

Salvia News

NUMBER 75



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc

www.salvias.org.au

Autumn 2019

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP 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 & 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 GPCAA and has been used for quite a while now).

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SALVIA NEWS SUBMISSIONS

Copy deadline for the next edition is on or before 17 April 2019

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SALVIA NEWS

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

Happy New Year!

At about the same time as you received your last issue of Salvia news, the Group was officially incorporated - Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc. As you are aware 'The Rules' have been submitted and passed and a copy is available for any member who is interested by contacting Lyndi Garnett. A new year, a new beginning!

We are very pleased to welcome Tine (pronounced Tina) Grimston as the new Membership Officer of The Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc.

Lyndi tells that Tine is a lovely person with a beautiful and quirky garden. (Salvia News No 63 Autumn 2016, Page 16/17). She put her hand up at the Salvia Christmas Lunch to take on the membership role, and is working with Meg Gadd to take over the reins. She has also volunteered to have Christmas lunch in her garden.

We are very grateful to Meg Gadd who has given so much in time and expertise over the years to ensure the best return for the Group. All who have met her will agree what a delightful and helpful person she is and she will be missed of course. We wish her continued success and look forward to catching up with her at a Salvia event in the future.

So many around the country are struggling with drought conditions and other extremities of weather and of course it takes a toll on us all. Perhaps when you are tucked away in a cool and comfortable spot you may pull out some previous issues of Salvia News to remind ourselves of salvia advice freely given so you and I may

manage better.

In the meantime enjoy the latest Salvia News with some favourites including Pat Anderson who has written about 'Seasonal Salvia problems', how to recognise, attend to them and has included preventative action too, commencing on page 7;

Meg Bentley, author of 'A Manual for Salvia Growers' who submits almost every edition with 'Notes from Gruyere', this season is taking readers for a stroll through a section of her garden with inspirational photos too, commencing page 10.

There are many keen salvia enthusiasts and learned members of The Perennial Poppies Group Inc. in South East Queensland who every issue willingly share their experiences and expertise. This issue Lynn Mc Allister, a very experienced Salvia Grower tells about her 'Summer Cottage suburban garden', commencing page 14.

Of course there is more so keep reading. Hope you enjoy this edition of Salvia News. As always, would love to hear what you think, what you like or dislike in the current or previous issues and what you would like to see more of.

Autumn, my favourite season, lets all get our hands dirty!

Happy Gardening
Beth Gilchrist
editor.salvianews@gmail.com

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**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE
NEXT EDITION OF SALVIA NEWS IS
17 APRIL 2019**
editor.salvianews@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

Remember to check the website regularly for any changes and additional information.
www.salvias.org.au

*Remember too to take your plant lists to events or email your list to Lyndi prior to the event so you aren't disappointed. Should you have any queries, phone Lyndi Garnett, VSSG Co-ordinator on 03 9803 4534 or email lgarnett844@gmail.com
Also don't forget to let Lyndi know if you are attending events. Some events the hosts need to know numbers prior to the event.*

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.

Please note that Lyndi advises that

Tesselaar Nursery is NOT holding its annual Plant and Garden Expo this year.

Previously people chose between Ferny Creek and Tesselaar's - opting to go to Tesselaar's, but hopefully this year those people will come to Ferny Creek and onto Jindivick as well. These are the only Garden Events for the summer/ Autumn period.!!.

March 9, Sat 10am - 4pm

**FERNY CREEK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
2019 PLANT COLLECTORS & GARDEN EXPO**
100 Hilton Road, Sassafras, Vic

Rare plant sales, Botanical Artist, Book Sales, Garden Tools, Wood turning, Guided garden walks, refreshments, light lunches, Free onsite parking

We, VSSG, are only selling on Saturday 9 March even though this is a 2 day event. Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale. There will be a large range of Salvias for sun and shady areas, and tough Salvias for hot dry and frost areas.

Due to demand, we encourage you to email lists so that those plants can be put aside for you. lgarnett844@gmail.com
As always bring along plants/flowers to be identified.

March 31 Sun 11am

RUSSELL CHEAL'S GARDEN VISIT
30 Charles Smith Drive, Wonga Park Vic.

Don't miss out on seeing Russell's beautiful garden and how he propagates all those Salvias, getting them to flower so early and so easily.
Tea and coffee will be provided. Bring a plate to share and a chair.
Don't forget to phone Russell if you are coming 0415 865 331

April 7 Sat 9am—3pm

JINDIVICK RARE PLANT FAIR
The Jindivick Public Hall
Jackson's Track, Jindivick

Salvia plants, books and seed for sale.
Large range of Salvias available for sun and shade, tough Salvias for hot, dry and frost areas.
To avoid missing out and due to a high demand, email Lyndi your list of plants wanted. lgarnett844@gmail.com

Tesselaar's Annual Garden Fair – Cancelled!!

Calendar of Events

April 28, Sun 11am

ATTILA KAPITANY'S GARDEN VISIT

1 Lough Court, Narre Warren North

This amazing garden is rarely open to the public.

Attila will be giving tours of his magnificent garden with discussions afterwards and Possibly a chance to purchase plants. ***Not to be missed.***

Tea and coffee will be provided.

Bring a plate to share and a chair.

