

# Salvias: Hot Right Now



Ingrid Millington from **Hillveiw Hardy Plants** with the on-trend flower for every garden

Salvia, which is in the family Lamiaceae, is the largest genus of plants with around 1000 species. They originate in Central and South America, Central and Eastern Asia and the Mediterranean.

They come in many forms: annual, biennial, herbaceous perennial and woody subshrubs.

They all have square stems which make them sturdy and requiring little staking.

The common name is "Sage" which I am sure that everyone knows as a culinary herb but that is just "touching the tip of the iceberg".

All are fantastic plants for bees and butterflies.

The shrubby salvias are wonderful plants for dry soils in full sun. If not pruned back until early April, they are very hardy and can be kept to a reasonable size.



Salvia "Golden Girl"

**Salvia x jamensis 'Golden Girl'** is a new plant, developed by Suncrest Nurseries of Watsonville, California. It has small mid green leaves and is a very compact plant. The flowers emerge from rosy pink calyxes and are a lovely bright yellow.

**Salvia x jamensis 'Javier'** This superb new shrubby hybrid was raised by a breeder in New Zealand. It produces masses of lovely blue-purple flowers between May and November with its black calyxes contrasting with lime-green foliage. Drought tolerant and hardy on well drained soils. 65cm



Salvia Nachtvlinder (Night Moth)

**Salvia x jamensis 'Nachtvlinder' (Night-moth)** This has the darkest inky purple flowers imaginable. It is one of the most stunning shrubby salvias I grow.

**Salvia 'Royal Bumble'** There are many red-flowered salvias but this one is outstanding. The



Salvia Red Bumble

stems are dark reddish brown with white edges, growing up to 120cm. The flowers have almost black calyxes and are a fluorescent red (if that's possible).

Herbaceous perennial salvias are excellent border plants, giving colour over a long season and will re-flower if spent flower stems are removed.

**Salvia bulleyana 'Blue Lips'** Pretty two lipped open-mouthed flowers of soft pale yellow with blue-mauve markings to the front lip form many flowered racemes or spikes above aromatic dark green leaves that are very crinkly. 60cm.

**Salvia 'Madeline'** Bred and introduced by plant breeder Piet Oudolf, this lovely sage has long spikes of flowers that are bright violet blue with a contrasting white lip. Once you see this plant, you will have to have one.

**Salvia 'Amistad'** This is an exceptionally beautiful new variety. Large rich purple flowers are carried on tall, near-black

stems above a mound of lush green foliage. With regular deadheading, this magnificent hardy perennial can flower almost continuously from May right through to October. 120cm.

**Salvia 'Love and Wishes'** This was bred in Australia and produces masses of open mouthed dark red flowers from May to November. Sumptuous dark stems and calyxes make a wonderful contrast to the flowers. 80cm.

These are just a few of the 60+ varieties salvias we grow and are our favourites at the moment. The range of colours provided by salvias and their often aromatic foliage make them a plant that no garden should be without.



Salvia Amistad