

Salvia News

NUMBER 67



Official Newsletter of the
Victorian Salvia Study Group
Autumn 2017

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 (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.)

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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Please post your copy to:

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or email:

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



SALVIA NEWS

VICTORIAN SALVIA STUDY GROUP

Website: www.salvias.org.au

Hello everyone,

Happy New Year, it already seems so long ago. Hope it is a special year for you all. Hope family and friends in poor health experience a better quality of life in 2017.

Together with my new husband, we are settling happily into life in Temora NSW. What a great town, very clean and tidy and so very friendly almost without exception. During one of our early visits to one of two nurseries in the town, the proprietor shared that she had a visit from a lady who was looking at the salvias on display and told her that Salvia Wendy's Wish was named after her. I showed her photos of a visit to Wendy Smith's garden that we visited early last year. You may remember that Wendy and her husband had downsized and moved from a large house and garden on the Mornington Peninsula to a Retirement Village in Cranbourne Victoria and the magnificent garden she had built from scratch in a much smaller space. Chris was astounded at the salvia gardens displaying so many varieties in a small space resulting in a most spectacular garden.

We are working to build a garden in our new home and will share its beginnings on page 16. One of our wedding presents included a couple of days gardening by two special friends. The results are amazing. What a fabulous gift don't you think..

This Season it is Kathy Basiaco in Brisbane who has written for the Perennial Poppies Group of S.E. Queensland sharing her trials and tribulations of gardening in the sub-tropics, a great read commencing on page 6.

If you didn't make it to the Annual Salvia Sale held at Nobelius, then have a read what Heather has to say about the day – page 13. It's always a great day to make your purchases at a great rate, plus the chance to wander the Display Garden where you may get to see the plant in a garden setting before you purchase and to meet others interested in Salvias too. It's a good one to diarise as soon as Lyndi has finalised the date, usually in November.

The New Blog on the VSSG Website, more input by Lyndi, should be of interest to many and worth a read. Find out more on page 15.

As always it's been a pleasure putting this edition together and hopefully you will enjoy the read. Please share with us your likes and dislikes too about each edition. Your input is valuable and I am certainly prepared to make changes that will make it better. Don't forget we would love to hear from you especially to share your salvia experiences.

Happy Gardening,
Beth Gilchrist

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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 03 9803 4534 or email

lgarnett844@gmail.com

March Sat 11 & Sun 12 - 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 Salvias you're looking for. Many unusual Salvias.

Email your list to Lyndi Garnett: lgarnett844@gmail.com, so you don't miss out. Come early to get those bargains. Books including Meg's 'A Manual for Salvia Growers' and seed will be on sale.

March Thurs 23 – 10am

FRIENDS OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS

Mueller Hall, in the National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens

Birdwood Ave, Melbourne Mel: 2G

Lyndi will be speaking "How Salvias can complement roses". Salvia plants and books will be for sale. Bring plants to be identified

April Sat 8 – 10am-4pm

JINDIVICK RARE PLANT FAIR

Jindivick Public Hall, Jacksons Track, Jindivick

Mel: Touring map 916.U6

Salvia plants, books and seed will be for sale. Loads of plants and products for sale, demonstrations and displays. Bring your list, bring plants to be identified, to avoid disappointment.

email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

April Sat 22 & Sun 23

TESSELAAR PLANT EXPO

357 Monbulk Rd, Silvan

Mel: 123 B5

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

email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

May Tues 9th – 11am

ROWVILLE LIBRARY

Stud Park Shopping Centre, Stud Rd, Rowville

Mel: 81 J1

Lyndi will be speaking. Salvia plants and books will be for sale. Bring plants to be identified

June Sat 17

RHS GARDENER'S DAY OUT

Deakin University,

Burwood Campus, Burwood Hwy, Burwood

Mel: 61 B5

Top speakers and presentations through-out the day. For more information contact Jennifer Rickerby RHSV Secretary on 03 5367 6363 or via plantzia@bigpond.com.

