ever wondered why a particular plant you have looks so much better in someone else's garden? Have you ever looked at a plant in a garden or a nursery and thought, "That looks like my *Salvia* x, y, or z and yet it has a different name"? Well I certainly have and these are some of the reasons why I decided to start a potted collection of all the forms that are circulating of *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla* and everything in between.

This potted collection is burgeoning. At the last count, it was approaching 170 items. I think I may have bitten off more than I can chew. I started this pot collection last year so that I could grow them all in identical conditions, for comparative purposes. My gut feeling was that plants could be variable according to local conditions such as soil, light and shade and competition from trees and other plants for example. I was also aware that there are so many that are very similar. Therefore, by growing them in identical conditions, this way I would have an objective basis for making comparisons between the various forms of *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla* and their crosses.

To date they are mostly in 6" pots, all jammed together on benches. As I let them grow out to flowering stage before Christmas, they had turned into one tangled mess of small-flowered salvias, albeit a colourful one. So now they are cut back hard. This was a good move because it allowed me to see more clearly which ones are missing (as far I was aware at any rate) and for which ones I had more than one plant. I realise now that I need to pot them on to 8" at least, and spread the pots out, but where?? However, I will persevere so that I have a genuine way of comparing them, for all the following reasons

1. There are just too many "named" varieties out there – as in, people have individually slapped names on too many plants that are not significantly different from what is already out there or from what has just been named elsewhere by someone else. Sometimes plants with different names are almost identical. These species hybridise with each other so easily, and because so many of us are growing them, similar variations will crop up all over the place and in different states of Australia, not to mention overseas, from where yet more will find their way to these shores.

The nurseries are also to blame for periodically bringing out a new "series" of salvias to boost sales, many of which are similar, if not the same. We had the Mexican Bandit series in the 90s, then the Sierra series, then the Navajo, series, the Heatwave, the Mesa, and maybe others I have forgotten about. Having said this, some of these are excellent performers, the Heatwave series in particular in my opinion

2. Local variations. Sometimes a garden plant may appear to differ from a pre-existing, named plant by having smaller or larger flowers or leaves or flowers in a different shade of colour. Quite often such variations will be the result of growing conditions, soil quality, nutrients, watering regimes or just age. The Hydrangea is a classic flower for manifesting different coloured flowers according to soil conditions. But while I am not aware of any pink salvias that become blue when grown in different conditions, I do believe that more subtle variations do occur.

I recall seeing quite a few plants in Janell Fallon's stunning salvia garden at Paschendale, during a Salvia Association of Australia weekend visit a few years ago, where several plants had discoloured to almost bleached patches. We, Janell and the visitors, concluded that this might have resulted from using herbicides in the adjacent path. I have certainly seen this effect on leaves before.

Several reasons for going potty

By Pat Anderson

3. **Variations with weather conditions.** I observed some unusual colour phenomena in a few of my plants in November last year. Fiona Williams noticed the same thing and we concluded that these might have been caused by the unusual regime of heat and humidity we had experienced. Some examples appear in the following photos, taken on 9th November. Unfortunately, I didn't record the names at the time, but Figure 2 (from its location in front of my green house and next to 'Penny's Smile' is definitely *Salvia* 'Crimson and Black'. One could be tempted to come up with interesting names for such plants, but I can report they have all returned to type.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

However, it does make me wonder about the various *Salvia* 'Strawberry Swirl' and 'Strawberry Crush' sort of names. Are these real differences? I have kept 3 or 4 pot plants with these names, obtained from different sources, so that I can decide for myself what they are.

