

From the Vine

# Milford Garden Club Newsletter

2021

## MARCH

### Mark your Calendar



**Program:** Oh, Deer—Taking Back Your Garden

**Presenter:** Lori Heiden, Master Gardener

(See page 3 for more info)

**Date:** Thursday, March 11

**Time:** 6:45 Social 7:00 Meeting

**Where:** Zoom Meeting

**Zoom instructions will be emailed to all before the meeting on Thursday**

March 8	Mon	Groundcovers are a Gardener's Friend. Zoom with Julia Hofley
March 11	Thur	7:00 PM General Member Membership ZOOM Meeting Speaker from English Gardens - See page 3 for details
March 14	Sun	1:00 PM <u>Milk Jug Greenhouse Planting</u> with Sue at Superior Landscape in Howell – this is a GREAT way to jump start your garden. Highland Garden Club—Zoom meeting For more information see page 12
March 15	Mon	6:00 PM Executive Board Meeting—Zoom meeting
March 28	Sun	Newsletter Deadline - Martha Klemmer
April 12	Mon	7:00 PM <u>Saving and Sharing Seeds</u> Zoom with Ben Cohen & Karen Golden present - Highland Garden club - info on page 12
May 8	Sat	Plant Sale
Jun 18–	Fri-	Garden Walk
Jun 19th	Sat	

Milford Garden Club  
Est. 1948

A Member of the Michigan Division  
Woman's National Farm and Garden Association

## President Report

*Linda Smith*

We have survived winter and are on the cusp of spring. I see that some of my perennials are starting to turn a lovely shade of green and my herbs are awakening from their winter slumber. Now is the time our garden club moves into high gear.

We are in the early stages of planning for our annual plant sale and garden walk. Look for a survey from Survey Monkey to arrive this week. Please take the time to complete this brief survey called MGC Fundraisers. We will discuss the survey results at our next meeting. If the group decides to move forward, we are planning to hold the plant sale on May 8<sup>th</sup> which is the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend. We usually hold the sale at Johnson Elementary School. Unfortunately this year, we are unable to hold the sale at that location due to Covid restrictions. After checking on other locations in our area, The Carl's Family YMCA has graciously agreed to allow us to utilize the four camp pavilions on their property at no charge. Due to the number of deer in the area, we may be unable to set up the night before our event unless we can cover the plants to protect them from the deer. Or, we could do set-up in the morning with the event running from noon to 1:30 and clean up to follow. It was suggested that we determine the pricing of the plants prior to set-up. This would require some volunteers that would be available by phone or email to pre-price plants based on the plant name and the size of the pot prior to the 8<sup>th</sup>. The donor upon arrival would affix the correct price stickers to their plants and take them to the assigned pavilion. With the 4 pavilions, we could group the plants according to type or light requirements. We will also need to decide if we what to have a boutique this year. If we do have a boutique, we will need to make sure we have enough people to clean up and remove anything that isn't sold. To make the sale a success, we will need plant donations and many helping hands on the day of the sale. Start looking around your garden and friends' gardens for plants that may need division. This event will be a great time to get together with fellow gardeners in an outside environment following Covid guidelines.

We need a volunteer who would enjoy managing our Facebook page. **Ellen Collins** has been doing this for us the last couple of years. Please reach out to her for more information regarding what is required and let me know if you are interested.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our Zoom meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. We will open for social time at 6:45 and our business meeting will start promptly at 7 P.M. English Gardens will present the program. If you need help setting up Zoom, please contact **Linda Becker** or **Cindy Bauman** for assistance.

Warm regards,

*Linda Smith*

More information on the ZOOM GMM on next page



## ZOOM GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, March 11th

6:45 Social

7:00 Meeting

7:25 Speaker



Zoom info & Invite will be sent via email before meeting.



**Zoom Topic:**

### ***Oh, Deer - Taking Back Your Garden.***

Suggestions to help you grow flowers, vegetables, and other plants where deer seem to eat just about everything. Will cover understanding deer behavior, recognizing deer damage, eating habits, smart gardening to deter deer and deer resistant plants.