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

email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

Notes from Gruyere: Autumn 2017

Meg Bentley

I must say the Summer edition of *Salvia News* No 66 was such a delight to read! The article from Pat Anderson sounds like the trip of a lifetime, going overseas to meet up with fellow *Salvia* enthusiasts...growers, gardeners and nursery folk alike.

How interesting to have had the chance to see some of the many *salvia* species growing in Europe and what a torment, knowing that seed from any 'specials' will not necessarily produce exactly what you have seen...if you had the chance to import seed and grow them here in Australia.

I feel with growing actual species from seed there may be a better chance of a true reproduction, whereas growing cultivars like the *Salvia microphyllas* and *S.greggii* crosses only produce more of the same but differing in colours, size and possible leaf shape. Having the opportunity of seeing species like *Salvia's nutans*, *carduacea*, *ringens*, *smyrnia* and Frank Fisher's gravel bed of many Turkish, Mediterranean and Californian *salvias* which included *Salvia's grewifolia*, *retinerva*, *leucocephala*, *languidula*, *S. yogodensis* and *S.cedroensis*, plants you only read about in the big 'Florals', plants of various parts of the world.

What a wonderful opportunity and adventure Pat, no doubt there would be many among us who would love to have gone on such a mouthwatering journey.

As for my own garden here in Gruyere, there are quite a number of *salvias* flowering since we have had a bit of rain and the wallaby has now gone back to the bush so plants have put on a good deal of growth.

Salvia canariensis has done very well this includes *S. canariensis alba* and the furry-stemmed relative *S. canariensis* var *candidissima* which has a much deeper coloured corolla than the actual species. I have grouped these together with *Salvia broussonetii* and the Canary Island Strawberry Tree, *Arbutus canariensis* in the middle. Other plants I will include in time will be the Canary Island Smoke Bush, *Bistropogon canariensis* and *Isoplexis canariensis*. These are hardy plants and will grow well together since they all need the same conditions, full sun, open situation, plenty of mulch and will need little watering once established.

I have been busy (where time permits) potting up many rooted cuttings and placing them into the shade after giving a good drink of Maxicrop to help minimize any shock to the root system. Not an ideal time to do this job in the middle of Summer but other matters needing attention took priority. The cuttings would have died in the heat and dry had I not repotted them but they are all looking good so well worth the effort. They will now be kept moist and in the shade to recover.

A good time now to snip off spent flowering stems and allow the new buds and shoots to get ready for their Autumn flush of flowers.

News from southeast Queensland

Kathy Basiaco, Brisbane 8/1/17

Welcome to the summer news from the Queensland Salvia Study Group. I hope that all readers have had an enjoyable Christmas. I must admit that summer isn't my favourite season here in Brisbane. Any physical work, depending on the heat and humidity of that day, is a struggle since your energy is being sapped from you. Even for a keen gardener like me there have been days when I've said "forget it"!! Thoughts go through my head like that cartoon where someone feels so hot that they stick their head into a freezer to cool down. Extreme I know, but you get where I'm coming from!

Southeast Queensland is such a large land area that you often find a feast or famine of water. Also the summer 'set your clock to' afternoon storms don't seem to happen so much anymore. We were hearing of torrential downpours and severe storms south and west of here while our garden cooked in the daily heat and the lawn had turned to straw brown. A daily afternoon watering using the hose, on just the garden not the lawn, felt like a bandaid solution. Add to that, the combined 15,000 litre tanks had dwindled to almost nothing. In a nutshell, only a good heavy downpour would suffice. Only recently, a widespread and heavy rain band arrived in Brisbane and overnight both tanks were totally filled. What a difference a day can make!

There is a saying, just add water, and in Brisbane if you add water to the heat and humidity, the plants in your garden tremble with excitement. I sometimes think of an imaginary starting gun in the garden that the plants hear and they are off! It certainly applies to our garden and the daily trimming and cutting back is now done in earnest. We have 900sq m with next to no lawn so we have plenty of work to do.