Phone Attila if coming on 0419 990 934

May 19, Sun 11am

MAUREEN SCOBLE GARDEN VISIT

6 Riverview Street, Avondale heights

Join us to visit this gorgeous garden packed full of interesting plants.

Tea and coffee will be available.

Bring a Plate to share and a chair and enjoy the surrounds near Maribyrnong River .

Phone Maureen if coming on 03 9318 3271

June 15 Sat 9.30am

RHSV GARDENER'S DAY OUT

Deaken University

Burwood Hwy, Burwood

3 fantastic presentations by Diana Sargeant (Roses), John Arnott (Cranbourne Botanical Gardens) and Angus Stewart (horticulturalist, author and media personality. Many specialist plant sellers and allied stalls, superb Special Effort, Great 'Goodies Bag', Hanging Basket Awards.

Vibrant atmosphere that sets the day apart. Lunch available, Ample undercover parking, public transport.

More info on the RHSV website closer to the date www.rhsv.org.au

Our Salvia Stall Includes plants, books and seed for sale.

Bring plants to be identified.

To avoid disappointment, please email your list to Lyndi and the plants on your list will be put aside for you. lgarnett844@gmail.com

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

PLEASE NOTE:

Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes Salvia News Annual Subscription

NOT FOR RENEWALS

Any queries, phone Tine Grimston – see details below

Name :

Address :

Suburb/Town:State: Postcode:

Phone :Email.....

Membership includes Salvia News Annual Subscription 1 year (4 issues)

☐ Hard copy posted \$20.00

☐ On-line \$15.00

Subscribe for a Friend

Name:

Address:

Suburb/Town: State:Postcode:

Phone:Email:

Payment Details: Fill in the form and send to Membership Officer;

Tine Grimston
Membership / Subscription Officer
Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
4 Crimea Close,
Rowville Vic

Ph. 0466 285 542 Email: **tinegrimston@gmail.com**

- ☐ 1. Cheque / Money Order payable to Victorian Salvia Study Group Inc
- ☐ 2. Direct Deposit: Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 A/c No: 116846122
Account Name: Victorian Salvia Study Group Branch Inc
Surname & Initial (Admin purposes only)

A form must be completed with all forms of payment

Seasonal

Salvia problems

Pat Anderson – Warrandyte Vic

I'm writing this in early January, when all the problems of growing salvias in winter are well and truly behind us. Frost damaged foliage has been removed by cutting plants back, in some cases almost to the ground. Some good rain in November and another big dump in December helped create a good show in the garden for Christmas. And, now, it's time for all the problems of growing salvias in summer to return. These of course include the intense heat, hot winds and lack of rainfall. Add to this mix an attempt to grow salvias in poor soils and along come those pesky little mites to invade the already-stressed plants. They seem to prefer stressed plants.

What are mites? They are nasty little, 8-legged sucking creatures (*Tetranychus urticae*) that pierce leaves on their under side and suck all the goodies away from the leaf cells. They thrive in hot, dry conditions when the time period from egg to egg laying maturity can be as short as 8 days, and adult females may have laid 100 eggs by the end of the season! So from a state of no apparent problem, it doesn't take long for the problem to become overwhelming.

The presence of mites becomes obvious when the leaves become mottled with white spots, giving an overall whitish look, before they become droopy. Inspection of the underside of the leaves will show tiny orange to brown creatures moving about (you may need a hand lens as they are so small) and generally a bit of webbing, which helps protect them!. After all, like their other 8-legged relations, they are in the spider family – hence the common name – red spider mite.



Here are some pictures of mite-affected leaves on *S.* 'Firecracker' and *S.* 'Petardo'.

So, what can we do about them?

One thing is for certain; if you leave the problem unattended, it will only get worse, both spreading to adjacent plants and eventually killing a plant through starvation. Not only that, the eggs and even the mites themselves can survive the winter in crevices and under leaf debris, lurking there ready to strike as soon as it heats up again the following summer and plants are again stressed. In other words, once you have the problem, it will return and probably get worse each year. That is certainly my experience.

Continued next page ...8



Seasonal Salvia problems

.....continued from previous page

There are a number of ways for tackling the problem:

1. Hosing them off with a jet of water. This is simple and effective, but it needs to be done from the first appearance. Heavy hosing early in the morning over 3 consecutive days is recommended. Even in agricultural areas, it has been noted that mites can be a problem in drier, dusty parts of a paddock and so regular watering is important.
2. Removing infested leaves, buds and stems, but being careful NOT to put this infected material in the compost heap, where the temperatures reached are unlikely to kill the eggs. Then being vigilant with hosing as above.
3. Spraying - quite a few possibilities:
 - a. I have heard of people using home-made coriander tea as a spray, but I am not sure whether or not this kills mites or just washes them off in the same way as a jet of water
 - b. There are a number of horticultural sprays on the market, but even these are not necessarily the answer. Traditional petroleum-based oils work by smothering the mites, but while these are technically 'safe', they can cause damage to the leaves of some plant genera. The Californian nursery, "Flowers by the Sea", claims that salvias are among the list of plants that can be damaged this way. Eco Oil or oil sprays based on plant material, like the Neem tree, work in a different way, interfering with the digestion and reproduction of mites. While these are technically safer for the environment, they might still cause leaf damage, especially in hot conditions. Also, it must be said that any "knock-down" sprays like these will not get rid of eggs, and so the treatment will need to be repeated regularly – probably every 4 -7 days throughout the season. Then there are, or were, specific miticides, with a systemic action (penetrating throughout the vascular system of the plant) on the market. Apart from being nasty chemicals in their own right, by getting into the vascular system, and ultimately the nectar, they can consequently have a deleterious effect on good insects and pollinators, just like certain insecticides can. Kelthane was one such product but I believe this is unavailable now. In any case, it is thought that mites can rapidly build up resistance to the effects of miticides. Using insecticides is ineffective on mites and will have the added problem of killing good bugs.
4. Use of natural predators. It is possible to buy predatory mites, which are claimed to be very effective for controlling spider mites. However, these depend on a supply of spider mites for their own survival, so it is probably tricky to get the balance just right. For a garden the size of ours, we would need to spend a small fortune for this. But then the Powells, who run Tupelo Grove Nursery in the Adelaide Hills, use this method successfully on quite a large scale. I assume they introduced the predatory mites before the pest ones became a problem of plague proportions.