Bio: Lori Heiden is a Master Gardener and a Garden Coach at English Gardens. She works with customers on DIY landscape design projects and offers home garden consultations. Lori is also a butterfly enthusiast and a pollinator champion.

# Happy St Patrick's Day!



# Downy Mildew

Downy Mildew In  
*Impatiens walleriana*

New Guinea  
Hybrid 'Bounce'



## Down With Downy Mildew!

\*\*--OH, NO!- Why did my basil "TURN GRAY AND CROAK???"--\*\*

(References are at the end of this article as endnotes)

**Just** when you were looking forward to making lots of caprese salads and pesto over the spring and summer- your basil "croaks"! The cause may well be downy mildew which has become pervasive in basil after being noticed in Florida in 2007.



**Downy mildew** is a problem in a variety of plants and can be caused by several different organisms. You may be familiar with downy mildew in Impatiens which was first reported in 2004 and rocked the shade plant growing industry (and my garden plans, boo!). It is caused by a different organism than basil, but the plants yellow, then defoliate with gray white fuzzy leaf undersides, and become "sticks." There are resistant varieties thankfully. The New Guinea impatiens and some interspecies hybrids are resistant. I've been stunned at the beauty and TONS of flowers on Impatiens 'Big Bounce', 'Bounce' and the wonderful 'SunPatien Compact' series and HIGHLY recommend these after trialing them for years!!

But what about **pesto lovers** and downy mildew in basil?? The fungal-like organism is called ***Peronospora belbahri*** and it's host specific to basil which means it won't affect other plants.



Continued on next page..



## **Down With Downy Mildew!** Continued from previous page

It grows best in cool, wet weather so often is worse at the beginning of the season, but also at the end of the season. This little blighter can continue through summer, unlike downy mildew (DM) in lettuce or cucumbers. It favors the “sweet” or Italian basil more and has greatly impacted the commercial growing industry.



Over the years, I've been dismayed to watch my fresh out of the greenhouse basil “turn gray and die”. The bottom leaves begin to yellow on the top surface making one think “*Hmmm, it just might need some nitrogen?*”- sadly, not so. Lo and behold- the yellowing is often in sections between the veins, then the leaves tend to curl, and finally get a gray fuzzy underside. Sherlock Holmes would have an “Ah, **HA!** moment” using a magnifying lens on the underside of the leaves, as one might see the thread like filaments of fuzzy gray growth of the *P. belbahri*. I can just see him blurting out, “Ah,

**HA!** It's *P. belbahri*, my dear Watson!” I've seen plants croak within 7-10 days - ruining dreams of a massive pesto supply filling my freezer! And this sneaky organism can easily be spread by wind, water, and even be on seed you buy. (See the basil photos, “Going, going, GONE!” taken over just 8 days time. Yup, it turned into “sticks” also, similar to the impatiens.)



So, how to avoid this for your next growing season? The “sweet” green leaf basil has been most affected, whereas the red or purple kinds have some resistance. Lemon and Thai basil also are more resistant. So if you want delicious green leaf basil for caprese: first, try to find seed that has been steam treated. High Mowing Organic Seeds sells steam treated seeds which prevent the actual seeds from being contaminated. (By the way, a fabulous herb scissors for fine snipping basil and ALL herbs is Jenaluca Herb scissors)



Second, buy a variety that is downy mildew resistant (DMR) such as one of the 4 types Rutgers has developed: ‘Rutgers Obsession DMR’- a vigorous plant also resistant to fusarium wilt; ‘Rutgers Devotion DMR’- a Genovese type that is uniform and upright with dome shaped leaves; ‘Rutgers Thunderstruck DMR’- medium sized with slightly ruffled leaf; and ‘Rutgers Passion DMR’-with a cupped leaf growing bigger than Obsession. Proven Winners Basil ‘Amazel’ is DM resistant and was a winner at our University of Illinois trials for years growing to almost shrub proportions of 3 ½’. It has done great for me in my home garden, but this year I noted that in 2 separate nurseries EACH had ½ their stock of basil infected. This is concerning because Proven Winners plants are grown sterilely from tissue culture then sent as small plant plugs to nurseries.