Salvia splendens 'Variegated Mauve'

This leads me to the salvias that are doing very well at the moment at my place (some are winter flowerers). 'Phyllis Fancy', 'Anthony Parker', 'Meigan's Magic', 'Black Knight', 'Timboon', *S. involucrata* hybrids and *S. iodantha* are all looking at me for a much needed cutting back. All of the *S. splendens* hybrids are in flower now. Both variegated and non-variegated are galloping along with their growth. There are other salvias, much smaller in size, that need trimming and shaping as well. The *S. greggii* and *S. microphylla* are all in flower now. They grow so fast and in turn look lanky but I'm careful to not cut too hard. A heat wave could see them go to plant heaven.

In our garden we also have salvias that don't come to mind as being growers in the subtropics. Like many gardeners, I like a challenge and often grow salvias that come from non-subtropical areas. Summers here can be a challenge for these salvias, depending on the rainfall, while I find the other seasons much easier.

Some of these salvias flowering now for me are *S. trijuga*, *S. taraxacifolia*, *S. patens* ‘Chilcombe’ and ‘Allen Chickering’. Since these salvias can be sensitive to having too much water and moisture around their roots, I grow them in unsealed terracotta pots. The clay in these pots act as a wick to remove excess moisture from the potting mix (amongst other good features). Also, keeping these and other plant treasures in pots allows you to move them into a covered light filled greenhouse if days of rain become a problem.



S. patens ‘Allen Chickering’

Summer here in my garden also signals another imaginary starting gun, the race with the insect pests. Ants and their symbiotic pest partners in crime, scale and mealybugs, are the worst I’ve seen for a while. A good number of salvias are affected by them, especially *S. ‘Purple Majesty’*, *S. iordantha* and the *S. splendens* hybrids. I don’t use toxic chemicals, so I deal with them with strong sprays of water. As a last resort, I use pyrethrum and white oil to deal with them if they don’t get the message to go! As well there are the grasshoppers and aphids to contend with. Salvia flower nectar attracts many small birds such as honeyeaters while other local birds feed on those pesky grasshoppers. Fairy wrens in particular are very cute when you watch them patrol at lightning speed.



S. ‘Purple Majesty’

continued on page 8...

News from southeast Queensland *Kathy Basiaco* 8/1/17

...continued from page 7

I also love collecting unusual climbers that are flowering at my place now. The most unusual one for me would be the handkerchief or bow-tie vine (*Dalechampia dioscoreifolia*). The large magenta bracts are eye-catching and beautiful, certainly not typically shaped flowers. The *Maurandya erubescens* is another pretty one but it can take over if you aren't watching! The snail creeper (*Vigna caracalla*) has woken from its slumber and is threatening to strangle the *Ipomoea carnea*. I have a hunch the *Ipomoea carnea* has stopped many keen gardeners in their tracks when they see this beauty in full flower. "Can I have a cutting" must have led to this beauty being grown in many gardens in Brisbane, including mine!



Snail creeper

Despite not being too keen on summer here, I do find that there are some good times of the day. Early mornings and afternoons are when the sun isn't so fierce and when you can walk around and notice some more salvias in flower. Over the past weeks I've also seen *Salvia muirii*, *S.* 'Josh', *S.* 'Mulberry Jam', *S.* 'Harmony', *S. lavanduloides*, *S. oxyphora*, *S. keerlii* and *S.* 'Marine Blue' all in flower. *S. uliginosa*, when given plenty of room, is a sea of sky blue at this time of year and *S. mexicana* 'Bill Whitehead' with its deep violet/blue flowers and blackish calyces is a standout. One thing though when you walk around it's a chance to see what other work needs doing. It's never ending, just where are those secateurs?

Salvia henryi

Pat Anderson, Warrandyte Vic

I brought a few give-away plants to the Christmas break up in December, which included some small plants of *Salvia henryi*. I thought I should remind any one who took one about how this plant performs.

Salvia henryi is an annual and so if you want to keep it going, you must collect seeds. How can I do that, I hear some ask, if it hasn't flowered? Well it is possible that this is the case with those small plants. But all is not lost.