..continued page 14

Several reasons for going potty

Pat Anderson

..continued from page 13

4. **Fading over time.** Have you noticed how vibrant colours can be when a plant first comes into bloom, especially in the spring or early summer, and then how the colour fades with time, and especially in the heat? Again, it would be possible to see a faded plant in someone's garden and think, "This is different", take a cutting home, name it and so on.
5. **Source of plants.** This can also be a problem. I have 2 plants of one variety from different sources, both with similar flowers, but with different shaped leaves. How do I know which one is correct? I also scored a salvia as a Kris Kringle gift at our garden club break up this last year. The donor told me where the plant was purchased. It is a lovely one, with a professional nursery label, naming it *Salvia* 'Navajo Bright Red'. This is a new name to me. I understood that the original 'Navajo' series comprised red, cream and purple and I have since seen 'Navajo White' and 'Navajo Rose'. But this so-called 'Navajo Bright Red', lovely as it is, is anything but bright red - more a dark wine red. I am overjoyed to have it but I wonder about the label.

We all tend to want to stick with the name by which we first acquired a plant. Years ago, I obtained a lovely form of *S. greggii* from a lady in the Dandenongs, bearing the name 'Peaches and Cream'. This seemed then, and still does, a most appropriate name for it. Then I was told some years afterwards that my plant is *Salvia greggii* 'Bicolor'. On whose authority I ask? Who is to know which was named first when there is no official register? Some years later, another similar plant called 'Keegan' came into circulation. Again, a very nice plant, but the leaves are different even though the flowers are the same.

Many of us are guilty of naming things, sometimes unintentionally. I have not wished to perpetuate this naming frenzy, but it has happened. One of my flowers ended up in the first calendar produced by the Vic Salvia Study Group, a pink flower with a delicate cream edge to the lower lip, and it looked attractive on the photo so that everyone wanted one and it got called 'Pat's Pink'. Others I just keep with a series of numbers and letters with the intention of not pushing them around. Perhaps I should have tossed them out in the first place, but it is interesting to note that some of these are remarkably like others that have emerged in circulation.

6. A new aspect to the naming and the proliferation problem is the number of people growing salvias from seeds collected from hybrids, purchased both locally and from overseas, and then using the original name. Occasionally things come true, but more often they do not, and should not be expected to. I have experimented with seeds of named cultivars, such as 'Mesa Azure' and produced several different plants with a range of colours from lemon to red. This is what I would expect and so there is no way, such plants should be called 'Mesa Azure'.

So, my next job will be to pot these many forms of *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla*. and their crosses, on into larger pots, of the same size, and to reorganise my potting area so that I can spread them out more and jiggle them around when I want to put any 2 or more side by side. Then of course, I will no doubt discover another x varieties to add to the collection. But for the sake of having standard growing conditions for making any comparisons, I think it will be worth the effort.

GARDEN FAVOURITES

Photos: Patrick Hogan. Ferntree Gully Vic



Salvia madrensis

Flowers late Autumn and Winter, grows to approximately 1.5 metres, needs staking or protection from wind.

Salvia 'Joan'

Flowers most of the year, is just loved by the native birds.

Salvias bring the birds and bees to wherever they are grown.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Check out the Salvia Study Group on Facebook.
Thanks to Patrick Hogan, VSSG is now on Facebook.
Any queries Patrick can be contacted by emailing;
patrick.hogan@optusnet.com

Will *Salvia* stay united?

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte, Vic

In the last edition of *Salvia News* (Summer 17/18, no 70), I summarised a paper by Will and Classen-Bockhoff (2017) where the authors provided some evidence for splitting the huge genus *Salvia* six ways. But I also noted that such a split was by no means imminent, or even certain, and that I would follow my article up in the next issue of *Salvia News* with a summary of a different paper that argues for maintaining the status quo.

In the meantime, Sue Templeton has referred to this same paper in the newsletter of the *Salvia Association of Australia* (Jan 2018, no 91), giving the authors' arguments for retaining the existing *Salvia* genus as it is. I have discussed this with Sue, who has encouraged me to write as promised as there will be people who do not see both newsletters. It is also important to do this because only this week, Lyndi has noticed something strange in the web catalogue of the 'Flowers by the Sea' nursery in California, which made her wonder if a revision of *Salvia* had already taken place.

