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INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY, INC.

FALL/WINTER  
1973-74

# LILACS



A PUBLICATION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY, INC.

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LILACS is the official publication of the International Lilac Society, Inc. published quarterly with the PROCEEDINGS of the Society's Annual Convention. Both LILACS and THE PROCEEDINGS are benefits of membership:

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INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY, INC.

CONVENTION PROGRAM  
Hamilton, Ontario  
May 25 and 26, 1974

SATURDAY, May 25, 1974

- 8:30 - 8:45 — Buses leave Holiday Inn for R.B.G. Headquarters  
8:45 - 9:45 — Registration at the Royal Botanical Gardens' Headquarters  
(coffee will be available)  
9:45 - 10:00 — Official opening of I.L.S. Convention  
10:00 - 10:45 — Speaker — Dr. J. Pringle. "Interspecific Hybridization  
Experiments in Syringa series Villosae at R.B.G."  
10:45 - 11:30 — Dr. David G. Nielsen — "New approach in lilac borer control".  
11:30 - 11:50 — Coffee break  
11:50 - 12:30 — Dr. W.A. Cumming — "Canadian lilac introductions and  
their history"  
12:30 - 2:00 — Box luncheon at Royal Botanical Gardens  
2:00 - 2:45 — Afternoon speaker. Prof. Louis M. Lenz.  
"The application of Chemosystematics to Lilacs".  
2:45 - 3:30 — Buses leave R.B.G. Headquarters for tour of Rock Garden  
3:30 - — Buses leave for Lilac Collection  
3:45 - 6:00 — Observing lilacs  
6:00 - — Buses leave for R.B.G. Headquarters  
6:00 - 7:00 — Barbecue  
7:00 - 7:40 — R. E. Halward —  
"Lilac propagation at Royal Botanical Gardens—Hamilton".  
7:40 - 8:30 — "Lilac Kaleidoscope" — short slide presentation by I.L.S.  
members.  
8:30 - — Buses leave for Holiday Inn

SUNDAY, May 26, 1974

- 8:00 - — Buses leave Holiday Inn for Niagara Parks Commission  
Lilac Collection  
9:00 - 11:45 — Tour through Niagara Parks Commission grounds  
11:45 - 12:30 — Luncheon at N.P.C.  
12:30 - — Buses leave for R.B.G. Headquarters  
1:30 - 3:00 — President, Secretary and Treasurer's Reports —  
Election of Officers  
3:00 - — Buses leave for Arboretum  
3:00 - — Lilac survey (organized by F. Nietz)  
5:45 - — First bus leaves for Holiday Inn  
6:00 - — Second bus leaves for Holiday Inn  
6:00 - 7:00 — Free time  
7:00 - 7:30 — Pay bar  
7:30 - — Banquet at Holiday Inn, followed by speaker, Dr. L. Laking  
— Meet your new I.L.S. Officers  
— Award presentation.

## USING NEW FORMS OF SYRINGA AS A HEDGE

by John L. Fiala

(photographs/comment—Charles Holetich, R.B.G.)

We are always looking for the new and different, particularly if it is also beautiful and rather care free. At the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Ontario there is an excellent display of what can be done with "lilacs" for hedging. One is immediately struck at the beauty and attractive shape and color of the hedges, particularly of *Syringa microphylla* and its taller form *Syringa microphylla* 'Superba'. The enclosed pictures submitted by Charles Holetich, Eastern-Canada Vice President of I.L.S. give an excellent picture-story of what can be done with lilacs as a hedge. At the Sheridan Nurseries, Oakdale, Ontario in the planting fields the rows of unclipped *Syringa microphylla* are low (approximately 2 feet tall) and as uniform as if they had been clipped, forming an excellent, attractive hedge-row even in the nursery. Visitors to the Annual Convention this Spring at the Royal Botanical Gardens will be able to judge for themselves the beauty of this lilac material.