4.Prevention is better than a cure.

1 So, why do some gardens not have the problem? Their secret is having the right preventative conditions. Ideally these would include:

1. Deep rich soil
2. Plenty of rainfall or adequate watering, so that plants do not become water-stressed
3. A mix of vegetation, rather than a monoculture, especially one that includes dense shrubs that will be attractive habitat for small birds which in turn should keep the mite numbers down

Which salvia species are affected by mites?

Flowers By the Sea Nursery publishes a list of species that are particularly susceptible:

Salvia wagneriana, *concolor*, *dombeyi*, *guaranitica*, *gesneriflora*, *madrensis*, *splendens*, *mexicana*, *involuta*, as well as the hybrid 'Wendy's Wish'. I would agree with this list, and I note that all of these salvias have relatively large leaves and come from regions that have plenty of moisture, which is why they are the first to become stressed by a lack of moisture and thus susceptible .

Continued on page 9...

Seasonal

Salvia problems

...continued from page 8

I have not yet seen the problem on small-leaved salvias such as *greggii* and *microphylla* forms, *chionophylla*, *chamaedryoides*, or 'Marine Blue'. From the experience of our garden, I would add, *Salvia atrocyanea*, *vitifolia*, *univerticillata*, *holwayi*, *sprucei*, *fulgens*, *confertiflora*, and the cultivars; 'Petardo', 'Firecracker', 'Desley', 'Van Houttei', 'Ruth' and 'Mystique', all of which have large leaves, but also *Salvia dichlamys* and *x westerae*, which have medium sized leaves. The first time I came across the problem some years ago was on *Salvia concolor* and *Salvia* 'Red Dragon' (a form of *S. fulgens*). In spite of cutting back heavily and destroying the foliage, I don't think I got on top of the problem early enough and I haven't been vigilant enough over the years since.

Having thought about this topic more today, after a detailed inspection of this garden, there appears to be a stand-out factor that corroborates the various points raised above. Having plenty of tank storage space for water collected off the roof, as well as having pumping rights to the river, we water with overhead sprinklers in parts of the garden, especially our vegetable patch, and the lawn behind the house, which is our fire break. However, we still try not to waste water and use dripper lines to water some flower beds, especially those that are narrow or those that contain plants from dry regions. I understood this to be a more efficient way of watering plants close to their roots. However, close inspection makes it quite clear that those beds that are overhead watered regularly look healthy. Those beds that rely on drippers or are watered infrequently, even those with plants from dry regions, are those where mites are prevalent. The dilemma is that some plants from dry regions will cope quite well with very little water in the heat, but keel over if suddenly watered from above. Plants like *S. interrupta* and *S. potentillifolia*. But in my dry, Mediterranean salvia bed, which is watered by drippers, I have had spider mites on *S. officinalis* 'Berggarten'. So the right watering regime is not easy to find.

The best salvia garden I have ever seen, in spite of containing exclusively salvias, was that of Janell Fallan, when she used to live at Paschendale in western Victoria. She may have had decent soil, but in spite of a monoculture of salvias, the plants were beautifully placed and not overcrowded (a definite plus for stopping sideways spread), very deeply mulched with straw and presumably well-watered. The garden was a credit too her and it is a pity that it is no longer there for more salvia enthusiasts to visit.

There is an abundance of information on the internet to look at. But, more importantly, get out and look at your own plants for tell tale signs and, if the signs are there, do something about it before the problem gets worse.

Pat Anderson
January 2019

SNIPPETS FROM LYNDI

Lyndi Garnett - VSSG Co-ordinator

Just to let you know that Tine Grimston has offered to take on the role of Membership Officer - great news! She does this job for her other Garden Club, so she offered to do the same for us. Meg Gadd is very relieved and so am I. She has also offered to have us for Christmas Lunch this year.

Lots of people at the Christmas lunch - lots of plants given away and of course lots of good food as you would expect. Good to see a few people we don't see often. Hope someone has taken some photos to share. Fiona really does us proud. A very nice day.

NOTES FROM GRUYERE

AUTUMN 2019

Meg Bentley, Gruyere, Vic

It's a very interesting occupation to take someone, or a group for a walk through your own garden which is something I enjoy doing. While that sounds quite simple and easy to do, it can be very time consuming, not on my part by a long shot but for the visitor who thinks they can skip through in just a few minutes or half hour at most.