In the February issue of the scientific journal called *Taxon*, (the journal of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy), a paper appeared, written by a group of authors (Drew et al, 2017), entitled, "Salvia united: The greatest good for the greatest number". As the title implies, **the authors are arguing for maintaining the genus *Salvia***, with all its 900+ species as is, albeit expanding it with the inclusion of 15 species from 5 other genera: *Dorystaechas*, *Meriandra*, *Perovskia*, *Rosmarinus* and *Zhumeria*. These inclusions are based on the various molecular analyses undertaken to date, together with further analysis within the sub-tribe *Salviinae*, of which *Salvia* is a member.

The authors also indicate morphological arguments to include these additional genera. As often noted in *Salvia News*, *Salvia* as a genus is a stand out within the family Lamiaceae for having only 2 fertile stamens (1 pair), whereas most members of the family have 4 (2 pairs) of fertile stamens. The 5 genera proposed for inclusion in *Salvia* by the authors also have only 2 fertile stamens. One of them, Rosemary (*Rosmarinus*) also has the special elongated connective between the thecae at the tip of the stamens which has given rise to the distinctive lever mechanism that exists in many salvias and which plays a role in pollination.

So the paper argues that the name *Salvia* should be retained with these additions for the following reasons:

Any classification should embrace the diversity of global species and reflect evolution, but should also, I quote, "meet the needs of science and society".

At a practical level, it would be simpler (and less costly) to retain *Salvia*+. If the genus were split, as proposed by Will and Bockhoff (2017), then only about 250 species would retain this name, while 700 or so species would need to be renamed and would cause enormous headaches and costs for herbaria around the world, not to mention the horticultural business world.

If only the 250 or so species were retained in the *Salvia* genus, primarily from Europe and S and E Africa, then whole continental areas such as S. and E Asia, Central and S America and SW USA would lose some iconic species names. (This has of course happened before with, for example, the *Acacia* genus, where S. Africa has lost the use of this genus name)

The split would be confusing and frustrating for the large, worldwide interest in salvias by the many groups of enthusiasts like ours.

As a practical solution to the above, the authors (Drew et al) offer an alternative. They propose retaining the genus, with its additions, but with sub-division into 10 sub-genera. They support these sub divisions on the basis of the various molecular analyses conducted to date. They also link these sub-divisions to specific stamen arrangements. (Take a look inside some of your salvia flowers and you will see how different they can be – eg in *S. apiana*, *S. officinalis*, *S. patens*, *S. glutinosa*.) The sub-genera proposed by Drew et al are as follows (where the * indicates some uncertainties in the statistical resolution of some analyses):

- Salvia* subg. *Calosphace* (500 spp.) – species from the Americas
- Salvia* subg. *Audibertia* (19 spp.) – species from the dry areas of SW USA and Baja California, like *S. clevelandii*, *S. dorrii*, *S. apiana*
- Salvia* subg. *Meriandra* (2 spp.)
- Salvia* subg. *Dorystaechas* (1 sp.)
- **Salvia glutinosa* clade (90 spp.) – Asian species
- **Salvia aegyptica* clade (30 spp.)
- Salvia* subg. *Zhumeria* (1 sp.)
- **Salvia officinalis* clade (250-300 spp.) – primarily European species, but no details given about whether the S. African species would be included
- Salvia* subg. *Perovskia* (8 spp.)
- Salvia* subg. *Rosmarinus* (3 spp.)

Additional botanical descriptions are presented for species where there would be a name change. For example, what we know as *Perovskia angustifolia* (or Russian Sage) would become *Salvia karelinii*. The type species of *Salvia* subg. *Rosmarinus* would be what we know as *Rosmarinus officinalis*, but become known as *Salvia rosmarinus*. *Rosmarinus tomentosum* would become *Salvia granatensis* (after the Spanish province, Granada where most populations come from) and *Rosmarinus eriocalyx* would become *Salvia jordanii*.

To my knowledge, none of these suggestions have yet been endorsed by the International Botanical Congress, but naturally, I am following this up in view of the entry in the nursery website noted above.