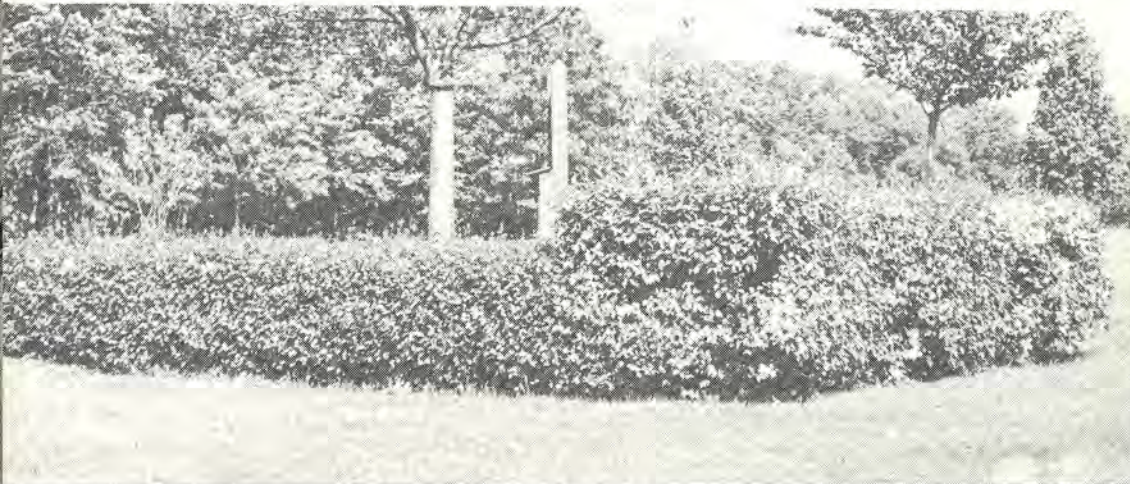
Another popular lilac for hedging is *Syringa x chinensis* (Rouen Lilac). Photo, again from Charles Holetich, Arboriculturist at the Royal Botanical Gardens, shows what can be done with this lilac to make a beautiful, dense and attractive hedge.

We are all acquainted with using *Syringa vulgaris* or *Syringa villosa* for taller background, often windbreak hedges. Many of us have not realized the landscape value of the smaller, more delicate formed lilacs (yet rugged in use and adaptation). *Syringa x Prestoniae* in its many named varieties (too many are identical or nearly so) has been suggested often for large estates and for background hedges or to break large areas with taller masses. They make attractive hedges and windbreaks where space is provided (they are not for restricted city lots). These often attain heights of 25 to 30 feet and nearly as wide.

Lilacs do make an attractive hedge. They should be used with proper respect for their mature form, their habit of growth and bloom. One must be aware that a shrub of large form never look "right" constantly clipped to a 'bonsai' shape. With the use of *Syringa microphylla* and *Syringa microphylla* 'Superba' we now have attractive and beautiful, small hedges for areas that require this size. These smaller lilacs have a beautiful, feathery bloom plus attractive deep green foliage. We need to plant more lilac hedges — tall ones where landscape and area permit their stately beauty, smaller ones where areas are restricted. Do not overlook the landscaping effect, even in large areas of a small, neat lilac hedge setting off larger plantings behind it. A well planted lilac hedge is, indeed, a thing of real beauty — especially in full bloom!

*Syringa microphylla* 'SUPERBA' hedge on the right and *Syringa microphylla* hedge on the left at the entrance to our lilac collection.

Photo taken in June, 1973.





*Syringa microphylla* hedge. Planted on May 18, 1966, at the entrance to the lilac collection. It is being clipped twice a year. Blooms extensively first week in June. (see photo of single specimen). Photo taken in June, 1973.

Clipped hedge of *Syringa x chinensis* (Rouen Lilac) planted on May 7, 1962 as 30" tall specimen. Now it is six feet tall, 3 feet wide, dense and disease free. Photo taken in June, 1973.