Continued on next page..



**Down With Downy Mildew!** Continued from previous page



I bought 4 of the best-looking ones, but 2 died within a few days. ☹️ I also tried out two 'Rutgers Devotion DMR' plants. The 'Amazel' in past years made a terrific amount of pesto, but I think the 'Rutgers Devotion DMR' tastes better, was just as full, and **no** plants in the nursery showed signs of DM that I saw. I have already ordered seeds for Devotion and Obsession to try out next year! These are suppliers of the Rutgers seeds. 'Prospera DMR' basil is another new resistant variety and can be found in a number of catalogs such as Johnny's Select seeds. Varieties called 'Eleonora' (available at High Mowing Organic Seeds), 'Emma', and 'Everleaf' have "limited to moderate" resistance.

During the growing season, no matter what basil you choose, be sure to plant in full sun, space the plants apart so there is good air circulation, and inspect the leaves often for DM signs. Drip irrigation is desirable as overhead watering easily can spread the spores and disease. If you see signs of the disease, I would suggest you remove the plant and clean up all the dropped leaves immediately. Bag it and put it in the garbage, and do NOT compost it. Fungicides are used by commercial growers, but the organism becomes resistant to fungicides rapidly and many of the fungicides are not available to home gardeners. I'm not thrilled with repeatedly applying fungicide to something I'm going to eat, but have had excellent success growing the 'Devotion DMR' this year (with NO spraying involved) and highly recommend it. And after reading the plethora of fungicides used by growers, I CERTAINLY want to grow my own!



How about a great pesto recipe? This is a recipe from Rosalind Creasy's "Edible Landscaping" book. It's great on a Boboli crust with anything else you care to add for a pizza, besides using it on pasta. I tend to use less garlic and olive oil, and cover the small Ziplock containers of pesto that I freeze with a thin layer of plastic wrap on top of the pesto to prevent browning/ oxidation. This is her original recipe: "**Classic Pesto**" 3 cloves garlic; 2 cups fresh basil leaves (avoid getting any of the flower parts in it- they are bitter), ¼ c pine nuts (I use more); ½ tsp salt; ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper; ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan Cheese (I use Bel Gioioso aged cheese & tend to add more.

Continued on next page..



## **Down With Downy Mildew!** Continued from previous page

**Directions:** In a blender or food processor, combine garlic, basil leaves, nuts, salt, pepper, and ½ the oil. Puree, slowly adding remaining oil. Transfer to a bowl and add grated cheese, mix thoroughly. If you are adding this to pasta, you may need to add a few tablespoons of water to the pesto to make the right consistency for the pasta. Makes about 1 ¼ cups.

Grow green, put up pesto, and look FORWARD to trying these next year.

--Ann Tice, Basil Afficionado and Plant Trial Tattler

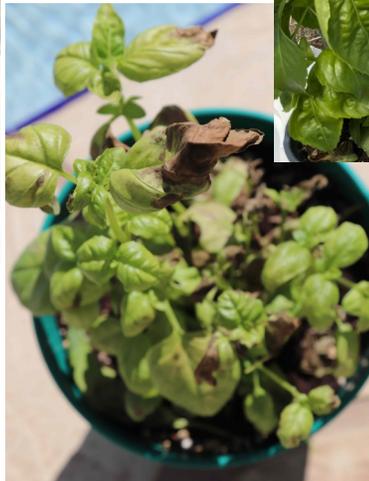
---

The above article was written by Dr. Ann Tice. When asked for a little background on her gardening passion and involvement in plant trial programs, Ann provided the following information.

I have loved gardening since both of my grandmothers taught me: one showed me wildflowers, the other her English style garden. I have known gardening ups and downs, from trying to grow carrots in the side of my grandmothers gravel driveway, to peaches in zone 4 northern Iowa!