Reflecting a bit further, while we might think of Rosemary as being very different from a salvia, take a close look, especially with respect to the stamens (you will need to be a close look as the flowers are fairly small), and similarities will emerge. Nothing like a salvia you might say. Well, how different are say *Salvia clevelandii* and *Salvia officinalis*? We are just used to these differences and could easily learn to embrace Rosemary in our midst.

Further reflection shows some parallels between the proposed subgenera of the authors Drew et al (2017) with the 6 new genera proposed to replace *Salvia* of Will and Bockhoff (2017). Both camps, for example, see the American species as distinct, although Will and Bockhoff would separate *Audibertia* and *Calosphace* species into 2 genera (*Ramona* and *Lasemia*) while Drew et al see these as 2 distinct sub genera. Will and Bockhoff would still call the European salvias *Salvia* and, significantly, they would include *Rosmarinus*, whereas Drew et al put the European species into their *Salvia officinalis* clade and have made a separate sub genus called *Salvia* subg. *Rosmarinus*. And what about the S. African species? With no detailed species lists, it is not clear where Drew et al place these, although by inference with numbers of species, they are probably in their *Salvia officinalis* clade. Then the species *Glutinaria* of Will and Bockhoff probably equates to the *Salvia glutinosa* clade of Drew et al. Again, without species names, I am not certain how closely. Will and Bockhoff's genus *Pleudia*, that includes the species *Salvia aegyptica* and their genus *Polakia*, line up with Drew et al's *Salvia aegyptica* clade. There is also that small group of anomalous species from the S. states of the USA including *S. roemeriana*, *texana*, *penstemonoides* etc) that Will and Bockhoff group with the European species, which needs resolving.

Time will doubtless unravel all this for us, but rest assured that I am trying to ascertain where any moves for change are at. Meanwhile, continue to enjoy your salvias, if you can keep them alive in this heat.

References

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- Will, M. and Classen-Bockhoff, R., 2017. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 109 pp 33 -58. “Time to split *Salvia* s.l. (Lamiaceae) – New insights from Old World *Salvia* phylogeny”

SALVIAS

Victoria Salvia Study Group

Why you would like Salvias

- Salvias have a long flowering period.
- They have a huge colour range available for every garden.
- Salvias are easy to grow, most are not fussy with soil types.
- Many are hardy to summer heat and winter cold.
- A large range of sun or shade loving plants are available.
- Most Salvias are easy to propagate.
- They attract birds, bees and other native insects to the garden.
- Salvias come from all over the world so there is likely to be a Salvia to suit every position in the home garden.
- As Salvias are very popular, they are becoming more readily available from your local nursery.
- A much larger range is now available from the Group.

Victorian Salvia Study Group

Branch of the Herb Society

The Salvia Study Group is a group of Salvia growing enthusiasts.

The Group has a registered collection with the Growing Plant Collection Association of Australia's Flora Trust and a Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald. The Group is a not for profit organisation that aims to:

- Propagate for the purpose of study and circulation.
- Promote and encourage the growing of Salvias.
- Endeavour to name salvias correctly.
- Maintain the Display Garden for the Group and the general public.
- Name on the Salvia website, Facebook page and produce a quarterly Newsletter.

Blue Salvias

Blue salvias are invaluable in the garden, as they complement and contrast with other plants in the garden. They are ideal for garden surrounds in the summer months, while adding a winter hue to the garden in the cooler months.

The blues of Salvias are magnificent and diverse. Some can be delicate as falls in the summer sun, while others provide a rich shade of blue. Some will grow in full sun, while others need shade or grow straight up to reach for the sky. All these glorious colours and growth habits make Salvias very attractive to birds, while bees and other insects love the smaller blue flowers. Often the blue birds of paradise can be heard chirping between the leaves. These are qualities that make Salvias very attractive to plant in the garden.



**Smaller than actual size

www.salvias.org.au

Salvia Display Garden,
Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald, Victoria



NEW

SALVIA

BROCHURE

for VSSG

Lyndi Garnett and her Committee spent months in preparing and proof reading the new brochure for the Group. It is a double sided A3 folded into a DL size (like a business envelope) for convenience, full colour with loads of photos and information. The front page shows a great photo of the Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald.