**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS AT HAMILTON . . . October 20, 1973**

The Board of Directors of I.L.S. met for their Fall Meeting at Hamilton in October. They met with Dr. Les Laking and the Staff of the Royal Botanical Gardens where the 1974 Convention will be hosted. Included in the minutes of the meeting were the reports of Charles Holetich, Chairman for the 1974 Convention who presented for approval the Convention Program (now in the hands of all members). Prof. Al Lumley presented his recommendation for revisions of the Constitution and By-Laws which were gratefully received and final action called for the Legal Committee of I.L.S. to have the Lumley recommendations ready for the May meeting. A Committee for Registrations was appointed consisting of Dr. Owen Rogers, Freek Vrugtman and John L. Fiala who were to work out a program for registrations and seek transfer as soon as possible. A report from the Editor included concern for lack of financing for publications thus not meeting the needs for printing was presented. William Utley was charged with Memberships; Al Lumley appointed permanent Parliamentarian; Fr. Fiala chairman for Research reported that most of the work was on an individual basis – Dr. Gould with lilac wilt, Dr. Pringle with interspecies hybrids and his own work with tetraploids and interspecies hybrids; A Nominating Committee of C. Holetich, W. Utley and J. Fiala, chairman, was charged with the work of presenting a slate by April for the May Convention. The Editor reported the need for interested and meaningful articles for the Lilac Bulletin, changed from the Newsletter to "LILACS" by the Board and that the Revised Lilac Survey would be ready for print . . . the only obstacle being the cost of printing which the Society at present could not assume. Private financing was being sought so that it could be published by May if at all possible. Many of the Directors visited Sheridan Nurseries where they were welcomed and given a tour which included seeing the grafts of the new lilac, Agincourt Beauty. It was an interesting two day work session for the Board Members present: Robert Clark, Owen Rogers, Joel Margaretten, Charles Holetich, William and Lois Utley, Ann Robinson, Nancy Emerson, Albert Lumley, R.J. Hilton, Freek Vrugtman and John Fiala. President Robert Clark presided and adjourned the meeting until the May Convention.

Summary of meeting respectfully submitted by Lois Utley, Rec. Sec.



## DOUBLE LILACS AT HOLDERNESS

*by Robert Clark, Pres. I.L.S.*

The problem which Victor Lemoine set for himself one hundred years ago, namely, raising double-flowering common lilacs, continues to challenge horticulturists today. ILS member Raymond Baker of Holderness, New Hampshire, has a block of two or three hundred "French hybrid" seedlings coming into flower this spring. "Ray's" objective is double blooms in full range of colors.

Over the years the Lemoine nursery at Nancy, France, produced a superb series of double flowering lilacs, at the rate of four per year, which dominates the 1953 recommended common lilacs: white Edith Cavell, lilac Leon Gambetta, blue President Grevy, pinkish Mme. Antoine Buchner, etc. Baker uses these doubles as parents. The big difficulty arises from the scarcity of pollen (owing to transformation of anthers into petals) plus the tininess of the stigma and lack of development of the ovaries.

Ray Baker's "farm" is located on the Daniel Webster highway (US 3) in Holderness just north of the Meredith line on the left. You should phone him, (603) 279-4436, to let him know you are coming and for instructions how to locate the entrance driveway. He raises seedling mock-oranges, iris, daylilies, and other garden plants, in a one-man operation and under adversities of climate, soil and animals.

## MEMBERS TOUR SHERIDAN NURSERIES

During the Board of Directors meeting in Toronto in October ILS members had the opportunity to visit Sheridan Nurseries at Oakdale. There they were shown methods of propagation of lilacs, especially the soon to be released 'Agincourt Beauty' lilac. They observed the results of grafting upon various root stocks, saw the rows of microphylla used for hedging and had an opportunity to view the vast operation of the nurseries.

*Below: I.L.S. Directors Clark and Fiala examine lilac cuttings with Nancy Emerson, I.L.S. Treasurer, at the Sheridan Nurseries, Oakdale, Ontario.*

*George Liseu, Plant Propagator at Sheridan Nurseries, shows I.L.S. members Ann Robinson, Fr. Fiala and Nancy Emerson the difference in root growth on various kinds of budded lilacs.*





*NEW LILAC COLLECTION DEDICATED . . . in Nebraska*

**LILAC FARM LILAC COLLECTION . . .** *by Robert Clark*

Seventy-five lilacs from Lilac Farm, Bennett, Nebraska, are the nucleus of a new lilac collection at the University of Nebraska Field Laboratory at Mead seen by the public on Flower and Lawn Day, September 30, 1973. This collection is the gift of Mrs. Lourene Wishart (Western Vice-President of I.L.S.) of Lincoln whose grandfather, William Roggenkamp, received his early training in the nurseries of Ludwig Spaeth of Berlin, Germany. The collection is now located in the Horticulture and Forestry sector of the University's Field Laboratory, some 30 miles west of Omaha.

Participating in the dedication ceremonies were representatives of the I.L.S. (President Robert Clark and Executive Vice-President William Utley who traveled from New Hampshire and New York states for the occasion) and representatives of Lincoln's Garden Clubs as well as friends and Staff members of the Horticulture Department of the University of Nebraska.