Salvia thyrsiflora

Salvia 'Christine Yeo' intermingles with *S. x westerae*, purple *S. farinacea*, the tall spikes of 'Blue Boa' *Agastache*, *S. sagittata* {not in flower at the moment} and Heliotrope 'Lord Roberts' with flowers that smell like chocolate. *Salvia campanulata*, covered in pale yellow flowers weaves through the *S. forskaohlei* alba, lilac flowering Society Garlic the variegated form and crimson blooms of *S. spathacea* (At the end of this garden, as you go around the corner, deep purple flowers of *Salvia leucantha* fill the corner bed underneath the fragrant, pink flowering 'Childrens Rose'.

Photos: *Salvia thyrsiflora* - above
Salvia garden and Pelargoniums – opposite page
Salvia spathacea - page 12

An informative walk around the *Salvia* Gardens here in Gruyere may take a few hours so it's wise to have a cup of tea or coffee in hand ...or bottle of water, there is much to see to wet the appetite or the whistle. So, to write about it may take up less time and the reader can actually sit back in comfort and enjoy the tour.

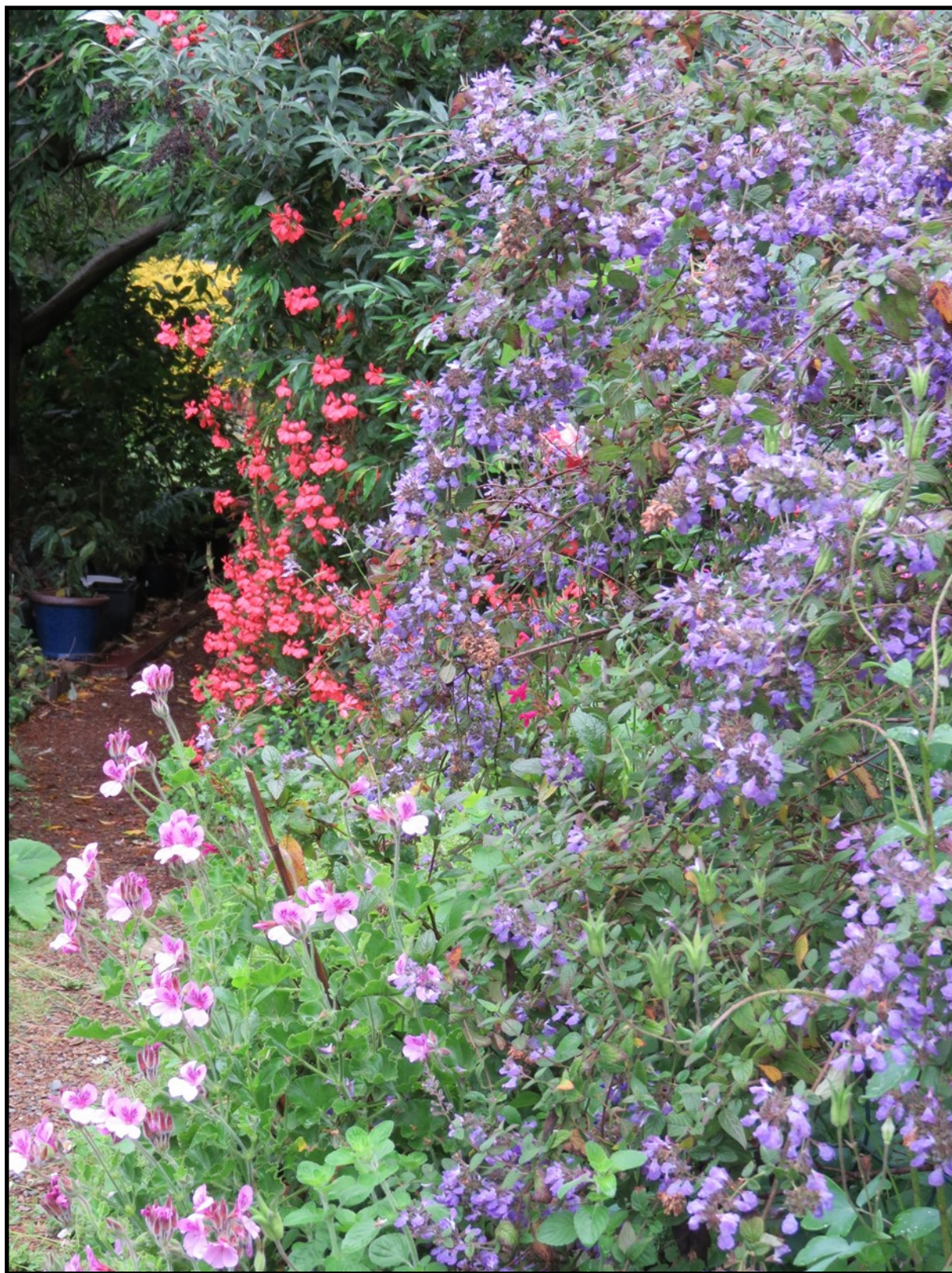
Starting at the *salvia* garden, an area where a house once stood but now turned into a series of *salvia* gardens for the past 29 years.