I have been a Master Gardener for 20 years, an Advanced MG also, and have run the Annuals Trial Program at the University of IL Master Gardeners volunteer garden for 19 years. (Usually involving between 1,200-2000 plants/ year). I have been awarded the Illinois State Outstanding Master Gardener Award, Teamwork Award, and the Sustained Excellence Award. I was also a winner twice in the Chicago Tribune's "Glorious Gardens Contest" and I won the National Scott's-Walmart prize one year. My Illinois garden has been featured in two magazines,

Now I focus on a small vegetable and fruit garden and a perennial garden with a transition to more easy care, durable plants that are mostly deer resistant!. My relatively new Michigan garden is about 80% transplants from my Illinois garden- and may the best plants win! .



**Article submitted by Pam Carter**

*Michigan Division of the WNF&GA continues to work for you . . .*

Heads up! We bring you great news. Don't miss a wonderful opportunity.

The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County presents their 2021 VIRTUAL Spring Symposium on Saturday, April 17. The event will be produced professionally to ensure success.

Registration begins on Monday, February 1, 2021.

Stay tuned. Respond quickly when registration opens.

Do you have to be a Master Gardener Volunteer to attend? No!

Do you have to live in Oakland County to attend? No!



The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County, Inc. is sponsoring a virtual Gardening and All That Jazz webinar conference. Leave it to us to bring you leading-edge technology to make our educational conference happen in 2021! We are fortunate to have retained the same four nationally known speakers/authors whom we had booked for 2020 (before we had to cancel). The Conference Team has hired Orion Television station to produce and present this one-day session for us to ensure the utmost quality which you can enjoy from the comfort of your home. Details, as well as pricing and registration information, will be available on February 1. Although it can't possibly be quite as exciting as our in-person conferences with food, vendors and live jazz, by April you'll be eager to hear our four exemplary authors and speakers as they send you back to your garden with renewed energy and ideas!

Details on FACEBOOK: Master Gardener Society of Oakland County

SPEAKERS: Rick Darke, Doug Tallamy, Heather Holm, Susan Martin



## Sooooo Many Salvias!

Salvias are a wonderful plant- but there are sooooo many of them! Over 700 varieties & some sources say over 1000--oh, my, I won't be discussing *all* of them- Yikes! The name comes from Latin meaning "to heal" with a common name of "sage". They vary widely from culinary to ornamental

types, and range from sub-shrubs, to perennial garden favorites, to all season blooming annuals (or "tender" perennials in our area). Culinary *Salvia officinalis* has many delicious sounding recipes that make my mouth water. Woah- check them out here: It was also used by Romans and ancient Greeks to ward off evil and as a memory enhancer. A few recent medical articles show some support for help with memory and also anti-inflammatory properties. Salvias are members of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*) and seem to have a lot of "S" descriptors for them: They are commonly called Sage, and most: have a fragrant Scent, Square Stems, like Sun, and have flower Spikes.

I consider them a Stellar plant for many reasons. Most are tough, drought and heat tolerant, like well drained soils, and are generally deer and rabbit resistant plants- which is a blessing in my garden!! On top of all that, butterflies and bees are **bonkers** over them and hummingbirds fight over them. All this adds to the joy of this plant.

To narrow all these down, I'll discuss 3 perennials and some annuals I've trialed at the University of Illinois and in my home garden. A GREAT source to look at in evaluating many salvias is the detailed, dedicated work done by Richard Hawke of the Chicago Botanic Gardens. He has trialed the perennial kinds for years and in 2016 published his report here: [salvia2016.pdf \(chicagobotanic.org\)](http://salvia2016.pdf(chicagobotanic.org)) In 2019, he followed up with a great review of 109 tender perennials – which we would treat as annuals here:

[no44\\_salvia.pdf \(chicagobotanic.org\)](http://no44_salvia.pdf(chicagobotanic.org))



The three perennial blue purple salvias I compared for 5 years were: *Salvia sylvestris* 'May Night', *Salvia nemerosa* 'Color Spires Violet Riot', and *Salvia sylvestris* 'Caradonna'. They all bloom late spring to early summer and look wonderful with Baptisia 'Lemon Meringue', Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), and catmint (*Nepeta*) varieties, plus the great combinations mentioned here: [https://](https://www.gardenia.net/plant-combinations/plant-family/salvia--sages)

