

Clebsch, B.: **A Book of Salvias: Sages for Every Garden.** - Timber Press, Portland, 1997. 221 pp. GBP 22.50. ISBN 0-88192-369-9.

The book presents 106 taxa of the genus *Salvia* (*Labiatae*) choosing those being both beautiful and interesting garden subjects. Special attention is devoted to the description and horticultural information on these widely cultivated ornamental species. The aesthetic value is improved by 87 photos and 9 drawings (including the black-and-white line drawings), both of uniformly high quality.

The book is a result of a long-term interest in salvias of noted amateur botanist and horticulturist in Northern California – Betsy Clebsch. The author has coalesced her extensive field knowledge into this cogent, impressive contribution to botanical literature on salvias. The main body of the text contains an account of selected species of *Salvia* coming from different parts of the world. The fact that the species have been ordered alphabetically facilitates the use of the book by non-taxonomists. The lay-out of the text referring to particular species is consistent: scientific name and references to illustrations are given, common name in English is sometimes added, several (usually 5) paragraphs follow, first of which brings information on geographical origin and distribution

area, brief characteristics of native habitats, and usually notes on etymology of Latin name. Next paragraph is devoted to the detailed morphological description. Practical and very valuable horticultural information is summarized in the remaining paragraphs of each species treatment.

Ten appendices contain information, which can help reader to solve his problems with cultivation and choice of the most suitable type of salvia, e.g. "Where to see salvias" (addresses of public gardens with particularly fine collections of salvias), "Where to buy salvias" (list of sources of salvias covering the United States, Australia, the British Isles, France, and New Zealand), "Flowering guide by season" (list of salvias ordered according to a time of flowering), "Cold tolerance guide" and "Shade tolerance guide", and catalogues of "Salvias with specially handsome foliage" and of "Salvias for containers". The last chapter presents a reasonable concise list of references.

This very nice book should be welcome by all readers who are interested in beautiful and garden-worthy species.

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