At the corner of one garden is a large bush of *Salvia thyrsiflora* covered in lovely blue flowers growing with roses 'Gertrude Jeckle', 'Abraham Darby' and 'Munstead Wood' as background plants. Also, in the background is a tall, pale blue buddleja which gives afternoon shade to *Salvia mexicana* minor, *S. corrugata*, *S. 'Omaha Gold'*, *S. 'Alice'*, 'Indigo Spires' and *S. karwinskii* and delights many butterflies and honeyeaters. In the foreground along the path is *S. chiapensis*, pale blue and white *S. farinacea*, *S. greggii* 'Coconut Ice', *S. 'Silas Dyson'*, various *S. nemerosa* sp and *S. rad-ul* with snowy white spikes.

Continued on page 11 & 12...

NOTES FROM GRUYERE

AUTUMN 2019



Salvia garden and Pelargoniums

NOTES FROM GRUYERE

...continued from page 12/13

While it sounds quite a mixture it does look colourful and the Honeyeaters are having a picnic, so too the bees and it won't be long before the *Calamintha* starts to bloom then the bees will really be busy.

If you walk up the central path of this garden, (made from the bricks from the chimney of the old house)



Salvia spathacea

on your right is the 'Andean Silver Sage' *Salvia discolor* with navy flowers which looks quite good beside the delicate pink blooms of a large *Cistus* plant. Further along the path is the magenta flowering *S. microphylla* 'Jane's Delight' and it lives up to its name, behind is the wispy blue sprays of *S.* 'African Skies', an apricot rose, *Salvia* 'Ritambelle' and the grey foliage of *S.* 'Greek Skies'. At the rear grows *Salvia* 's *mexicana* 'Bill Whitehead' and *leucophylla* with delicate grey foliage. Then we come to the arch where roses overhang into the garden, the 'Bamboo Rose' and the golden blooms of *R.* 'Graham Stuart Thomas', this one looks great beside a large bush of *Salvia semiatrata*, a great combination of gold and royal blue and purple together. There are smaller plants intermingled like *Nepeta* and scented low growing pelargoniums, especially the 'Guava' scented. At the corner of this garden grows my original *Salvia aurea*, still quite a large bush and with it grows *S. apiana* both with silver and grey leaves and because the rust colour blooms of *S. aurea* are hard to match in the garden, I planted roses with a hint of brown and a hint of pink to them. Also in the front area is a mass of *S. forskahlei* tall spikes of blue and white flowers emerging from large lush-looking green leaves, mind you after Summer they don't look quite that lush.

For a bit of contrast to foliage I planted the white flowering *Salvia canariensis* but this only looks good for a short while since it doesn't flower as prolifically as the species. If you return down this path you will notice on the opposite side, *S. canariensis* with *Salvia microphylla* 'Margaret Arnold' and purple spikes of *S.* 'Indigo Spires', I must admit this part of the garden has not been hard pruned for quite some time, yes it does need it but the little Blue Wrens and Yellow-winged Honeyeaters objected so badly to any interference, I had to walk away. Now of course it has become quite a jungle of Salvias' 'Pink Zapper', 'Heatwave Glow', 'Musk Pink', *S. dolomitica*, various nepetas' scented pelargoniums and calamint with a large, gently sprawling 'Sweetheart' rose that possums and wallabies like to sample every now and again. As you near the end of this garden there are a few large plants of *S. mexicana* 'Limelight' and 'Anthony Parker' with lower growing salvias like 'Marine Blue' and an extra rose or two like 'Heritage' and 'Maria Callas' with a tall growing *Acacia cognata* to help against the hot afternoon sun. Spiralling up through the wattle is a 'Gum Vine', so well clothed that birds have also chosen that to nest in too. Down on the steps at the opening of this path grow *Salvia africana*, *S. discolor* and 'Baby Sage' *Salvia microphylla*. There is an old pipe that runs under the step where on hot days the Blue-tongue Lizard emerges and sits basking in the sun.

That just about winds up this walk through the central salvia garden. Next time we shall hopefully continue around the outer parts of the garden.

SALVIA ANNUAL SALE AT NOBELIUS **SOLD OUT IN 2 HOURS!**

Photo: Neil Keir



Lyndi excitedly shared the great news via email that the Annual VSSG Salvia Sale at Nobelius in November 2018 sold out in just 2 hours! Here is what she wrote:

We sold out completely in 2 hours!!!!!! You would have loved being there. We've never sold out before.

Although our starting time was 11.30am, people came early as always.

Jillian and I, and our helpers, arrived at Nobelius at 7.30am, some stayed to help Jillian and off load plants, put tables out etc. Mandy, a new helper came with me to put up all the A frame advertising at the various roundabouts, Woolworths, flyers at the ATMs, and put up banners.

The Emerald Market was also on that Sunday which also helped.

Great advertising for this event included magazines, radio, flyers and word of mouth.

More helpers arrived to get the plants onto the tables, give everyone a cup of tea, arrange the umbrella and cash/ bagging up tables, while others attended to the information table. We were actually ready on time for the first time ever!.

We had time to wander through the garden when people began arriving. No-one, not even me, looked at our watches, so we didn't realise it was only 10.30am, but we said, "Its Show time" and began to go into action.