Salvia henryi is one of those plants I wrote about in the winter edition in 2013 (number 52), which, together with its close relatives, *Salvia roemeriana* and *Salvia summa*, and a few others like *Salvia lyrata* are cleistogamous. That's a long word that effectively means that a plant can produce seeds without visibly flowering. Plants like this may flower in the cooler months of spring, but as the season heats up, they form buds, but show no petals, and yet they self-pollinate within and seeds will form. Generally they may flower again normally when the temperature drops below 24° in the autumn. For more information look up the back issue.

Salvia henryi is a pretty plant with tubular pink flowers and interesting foliage, that is worth keeping. If your plant is showing no sign of flowering, maybe cut it back, fertilise and water it to keep it going for a flowering in autumn. It is an annual so it won't repeat flower.

The following photograph was taken in late spring/early summer, when it was still a comfortable temperature and *S. henryi* was flowering prettily. The second picture was taken of another plant in the height of summer when it was very hot and the flowers just appeared as calices, but by waiting for these to dry up, quite a lot of seed was collected.



VSSG SALVIA DISPLAY GARDEN AT NOBELUS HERITAGE PARK, EMERALD



Photo: Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully Vic

The VSSG Salvia Display Garden at Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald, photo taken by Patrick Hogan on 21 December 2016. If you haven't checked it out, it is well worth a visit. It's free and there is usually ample parking, a lovely place for a picnic under the trees adjacent to the Salvia Display Garden. It is maintained by Lyndi Garnett and Jillian Barkell on a fortnightly basis. They are always looking for assistance, even if it is a once off, just give Lyndi a call. Throughout the year there are also a few workshops, both during the week and on weekends at the Salvia Display Garden to assist with maintenance. Everyone who assists always gets to take home some cuttings for their own use. It's a great few hours, a great learning curve with benefits. In November there is the annual Salvia Sale. Another event held at the Salvia Display Garden is a propagating day, both events should not be missed.

As many of you are aware, this garden does not get watered. Plants are watered in and then have to make it on their own. This means that during the hot dry summer months flowering is often minimal but as soon as the rains return there is new growth and soon to follow, a mass of flowers. As a 'Study Group' it assists Lyndi and others of the group in making suggestions to others when helping to choose what will suit their gardens and conditions. Visits at different times of year give a different perspective. Of course there is a salvia for every season, and for almost every area also Salvias are well worth considering for lots of colour, to attract beneficial insects and nectar eating birds, and some make great screening.

Birds and Bees love Salvias *Photography by Kathie Thomas*

Kathie Thomas often works with Lyndi on the VSSG website, including uploading of each edition of Salvia News for those who get it online. Kathie is the next door neighbour who showed more than friendship to Trudi Fry when she lived in Victoria. Kathie has a great love and respect for all nature which is apparent in her photography. Some of her photos have occasionally appeared in Salvia News. Kathie's work is available for sale. She is also available for garden photography. Check out her website www.gardenimagery.com.au or telephone 0437 889 400 for further information and or bookings.



The Blue-Banded Bee

Editor's Note: After seeing the photos by Kathie Thomas' Blue Banded Bee on a salvia on the previous page and another below, I was looking through some earlier editions of Salvia News and noticed this article written by Meg Bentley in 2008, and thought it worth reprinting with Kathie's photos.



Photo: Kathie Thomas

The Blue-Banded Bee

Meg Bentley, Gruyere

Reprinted from Salvia News Autumn edition 2008

Over the last few years I have noticed a 'different' visitor to my garden. An unusual visitor on the wind, so to speak, not been seen by many and I haven't heard spoken about. Often, on a sunny day amongst the salvias, zipping from flower to flower and feeding on the nectar, I see this striped backside of an insect protruding from the corolla. My first thought was a bumble bee but we don't have them here and I couldn't find out what it was. That is until recently when a friend told me she had this unusual insect around her salvias and wanted to know what it was. She advised me to look up the internet which I did and found out exactly what it is. **Blue Banded Bee!**

The Blue-Banded Bee

Amegilla cingulate (it even has a botanical name, oops, I mean a species name)

Family: Anthorophoridae.

