

**THE BOTANIC NURSERY ATWORTH
WILTSHIRE SN12 8NU**



SALVIA – SAGE WORDS

Our range of Salvia today celebrates over 35 years of cultivating Salvia, many of our plants were donated to us by some of the most notable plantsmen and women; it has been our privilege to carry on their work and keep these plants in gardens.

Salvia species and cultivars are, in many ways, the perfect 21st Century plant, able to tolerate drought and unpredictable 'climate change' weather and being of an easy, labour saving temperament.

Salvia are a big family of plants made up of annuals, biennials, herbaceous perennials, and shrubs. All Salvia want a sunny open site and most prefer a free draining soil. All can get quite large and bushy so pruning during the growing season, even when the plant is in flower, is helpful to keep a good shapely plant and ensure lots of flowers. They are easy from cuttings and the annuals come from seed. In Salvia too we have a genus of garden plants that provide true blue, a colour rare amongst plants.

Quick Tips

- Most of the more garden worthy **Salvia** prefer a good, drained soil in full sun and an open site so not overgrown by more rampageous bed fellows.
- Keep plants trimmed back to encourage bushy floriferous plants, especially in the woody sorts.
- Most are hardy to -10° or less especially if mulched with wood chips, sawdust or conifer boughs, remove these in the late spring when new growth will be visible.
- Take a few cuttings in jumbo plug cells or small pot, overwinter in a frame or on a sunny windowsill. If you have one plunge in a greenhouse border for the coldest months, harden off prior to planting out.
- Most species are evergreen, but might be herbaceous in colder gardens, some species such as **involuta**, **guaranitica** and **patens** sorts are best treated as herbaceous perennials.

Care information for the main sorts we offer.

Woody Salvia - These sorts are mostly shrubs, and like all shrubs can be pruned to keep a good shape. If left unpruned some sorts can get large and unruly and the result after a few years is a plant that flowers less and becomes very woody.

So the best way to avoid this occurring to your new plants is by cutting back the spent flower stems to around half the height in around June. Even though they will be in flower. The plant will then make lots more flowering stems from below the prune and these will flower right into the autumn. Continue to trim back spent flowering.

As Autumn comes to an end reduce the plant by one third. In the Spring you again cut back the woody growth by half, it's also in the spring that they would like a feed, use any good garden feed, but best is a granular slow release sort like Osmacote or Vitex, place the pellets near the base.

For your own use, you can take tip cuttings from the soft growth in May and June, in fact any part of the stem will root at that time of year. Later in September node cuttings work well.

Herbaceous Salvia Just like other herbaceous perennials these plants will die down in the winter, usually following the 1st frosts, it's important to remember that they don't reappear as early as other herbaceous perennials, so be patient and wait until June. If you have a particularly cold garden you might want to place a mulch **around** the crown of the plant. Spring is also the best time to feed herbaceous Salvia.

These Salvia grow quickly and flower on new growth, you can also cut back the flowering stems by half to keep the plants shorter and encourage new growth to give you even more flowering stems from July to October.

Cuttings from herbaceous Salvia can be taken in May - June or again in September, node cuttings work well and for the larger leafed sorts you might reduce the leaf by half to slow transpiration.

Annual and Biennial Salvia for a colourful display all summer the annual Salvia are hard to beat. We favour the *Salvia farinacea* sorts which give lots of stems of flower in shades of blue and white.

Our favourite biennial is *Salvia turkestanica*, which, like our native Foxglove after flowering sets lots of seed which will fall into the border and come up on its own the following year, a large flower stem comprised of attractive bracts which enhance the pretty yet small actual flowers.



We hope these notes help you with your Salvia, any questions please email us.

office@botanicnursery.co.uk