I had taken about 400 plants, others had donated about 200 plants so there were loads for everyone and lots of variety to choose from. As you can expect it was a frenzy of people, baskets and helpers trying to find plants!! Of course the people who came at the starting time of 11.30am were amazed and somewhat miffed at the fact that so much had already been sold.

Neil took a photo of Fiona (Williams) with the last dregs of pots, which those people in the photo bought. There were trays of forgotten plants, terrible shape, ratty plants, but they all sold too. Fiona sold the last 2 plants at 12.30pm!!! People were still coming at 1.30-2pm only to find we had sold out!

Editor: What a fantastic result. The Annual Salvia Sale at Nobelius in Emerald next to the VSSG Display Garden is always great day and this is a timely reminder that it is worth while being early at this event to ensure you get first choice. Don't forget to diarise this years event, it's well worth a visit.

PLEASE, HELPERS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED for the different events. **CAN YOU ASSIST?**
Please phone Lyndi for more details 03 9803 4534.

Salvias in southeast Queensland

Lynn McAllister, Lawnton Qld

Welcome to 2019 and Lynn's suburban summer cottage garden, in Lawnton, just north of Brisbane. Once again, it has been a very dry winter and start to summer, across much of southeast Queensland. Over the past few years, I have been propagating and planting my salvias into different microclimates in the yard, to make the most of different microclimates and hopefully guard against losses from the vagaries of the weather. This has been quite successful, especially with the *microphylla/greggii* varieties which tend to 'up and go' when the dry times are suddenly broken by heavy rainfall (always welcome but a risky time for the smaller growing salvias). It is very satisfying now, to have replacements on hand for the losses to drought. The rainwater tanks emptied long ago, so for now most of the garden is town-watered, a section at a time, each week. Several difficult to access areas, under large trees *Nauclea orientalis*, *Backhousia citriodora*, *Eleocarpus grandis* and *Eucalyptus tessellaris* are watered only when they look dire, perhaps once a month. We are certainly praying for a widespread rain event but I should thank the dry weather, for prompting me to take a closer look at what is happening in the garden and suggesting a few improvements. Since last winter, I have been steadily redesigning, to create a new salvia garden, which will (hopefully) better meet the demands of our increasingly dry climate, while giving the yard a much-needed boost!

The chosen space is a level 100 m² behind a 10 metre long, retaining wall, running from the north-west corner of the house, down a slight slope. This 'garden' desperately required a tidy, being the fallout from a defunct 'grow-your-own' mission. In permaculture terms, it would be a Zone 1 (I think), close to the house where the plants can most-easily be watered and appreciated. The cement wall is 90 cm high so drainage is

quite good. It faces west, and is providing a hot, dry, airy microclimate on top of the wall. This is the where I planted Mediterranean salvias and herbs last June. It was exciting to plant grey-leaved plants with a degree of confidence they would do well (In Brisbane, very few grey leaved plants do well). *Salvia discolor* (pictured right) had been flowering almost continually, under a small cumquat tree on top of the wall, for about 5 years. I love the black flowers (I guess they are really just very dark purple). They are stunning against the soft pale grey foliage. To complement *S. discolor*, I planted *Salvia officinalis* (culinary sage), *Salvia dolomitica* with its lovely pale, dusty pink head of flowers against the small grey leaves, and relocated several pieces of artemisia from a friend's garden. I planted lemon, orange and plain thyme and a few lavender varieties from the local nursery between the resident salvias 'Rosh Eden' a local seedling from the garden of Sheryl Jenyns, *Salvia madrensis*, 'Winter Lipstick' and 'Joan' which form a wall of sorts, along the edge of an adjoining path.



Salvia discolor is a favourite

Of the larger salvias, *Salvia wagneriana* and its dark form variety have both proved to be very drought hardy, doing well in the shade of a large quandong which keeps the area quite dry and equally well in regularly-watered semi shade, sharing a space with small shrubs and favourite weeds, *Cuphea hyssopifolia*, a small-flowered tabernaemontana, *Persicaria decipiens* (favourite of the leaf cutter bees) *Malva sylvestris*, and an old faithful iboza now called tetradenia, I believe. I have always found my larger growing salvias willing to share their space with other shrubs and trees, as long as they are regularly watered and of course kept within bounds by regular pruning. I pruned all the larger salvias back to stumps over the festive break. Most have

Meg Gadd our Subscription Officer

Lyndi Garnett

We would like to say a very big Thankyou to Meg for the time she was the Subscription Officer for the Group. I say subscription, rather than as membership as it was then known, as Meg operated under that title.

I remember asking Meg if she would take on the role of subscription officer so many years ago (at a Christmas lunch in Pat Anderson's garden). I didn't know Meg very well but I knew she knew her way around a computer and was a very competent person who would be able to handle such a job. I was very glad when she said yes, so I told Bevan Whelan that we had found a replacement for him and organised for him to hand over and show Meg the ropes of the new job. I don't think Meg saw a lot of Bevan but as she is a sensible, methodical and reorganised it and came out smiling, of which we (knew nothing really about the job) were extremely grateful.

Meg is an unassuming, quiet person who just got on with the job at hand. As Meg has a farm in Gippsland and an elderly father, we didn't see an awful lot of her at garden events, but when she was up in Melbourne and was able, she attended Committee meetings.