It is found in most areas of Australia, except for Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Habitat: Urban areas, forests, woodland and heath.

Common in Brisbane, also Sydney. Usually a solitary bee and I have never seen any more than one at any time in the garden. They are about 15 mm in length, with black-blue bands on a yellowish, rather rounded posterior. They build a nest underground; a female may build a nest with other Blue-Banded bees on the same location but the males do not build nests and will cluster for the night hanging from stems or leaves by their jaws...so I'm informed.

The Blue-Banded Bees are known as "buzz pollinators", a special technique to get the pollen from flowers known as buzz pollination. They hold the flowers and vibrate with loud buzz sounds. The vibration excites the flower and it drops pollen onto the bee's body.

Native only to Australia, although they or their close relatives can be found in other continents.

They do sting but they are not aggressive and will not attack unless disturbed.

They love blue flowers....I have seen the Blue-Banded bees on all the *Salvia greggii*, *S. microphylla* 'Hot Lips' and only a few blue flowers.

One thing I have noticed about these bees, they only seem to come around on the warmer days and not when the weather is cold or about to rain.

Editors Note:

Trudi Fry was editor at the time this was printed and added after Meg's article that several people had told her about local sightings. John Daniels from Tasmania had sent a photograph of it at the Royal Hobart Botanical Gardens so it had already migrated to Tasmania.

It's such a beautiful thing and Kathie's photo superbly shows it off and that this old article is once again relevant..

When contacting Meg in January for permission to reprint her article she commented about the Blue Banded Bee, "I did see one this morning around the Chinese salvias, rather unusual in as much as a hot north wind blowing and in full sun."

Salvia Christmas Party 2016

Patrick Hogan, Ferntree Gully Vic

Annabel and Rob Evans kindly allowed the Victorian Salvia Study Group to host the end of year Christmas party at their beautiful manicured property. The Salvia Display Banner along with some colourful balloons showed the way to the house and must have caused a talking point for the neighbours.

The weather on the morning may have deterred some people from attending but by the time we got there until we left we had no rain.

Annabel has a variety of trees, shrubs and Salvias and lots of old fashioned plants around the garden. The back garden is shaded by a very large Oak and provides the ideal spot for Annabel to sit and relax after a hard day in the garden.

One of Rob's quirky items in the garden included a homemade BBQ (photo below) with a prized homemade stamp stating "Not made in China".



Aquilegia vulgaris

Lyndi spoke of the success of the year and an invitation to all present to help out at the working bees at Nobelius. As usual plenty of scrumptious food was available and lots of Salvias were provided by subscribers to take home. A truly memorable garden which provided a very nice backdrop for the Christmas end of year get together.

Thankyou, Annabel, and Rob for hosting the Victorian Salvia Study Group. What a wonderful way to finish up the year.

SALVIA PRESENTATIONS

Lyndi Garnett, VSSG Co-ordinator often gives presentations to Gardening Clubs and other Groups. If you are interested in booking her as a speaker for your Group, please book early, there are limited spaces. For further information and to make a **Speaker booking** please phone Lyndi on (03) 9803 4534 or email: lgarnett844@gmail.com

ANNUAL PLANT SALE DAY AT NOBELIUS

Heather Lucas, Heathmont, Vic.

Wow, what a successful day the Annual Plant Sale Day at Nobelius was this year.

The Plant Sale Day was on Sunday 20th November, 2016 and was supposed to start at 11.30 am, but those keen salvia buyers were off the mark early, with several arriving an hour earlier. Set up began early at 9 am and with all the helpers, the tables and plants were all set up and ready to go. This year there were many tables with plants on them all colour-coded with signs indicating the colour group – blue, purple, red/coral, orange/black/white/yellow, crimson/cerise and pink. There were also two cashier tables this year and all helpers brought lunch and cakes/biscuits, etc to share with coffee/tea provided which kept them all going for the day.