[www.gardenia.net/plant-combinations/plant-family/salvia -- sages](http://www.gardenia.net/plant-combinations/plant-family/salvia--sages)

**Salvias** continued on next page..



*Salvia sylvestris* 'May Night' is a garden stalwart and won the Perennial Plant of the Year in 1997 after being introduced way back in 1957 by renown German horticulturist Karl Foerster (who has a great kind of grass named after him that blends well with this salvia). 'May Night' has purple-blue flower spikes on an 18-24" plant blooming in mid spring. *Salvia nemerosa* 'Color Spires Violet Riot' grows 22" tall and 20-24" wide with slightly brighter violet-blue flower spikes that are a bit more uniform, more densely packed blooms, and is less apt to "fall open". It tended to flower and last a bit longer than 'May Night' also. These characteristics would seem to give it a slight edge over the gold standard of "May Night". *Salvia sylvestris* 'Caradonna' grows to 24" tall and 18" wide and had a little more open flowering form with delightful purple black stems that last attractively past the violet- blue flowers.



Salvia Violet Riot

All three of these can benefit by deadheading after the spring flush of blooms. The flower spikes are formed in whorls and if you follow the old flower stem down, you will see 2 new leaf sets and buds forming on either side of the main stem- cut above this and the plants will tend to rebloom, although not as heavily as in the



Salvia Violet Riot trimmed

spring. 'May Night' old flower stems look pretty messy, tacky, and brown, so some kind of deadheading is helpful- even if you just decide to whack it back by 1/3 without being so careful to not trim new buds. 'Violet Riot' blooms last a little longer than 'May Night' and after deadheading, they produce more (but still limited) blooms than 'May Night'. With 'Caradonna' I let the black stems with faded small flowers stay longer as they look good for a longer time. To make them more low maintenance, I just do the "cut 1/3 back" once as I have never gotten very good reblooming from them.

So, overall, I favor "Violet Riot' over the still excellent plant 'May Night' and think 'Caradonna' is great, also with the colored stems and for me, easier care.

Part two will continue with trial results of several tender salvias, treated as annuals in our area...stay tuned for "Super Salvia Saga Part Two".

-Ann Tice, Plant Trial Tattler Sooo Many Salvia photo info:



Salvia May Night rebloom

Continued on next page..



**Sooooo Many Salvias!** continued from previous page



Salvia Caradonna

1a GREAT COMBO for mid/ later spring: Baptisia ‘Lemon Meringue’, Salvia ‘May Night’, and Nepeta ‘Cats Meow’

1b combo: Salvia ‘may Night’ with Itoh Peony, Iris ‘Clarence’, variegated iris, Baptisia ‘Lemon Meringue’, and allium.

2a All 3 salvia compared in mid June: L to R: Salvia ‘May Night’, ‘Caradonna’, ‘Color Spires Violet Riot’

2a labeled as above= TWO PLANTS OF EACH btw..

2b mid **June Caradonna**

3 mid June May Night

4 mid June Violet Riot

5 late **June Caradonna** (stems are nice)

6 late June May Night (stems are yucky)

7 late June Violet Riot (lasting longer)

8 **Salvia deadheading- trim above buds**

(more labor intense)

9 deadheading by lazy or quick method- cut 1/3 back o Violet Riot

10 demo showing how the 3 salvias “re bloom”: L to R May Night—Caradonna—Violet Riot doing better than May Night

11 (optional photo) August “re bloom” of May Night = unimpressive!

12 (optional photo) August “re bloom” of Violet Riot = some..



Baptisia Lemon Merang Salvia



Salvia Trim—above buds



Salvia May



Salvia Violet Riot

Part 2 Continued on page 13

**Article submitted by Pam Carter**

## 2021 Highland Garden Club

Hello Fellow Gardeners,

*Is it Spring yet?*

On this cold, snowy day it we're excited to announce Highland Garden Club's line up for 2021.



### *Mark your Calendars:*

Here's the link to register on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/highland-garden-club-31060267499>

**Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> 1pm** **Milk Jug Greenhouse Planting** with Sue at Superior Landscape in Howell – this is a GREAT way to jump start your garden.