Although we didn't see her often, she was always working in the background, always on top of those new subscriptions coming in and trying her best to decipher illegible names on forms, chase up people who had deposited with only initials or no name at all, chase up over due subscriptions and continually giving people a second chance with a reminder or two if they had forgotten to pay their subscription. All of this whilst holding down a 9-5 weekly job at a high school!.

We all thank you Meg for the tireless work you have toiled through over the years. Now it is time for you to pass on your knowledge to Tine Grimston who is another very sensible competent person who is perfect for the role of Membership Officer.

It is time for you to take a nice long relaxing holiday and hopefully still participate in the Group's activities.

Salvias in southeast Queensland - *Lynn McAllister, Lawnton Qld* *...continued from page 14*

responded well to this approach over the years even though it is always hot weather. They delay growing back when it is very dry though, which works well in saving water. My losses to this summer pruning in such dry weather have been the *involucrata* x *karwinskii* varieties 'Pink Icicles' and 'Timboon'. I haven't bothered to replace them as 'Bethellii', 'Mulberry Jam' and 'Winter Lipstick' readily filled the gaps. I am tempted to add *Salvia involucrata* 'Hadspen' which I saw recently at Nobelius Heritage Garden, to the garden and hope that it tolerates the hot, dry conditions. The depth of flower colour, deep electric pink if that's possible, was truly amazing and it was in good flower even in quite hot weather. It seemed a neater, more upright bush, perhaps better for smaller gardens, and with more-solid flower colour, no white tips, than similar varieties.

What an amazing range of colour, form and habit we have in our salvias, and so many different types I am yet to grow. I think I will move on to another section of garden and give it a revamp. It's so good for the soul.

The Perennial Poppies Group Inc.

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Autumn Propagating in Gruyere

by Meg Bentley

Editors Note:

This is a reprint from Salvia News Autumn 2015 which is relevant still and Meg Bentley has kindly allowed a reprint.

Happy New Year to everyone.

What perfect weather for gardens and gardening...while it rains or when the drizzle sets in and while the mornings are deliciously cool and fresh. It has also been an ideal time to propagate salvias and to pot up cuttings that have taken root, to which most of my mornings are taken up with these jobs in hand.

I have found that as long as the propagating medium (perlite with a small amount of soil mixed in) is kept damp then the cuttings will form roots very fast. It takes no time at all to fill a bench with potted up cuttings especially if they were placed 6-8 cuttings to a pot or tube stock with a single cutting and pot up into larger pots. Suddenly all the bench space is taken up and starts the constant juggle of moving those plants into a shaded area while established plants are put into open areas. Shade is still a necessity for the young soft growth because the sun is so hot when it does come out but eventually they will harden up and be moved out into the open.

When potting up the cuttings especially from the perlite mix I have found the best method is to have two containers on hand, one of diluted seaweed solution and the other to shake the perlite into as you tip out the cuttings and separate the fine roots. Trim off any roots that are longer than the top growth of the cutting so there is approximately an equal balance of root to top growth. Place a small amount of soil (potting mix) into the pot, carefully sit the cutting into the pot and gently backfill with potting mix tapping the side of the pot as you go and keeping the plant central. Don't plant the cutting at this stage too deep into the pot but keep the lower leaves just above the soil.

Many folk will want to push the soil around the plant at this stage...DON'T, it works much better if you thump the pot down onto the bench to help it settle in and that way the roots and soil work down together and you are not pushing the soil onto the roots and breaking them off as you push down. This can happen to many folk and the plant may die. Dunk the new potted up cutting into the seaweed solution and place in the shade to recover and settle in. Water overhead with extra seaweed solution. Large leaved plants will need to be watered more often than the grey leaved salvias so water them sparingly as needed.

I have been potting up some of the *Salvia aurea* cultivars and realized just how many come from our friend Trudi Fry. My favourite of course is the *Salvia aurea* 'Green Ginger', a compact bush with calyces of green (and stay that way) while the corolla is a bright gingery colour, unlike the paler terracotta colour of the species. Another one, called *Salvia aurea* 'Silver Lady' which was one of Trudi's specials is also a lower growing shrubby bush with silvery foliage. Then there is the prostrate growing form *Salvia aurea* 'prostrate form' which lays low to the ground with foliage fanning out on horizontal branches, similar to the cultivar *Salvia aurea* 'Bookleaf' but differs in as much as the leaves sit rather uniform like the pages of a book, hence the name.

Trudi's garden has not only brought about the aurea cultivars, how can we forget her beautiful *Salvia* 'Crimson and Black' or S. 'Snow White' which went so well with the Christmas red of her *Salvia* 'Holly'. How often one forgets how our plants came about, how they were named and by whom. There are many, many friends growing in my gardens, they become part of my life in my garden as do plants including their collectors from other countries.

Many of the early spring flowering salvias are ready for a cut back or trim and a feed, no doubt this will be done in the days ahead. Mulching too, if there is enough to go around, which will greatly enhance the garden in readiness for a repeat Autumn flush of flowers...hopefully!

May we all get through the hot summer, when it does arrive, we may yet have a very hot February and March so I hope your gardens hold up well and continue to flourish. Happy gardening to everyone.



I remember, do you?