This year we were very well prepared and extremely well stocked with all sorts, sizes and colours of salvias for the bargain price of \$5.00 each, no matter whether a small or large sized pot. The amount of helpers we had on the day was super, with the plants literally walking out of the park and by the afternoon there weren't many plants left.

The weather forecast for the day was fine and sunny, with a top expected temperature of 33 degrees Celsius. This combined with very good advertising prior to the day (The Age, radio broadcasting, RACV

magazine and an email to garden clubs) and on the day (signs at the Crighton Road roundabout and local areas) led to an excellent turnout of people and great sales figures.

Adding to the overall success was the fact that the garden was looking really great and many people were looking at the plants first in the garden and then asking if the plants that they liked were for sale. It should be noted that Lyndi Garnett and Jillian Barkell, with the help of volunteers (you know who you are), do a fantastic job of maintaining the garden and deserve a big thank you and pat on the back. If you didn't attend last year, it is definitely well worthwhile to put in your diary for this year, with not just the favourite and better known salvias available, but some very different and new salvias as well.

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to all the helpers on the day and especially to all the people who brought plants along to be sold. A big thank you to Pat Anderson who supplied many trays of plants, amongst them many newer salvias.

Now all that needs to be done is for me to plant all those salvias that I came away with on the day, hmm, yes I know I can't help myself!!

The New Book of SALVIAS

by *Betsy Clebsch*

Book @ \$15 each x copies \$

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Please make **cheques** payable to **H.S.O.V. Salvia Study Group**

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Check out the new 'Blog' *Lyndi Garnett, VSSG co-ordinator*

I have added a "BLOG" section to the VSSG website. www.salvias.org.au The Blog page will tell readers what is happening on the site I've just written about 'plant of the month', I've also mentioned that I'll compile a list of all the greggii/microphylla hybrids here in Australia. It'll keep you up to date with our Calendar and where we are next selling etc. and other areas that may of interest.

Salvia Tubifera



We've got a great crop of *S. tubifera* coming along nicely. This would have to be the plant of the month. This is a great *Salvia* for shady areas under trees, deciduous or under gum trees.

Although it can grow to 2-3mH, it rarely does as it tends to start flopping everywhere, creating a great ground cover in those bare areas under trees. It will grow quite happily under evergreen trees that have their lower branches taken off, allowing some sun to penetrate those areas.

Providing it can receive some water during the dry months, it will prove quite hardy. Being under trees

is the ideal spot for *S. tubifera* on frosty sites. Being frost tender, the tracery of the branches of deciduous trees help to break the frost, as does the branches of a gum tree or evergreen tree.

The tubular flowers are almost a watermelon pink in clusters, where they hang down nicely.

With all this rain, huge new shoots are appearing, the plant is romping away and in a few weeks when the new shoots have hardened off, the old canes can be removed – only where they are not wanted. Often as the stems flop down to the ground, these begin to root and off they go again with more new shoots.

A very useful plant for those awkward areas where nothing else will grow.



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

SALVIA CARDS by Meg Bentley

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..... *Salvia roemeriana*
..... *Salvia microphylla var neurepia*
..... *Salvia gesneraeflora 'Tequila'*
..... *Salvia leucantha*

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

Plus \$2.50 per pack posted \$

Total cost of order: \$.....

A New Garden in Temora NSW – starting from scratch

Beth Gilchrist

We are starting off with a blank canvas to build a garden in a climate with extremes, very hot, dry summers and cold winters with heavy frosts. The soil is heavy red clay and the local nursery advises that there are no nutrients in the soil. I had taken many cuttings from my old place in Victoria after contacting the Agriculture Department to check on their requirements which was no food, no soil, only potting mix. To commence planting we needed some garden beds to place them. We brought with us two compost bins and on arrival immediately placed and started to use them: the first is now ready to spread.