***Due to Covid restrictions signups are limited so please RSVP by responding to this email: [coopjudy@hotmail.com](mailto:coopjudy@hotmail.com). if you would like to join us.*** We will add another date if there is interest.

**Monday, April 12 at 7pm** Zoom with Ben Cohen and Karen Golden present **Saving and Sharing Seeds**

**Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> 9am -12** **Highland Garden Club Plant Sale** – if COVID restrictions are lifted the plant sale will be on Highland Township property. If not, the plant sale will still be held on private property. We will be outside, masked up and distanced.

**Monday, September 13 at 7pm** Tony Reznicek shares **Garden Worthy Species from Patagonia**

**Monday, October 11 at 7pm** Julia Hofley presents **Drama in the Shade! My Love Affair with Ferns and Other Shady Companions**

In the past we've offered Wine on the Deck hosted by generous gardeners during the Summer months on Thursday evenings – please let us know your interest/thoughts on promoting those events for Summer 2021.

**Question, concerns – please let us know what you're thinking.**

Get ready to dig!

Hope to see you face to face soon!

*Diana Diesch and Judy Cooper*

## Sooo Many Salvias Part Two -or- Super Salvia Saga: Annuals

In the first part of the article on Salvias, if you have eaten your culinary sage, *Salvia officinalis*, you might **remember** that it might be a **memory enhancer**, but also that there are sub-shrubs, perennials, and tender perennial forms (treated as annuals in our area) of this amazing plant that is also deer and bunny resistant! In this “part two” I will cover some of the annual varieties we have trialed at the University of Illinois Master Gardener “Idea Garden” over the years.

Again, a GREAT source to look at in evaluating many salvias is the work done by Richard Hawke of the Chicago Botanic Department. He has trialed the perennial kinds for years and in 2016 published his report here: [salvia2016.pdf \(chicagobotanic.org\)](#) In 2019, he followed up with a great review of 109 tender perennials – which we would treat as annuals here: [no44\\_salvia.pdf \(chicagobotanic.org\)](#) And of course, I mentioned there are 700-900 kinds of saliva- here is a good quick synopsis of this varied “super star plant”: <https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/lifestyle/hobby/2020/07/07/salvias-little-bit-of-something-special-for-everyone/112703066/>

I have run the annuals trial program at the Master Gardener’s Idea Garden on the campus of the University of Illinois for nearly 20 years and love testing out and evaluating the many plants that have been donated to us. We used to receive plants from two companies but due to cost cut backs, get them from just one company now-but an excellent company. We feel very privileged to be one of 47 North American (U.S. and Canada) trial areas and the only volunteer or master gardener group allowed to do this. From these results, one can decide just what to spend your money on when you go to buy annuals.



All of these salvia prefer sun, well drained conditions, have an upright form, and benefit from regular watering and some fertilizing.

*Salvia farinacea* ‘Victoria Blue’ is a gold standard for clear blue, all season blooming on an 18-24” tall plant that’s easy to care for, critter resistant, but a pollinator friendly plant. Pretty hard to beat, huh? Well, it has some really tough competition now! I am now in love with some true blue salvia hybrids: ‘**Rockin’ Playin’ The Blues**’, ‘Mystic Spires Blue’, and ‘Mysty’!! All three are hybrid crosses of *longispigata* and *farinacea*.

As mentioned, *Salvia* ‘Rockin’ Playin’ the Blues’ is a hybrid cross of *longispigata* and *farinacea*- and WHAT a

**Salvias** continued on next page..



**Salvias** continued from previous page



Salvia rockin playing the blues

cross this is!! It's a tall, robust, blue blooming wonder with healthy pleated leaves that knocks 'Victoria' off her pedestal, being more vigorous, taller, and simply STUNNING. Growing 24-48" tall and 24-36" wide, it's best planted en masse as by September, the tall stems spread out and open up a bit. It has earned our highest marks as a "Gold Medal Winner" for many years in the trails- HIGHLY RECOMMENDED and fought over by both the pollinators and the various Idea Garden chairs that plant our volunteer garden. One of the very best plants I have seen in the trial garden over the last 20 years.