Headings include;

Why you would like Salvias

Victorian Salvia Study Group—Branch of the Herb Society

New and Recent Salvias

Birds and Bees

Tough and Hardy Salvias

Winter Flowering Salvias

South African Salvias

and more. There are many wonderful photos.

It is the Group's intention to encourage even more people to grow Salvias.

There is a copy of the outside of the folded brochure on the opposite page to give you a sneak preview . The best way to get a proper look and read is to ensure you pick up a copy or two (one for a friend) at the next salvia venue as outlined on the Calendar of Events in this issue or on the web-site www.salvias.org.au

GARDENING IN TEMORA

Beth Gilchrist, Temora NSW

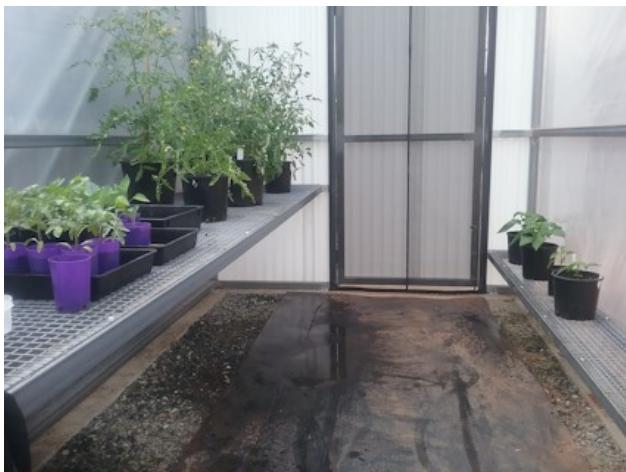
As much as we are enjoying our new home, the challenges of gardening in a climate that sounded so similar to what we have experienced before, really isn't. We were warned about the excessive heat and cold but not having experienced it, we now need to work out the best way to assist the plants, especially our salvias to survive and thrive, is taking time. More shade is needed to make a mini climate. We are mostly planting deciduous so that the sun can shine through in a winter where temperatures can be as low as minus 6. Summer 2017/2018 isn't as hot as last year, at least not at the time of writing this. Then we had two days in a row with temperatures over 46 in the shade. We managed better than we expected even though our very new garden at the time looked the worst for wear for a little while. Still losses have been minimal. To date 6 trees plus fruit trees and citrus have been planted and more trees are still needed for shade and protection, especially in the west south west corner at the front of the house. I read recently where some gardeners are planting a fruit tree in the raised veggie patch to protect crops from the heat of direct sun and trying to work out how we can adapt this for our own use. Since we now have new concrete paths for easy wheelchair access in all weather, fences, lawn which is in repair mode, and newly laid turf in Clydee Corner, several new garden beds have been prepared using the same no dig method I have used previously, and have had their first plantings, our new garden is evolving better than we had hoped. We have been told numerous times that the block where we now live was the rubbish dumping ground for the street until the house was built which is taking time to rid some areas of numerous weeds including some obnoxious weeds which are quite hard to remove. We are using 'Slasher Weedkiller' (bought from Vasili's on line) which is Australian Organic registered weed killer for the worst weeds, and Dicamba 'M' a selective herbicide to control certain broadleaf weeds in winter cereals, pastures, turf and non crop areas, is being successfully used on the grass areas under repair. This was bought from the local Agvet. The new lawn of course was weeded well prior to the turf being laid.



'Clydee Corner' evolved when our dear friends came for a stay soon after our arrival to start the garden off for us, now turfed and signed, the new lawn shows off the garden well. The back verandah overlooks this area and its in flower for much of the year, although during the peak of summer I have cut back quite severely to get it through the season with minimal maintenance and to give a great show for the autumn. Although quite sheltered, *Salvia 'Bill Whitehead'*, '*Salvia dwarf 'Limelight'*', *Salvia madrensis* are suffering badly when there are two or more days of heat around 40 degrees or more. It seems the larger leafed winter varieties are suffering even if only in full sun for a short time.