It's a funny shaped block, we have four neighbours. Although we face south, southeast, there is hot north sun along the west side of the house. This is where three above ground veggie beds have been erected, two planted out immediately with soil brought in in bulk. One of the local nurseries has warned of Fruit Fly even on tomatoes. As I do my best to garden organically she suggested fine mesh netting of crops and fruit trees. We used star pickets in the corners of the beds and black hosing wired onto the pickets to allow a netting cover which is pegged in place with washing pegs. The veggie patch is on a gentle slope. On the high side we have planted three dwarf citrus fruit trees. Other fruit trees have been ordered to be planted bare rooted next winter.

We really need more shade. Again, because of timing of our arrival, stocks are low in the two nurseries in town. Summer is hot to very hot, luckily it is rare for it to be humid too so I manage the heat much better here. Although the high temperatures seems to cook everything, there isn't the added problem of fungal diseases. The closest city, Wagga Wagga is 85 kms away so we are lucky to have a couple of good nurseries in town. One nursery has advised us of Autumn stock due and we will choose another tree or two then. We have still planted an ornamental pear *Pyrus ussuriensis* Manchurian Pear and a Weeping Cherry, *Prunus 'Snofozam'* Snow Fountains in the front yard. In the back yard which is very small, we planted a *Cercis Canadensis 'Roethgold'* Chain of Hearts, with magnificent lime green heart shape leaves. It is the same family as Forest Pansy and would have to be a favourite. All are doing well despite the excessively hot weather.

As part of a wedding present, our friends Bryan and Mary-Ann who have a lawn and gardening maintenance business, gave us a couple of days working in the garden. Wow, what a fantastic gift and the results are magnificent. We had started on one front bed but they extended it and assisted in planting. Once again I am using a variation of a no dig garden that has worked for me in the past which takes a bit of setting up but is much less maintenance than a normal garden. It will also assist such poor soil and help to lighten the heavy clay.

Cut the grass short where the garden is to go.

Liquid gypsum – follow the instructions on the bottle and spread over the area

Water soaked cardboard and or many layers of newspaper overlapping so that that ground cannot be seen. (Having just moved, we had loads of both cardboard and paper from the packing).

Water well.

Cow manure

Bought soil and compost

Mulch – In the past I have used sugarcane mulch. Here I have tried organic straw and I like it better.

Water well.

It should be left for a couple of weeks to settle but this time planting took place either on the same or next day. The mulch was moved aside, a hold dug twice the width of the pot the plant/cutting came in and mixed the soil with potting mix to plant. I have been planting *Salvias* deeper than they were in their pots for a few years with good results. They seem to grow a stronger root system. It works for me. Compost, manure and more organic straw mulch will be added again to the new gardens in a few months.

The front garden has a potted memorial rose – Guardian Angel brought with us from Melbourne together with its plaque. The bottom has been cut out of the pot so that it is still a feature. In similar colouring to the

pot is a bird bath surrounded by salvias. The back row includes two Camellias 'Asakura' and 'Sparkling Burgundy' and an Azalea 'Magnifica Rosea'. The first planting of salvias included *S. 'Bethellii'*, *S. 'Wendy's Wish'*, *S. Sallyfun bicolour*, *S. 'Angel Wing's'*, *S. canescensvar, dagbestanica*, *S. greggii* pink, *S. 'Love and Wishes'*, *S. leucantha 'Velour White'*, and three unnamed that I have misplaced tags. A fortnight later, Bryan and Mary-Ann came to stay and much work was completed. With the extended bed, the following were also planted out; *S involucrata* 'Pink Icicles', *S. scrabra*, *S. Heatwave 'Scorcher'*, *S. chiapennsis*, *S. 'Joan'*, *S dolomitica*, *S 'Pink Lips'*, *S greggii alba*, *S Heatwave 'Glimmer'*. Even in this short time the growth is very good and some are already flowering.