Salvia 'Mystic Spires Blue' is another hybrid cross that is equally spectacular when I have seen it at the Ball Horticultural test area and in public plantings over the last several years. It is more compact but equally as floriferous with stunning blue-purple spikes of flowers. Chicago Botanic Garden Evaluations gave it a *rare* 5/5 stars evaluation for excellent flower production and growth on this 2-3' tall and wide plant.

A "little sister" to above is Salvia hybrid 'Mysty' with the same heritage but more compact. She's stunning, with clean pleated green leaves, and lovely true blue colored blooms that churn out flowers prolifically all season. 'Mysty' grows 12-18" tall and wide

and.....I am in love.... ❤️ I have grown all three of these blue flowered hybrids for several years in my own garden and rate each one A+++ . The hummingbirds, bees and pollinators agree, but deer and bunnies avoid them- what more could a gardener want? It's a "must" in my garden.



Salvia Mystic

There is another contender besides these fabulous three: Salvia hybrid



Salvia Unplugged so blue

**"Unplugged So Blue"** – I am not sure if it is named after "National Unplugging Day" which is the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of March to get a respite from technology- but hey, in 2020 and 2021- we might need a break from the news! Anyway, this is a Salvia *farinacea* like Victoria, but more delightful with its more flower packed, fatter bloomed stems on a lovely 14-24" tall and 16" wide plant. The fat spikes of blooms are a bit irregular but larger than Victoria in size and were velvety intense blue with pollinators COVERING it! It did very well in trials and

was a Gold Medal Winner, and was released in 2020.

**Salvias** continued on next page..



## Salvias continued from previous page



Salvia rockin Blue s Shoes

Moving on to a different kind of plant--*Salvia guaranitica* 'Black and Blue' has always caught my eye with its electric blue flowers on black stems. But it always seemed "late to the party" in blooming on this 30-40" plant. It rated only a 3/5 stars on the Chicago Botanic Garden evaluations. Enter the 'Rockin' series of hybrid Salvia: '**Rockin' Fuchsia**', '**Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes**', and '**Rockin' Deep Purple**'. The later two are 30-40" tall and 24-30" wide with

'Fuchsia' 24-36" tall and 24-30" wide, but all are ROCKIN' with hummingbirds, bees, and other pollinators ALL summer long! They are not as packed with flower spikes as the 3 blue salvia hybrids I mentioned above, but the colors of the blooms are gorgeous and I plant them near our front door just to watch the antics of the "hummers" swooping in and bees squishing their chubby bodies into the fat tubular flowers- what a delight!

The 'Rockin' Deep Purple' with vibrant blooms on black stems are lovely up close, but don't stand out much from farther away. I LOVE the intense rich light blue hue with black calyxes of 'Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes' (and the name also!) and the color is as delightful up close as it is at a distance. These tall blooms and the '**Rockin' Fuchsia**' with VIBRANT pink blooms in black calyxes all sway

colorfully in the wind. My **favorite** is the 'Fuchsia' as it is a bit more compact and the TOP winner for the "hummers" squabbling over them, darting in and out as the bees ignore this and zoom into the flower petal landing pads! Grow these charmers just to please our flying pollinator sweethearts.



Salvia Lighthse Red1

In the distant past, we tried some interesting salvias including *Salvia elegans* 'Golden Delicious' or pineapple sage. It's a later season bloomer with red flowers backed by brilliant yellow-chartreuse foliage and a pineapple scent growing 3-4' tall. The foliage makes a nice color contrast all season,

but I wish it flowered earlier. *Salvia splendens* '**Lighthouse Red**' (there is also a dusky purple) was a gangbuster of ALL season red stoplight color into September on 24" tall stems with healthy looking foliage. *Salvia splendens* '**Vista Purple**' did fairly well sporting plum-purple blooms on a compact 10-12" tall plant. It does need some deadheading however, to get rid of stale brown old blooms & stems and sometimes I wish it wouldn't tire out late summer.



Salvia Vista

So, that's a wrap on some GREAT and some good salvias- hope this is helpful.

Article submitted by Pam Carter