The fruit trees were stripped of all fruit this year to allow them to settle before the first crop of the season. The veggie patch has been feeding us for months but will be better if more sheltered and the veggie net used like last season.





The hothouse/green house was going great guns until the heat became excessive. We are still seeking direction as shade cloth and fans are still not enough to prevent the tomatoes from cooking. All the seeds have been removed from the hot/green house for now. Insects can get in and attempts are being made to rectify. Next year will be better when some of the salvias, shrubs and small trees near the hothouse have more growth. We tried some multi branched sunflowers that grow over 2.5 metres, look great and only last a few months, and they will be planted by the door at the west end of the hot house prior to next summer.

Temora and its surroundings are very windy. We have had several small whirlies and the last one ripped the rose arch into pieces. Luckily plant damage to these has been minimal.

I was surprised when coming to Temora and visiting gardens to find many have their salvias growing in the shade. Having lived here for a year we now understand their reasoning. Most of the salvias I have planted to date come from Melbourne, either from cuttings I have brought with me, or bought from Lyndi plus a few gifts. These are all doing better in the full sun than those bought locally. I even have a few in pots grown for sharing and most are doing okay too. Although its early days, there

are areas with some shelter from the elements at least for part of the day and this should increase as the garden fills and spills. Many of my salvias need a lot more protection here than where I have lived previously.

The front garden against the house is our oldest garden that has now turned 1 year old, still has some gaps to fill but we are enjoying the changes with each season.

Maintenance at this time of year is done mostly very early in the day, dead heading, pruning where needed and watering. A lot of the watering is done at night providing the temperatures have dropped to something reasonable. Night watering allows good penetration before the next burst of heat. Remember this is a very dry heat with humidity usually a rarity.



The garden isn't as colourful during the Summer months as in the Spring and Autumn because its simpler for me to cut the salvias and other plants back to slow growth little until the worst of the heat is over - survival mode - and then another burst of colour in 6-8 weeks time.



Salvia Aurea prostrata is planted as a 10cm cutting less than six months ago in limited space and was soon sitting up and flowering in her first season, obviously enjoying whatever the elements send.

The garden still in its infancy is full of bees. All but one small bed includes salvias and one can see and hear the bees every day. Considering the amount of fruit and veggies we are also growing, it is a good sign of things to come. As well as about 70 salvias and still collecting, the flower garden also includes roses, bearded iris, bulbs, shrubs and more. There is still much to do but we are enjoying the ride.



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By Meg Bentley

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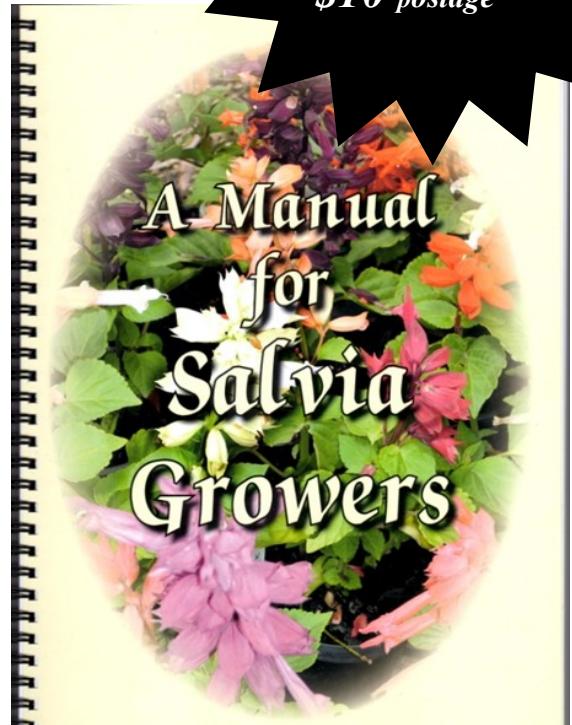
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