In the back yard, the Cercis was also part of their wedding present, how lucky are we! It was planted when they got here and they extended this garden in the shape I had chosen too and together with a few other plants, we added more salvias. *S. greggii* 'Pumpkin', *S aurea* 'Bookleaf', *S. muelleri* 'Violet', *S. madrensis*, *S. aurea* 'Silver Lady', *S. 'Dwarf Limelight'*, *S. leucantha purple*, *S. 'Anthony Parker'*, *S. munzii*, *S. 'Sweet Laura'*, *S. semiatrata*, *S. 'Waverley'*, *S. 'A Lo Ha'*, *S. 'Bill Whitehead'* plus a mini gold Chinese Lantern and Honeysuckle tree (cuttings I got from Lyndi's garden), and another Chinese Lantern and four clivias of different colours and a Brillantasia.

Our new home had a 'free standing bath' in the main bathroom. Unfortunately, the plumbing didn't fit and it was badly cracked. Only one thing to do of course. Norman with Bryan's help relocated it down into the back yard in the new courtyard being built as seen from the verandah. Two bricks were put in the base to hold a grate over the plug hole for good drainage, filled with soil and of course planted with more salvias.

We have a good size verandah at the back. As I have to use the front door for wheelchair access to the garden, it was decided to add a 'trug' – a metal frame with a material insert that can be replaced, filled with good quality potting mix – to have a herb garden close to the kitchen. It was so successful that Norman bought me a second one for salads which is mostly seed planted. The seeds were up within a few days. This too has been very successful. Today Norman ordered another from the Nursery for a mini salvia garden. Will let you know how it goes in due course. The verandah has a great outlook over 'Clydee Corner' as we call it with many thanks to Bryan and Mary-Ann. It will eventually have a proper lawn to show the salvias off and seating for Norman to take a break, of course I take my own chair with me everywhere.

It was a great idea to take cuttings from my previous garden. I just wish that I had been able to do more in the time frame we had. There are still other pots of cuttings that need planting but there will be no further gardens made until the fencing goes in, the delay being the tradies are very behind after the big wet last year and of course the Christmas break. Norman is busy both inside and out, assists with the watering, potting, lifting and carrying for me. Luckily we have a small water tank and another on its way. It's taking a lot of maintenance this first season, but the results are beginning to show already and we are loving it.

Taking a break before finishing this article; its after 7pm and still in the mid 30s temperature wise, I noted with glee a visiting blue-banded bee on one of the small salvias (more on the blue-banded bee page 12 of this edition of Salvia News). The garden is very new but the veggie patch is doing well and the salvias are already giving much pleasure, the birds and bees are already finding them too.

Next issue I will hopefully have some photos. In the meantime thankyou for allowing me to share.

Happy Gardening!

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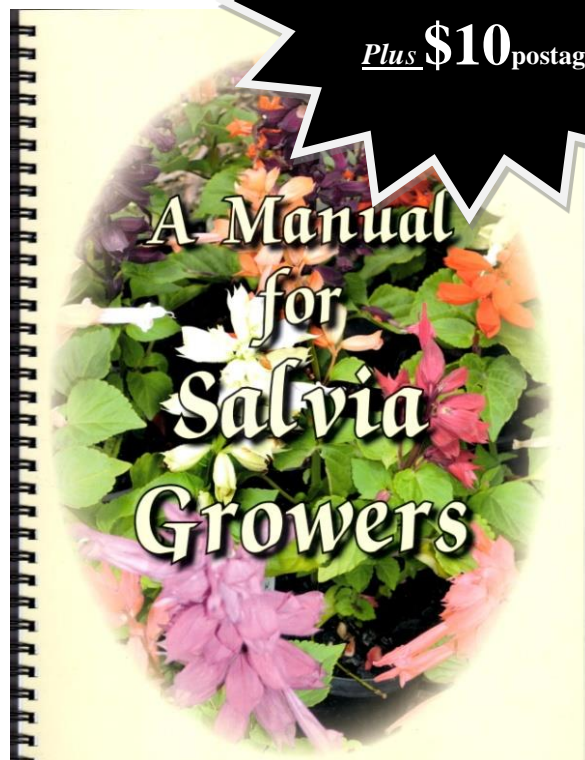
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