Beth Gilchrist

Our new Membership Officer Tine Grimston has had VSSG visit before. If you have access to Salvia News edition 63 Autumn 2016, the event was recorded.

Loads of different plants including salvias, a veggie patch and ever so much more. There are many pieces of art throughout her garden, Tine is a collector and when she gets home and puts her pieces together her husband Wayne makes them permanent.. They are beautifully placed for all to see when visiting her garden.

I remember too her garden room, now that is a room that most gardeners will envy, its much more than a potting shed. You will have to visit and see for yourself.

Lyndi has advised that Tine has invited the Group to visit for the Christmas event this year. Now this is another Christmas event that really shouldn't be missed. These pics are more than three years old, its your chance to see an update of this very special garden.



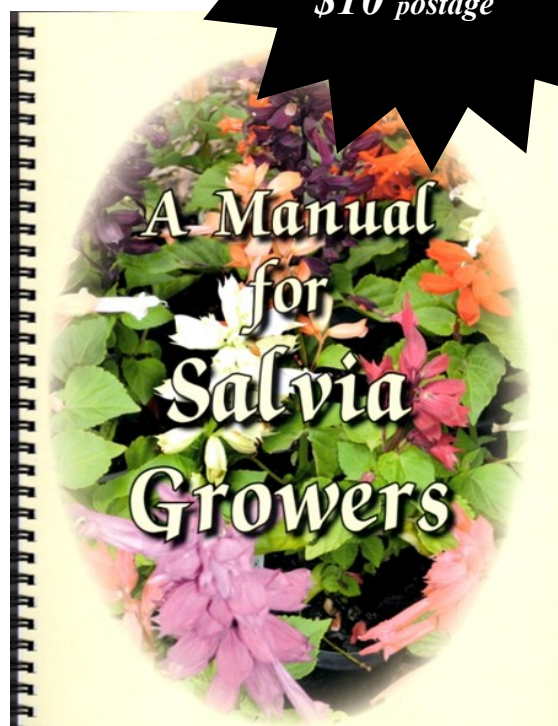
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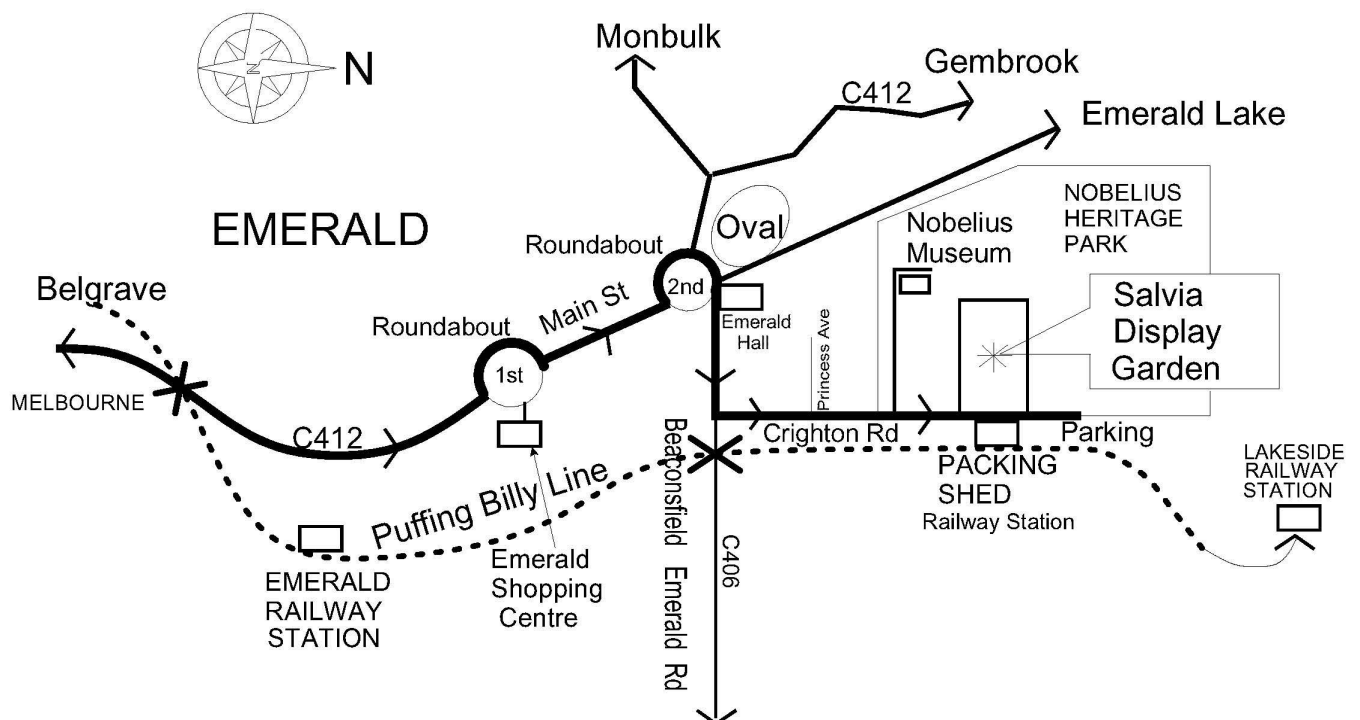
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