Space is available to extend the collection along the Laboratory roadway until the collection contains some 300 lilac cultivars. Lilac "Sensation" contributed by the Utleys' from their Grape Hill Farm, Clyde, New York, is the most recent addition. Other own-root lilacs are being readied in Mrs. Wishart's Lincoln garden for future planting.

At the Saturday morning breakfast the BIG RED Booster Club, Bob Clark and Bill Utley were interviewed over the statewide football radio network. In the crisp autumn air and sunshine a sea of red clad rooters became estatic as their BIG RED team came from behind late in the final quarter to defeat Wisconsin, 20-16. A reception in honor of the I.L.S. visitors was hosted by Mrs. Wishart at the Lincoln Country Club. Another new and fine planting of lilacs was dedicated!



*William Utley, ILS Executive Vice-President, points out lilac 'Sensation' to Mrs. Lourene Wishart, Dr. Wayne Whitney (of Field Laboratory Staff) and Dr. Robert Clark, ILS President, at dedication of lilac collection donated by Mrs. Wishart of Lincoln, Nebraska, Western Region Vice-President of I.L.S.*





*Lourene Wishart and some of the grand old 'Lemoine' lilacs at Lilac Farm*

## "WHAT IS THE BEST LILAC FERTILIZER?"

by Charles Horetich

It is always interesting to talk to "Lilac Friends", such as lilac growers, or one who just loves lilacs and has one, twenty, forty, or more lilacs at his estate, or one who manages a large lilac collection.

One of the questions very often asked is "what is the best lilac fertilizer?" Literature obviously is giving us a fair amount of advice, but even there, opinions differ considerably. One of the most practical answers on the subject that I would suggest is, do your own study, record the findings, pass them on I.L.S. Editor, so others could benefit from, because, believe me, there is a lot to be learned.

To my amazement, 20 out of 25 nurserymen, lilac hybridists, owners of small private collections and supervisors of large lilac collections I spoke to, in most cases do not use fertilizers on lilacs, apart from a lime application to correct pH of naturally acid soils. Some still prefer good old manure from the farmer's field two to three inches thick, preferably forked into the ground.

Those that use commercial fertilizers agree that the fertilizer should be high in phosphates.

With this in mind, and since our lilac collection is conveniently divided into small sections, I applied three different commercial fertilizers high in phosphates, on May 18, 1973. Half of each section received the fertilizer treatment, while another half was left untreated for future comparison. This program which may last for several years, may touch some light on the subject and in due time I plan to write an article on its findings.

### DELHI CHAPTER OF I.L.S. MEETS AND SETS PROGRAMS

The Delhi Chapter #3 of I.L.S. held a meeting on Feb. 6 at the home of Mrs. Hogen Ross. The following programs were set up:

- April — Program on proper Planting of Lilacs — encouraging the selection of the best varieties.
- May — Garden Tours to report and evaluate last year's Lilac Distributions — seeking and giving advise.
- June — Collecting — giving out plants — exchanging varieties — participating in the Horticultural Society Flower Show with a display and booth featuring Lilacs.

We also have the Horticultural Society of the State University here in Delhi working with us. We have already supplied them with good plants and will have a booth at their College Week this spring.

After lilac bloom we will have a "Trimming Session" as this is a need for all of us.

Nancy Emerson

*The Delhi Chapter #3, (Rochester Chapter #1, Ohio Chapter #2) is one of the most active of the three Chapters (local groups affiliated with I.L.S.). The Society encourages these local chapters to promote the lilac at the 'grass-roots levels'. Contact Executive Vice-President William Utley, Clyde, N.Y. if you wish to start a Chapter in your area for affiliation with I.L.S. We are always glad to hear from the Local Chapter Secretaries as to what their groups are doing.*

## HOW TO KEEP CUT LILACS FRESH FOR LONGER PERIOD OF TIME

by C. Holetich

During the International Lilac Society Convention in Boston, I undertook the task of finding ways and means people use to preserve cut lilac clusters to stay fresh for longer period of time in the containers. At least 12 to 15 I.L.S. members contributed to this article in one way or another and some will recognize themselves in the following lines. My hope is that this article may inspire others to add further their experiences on the subject and thus make it available to others through this publication.

Almost all seem to agree that lilac flowers should be cut early in the morning. For best results, flower cuttings should not exceed 18 inches in length.

From this point on, the opinion differs. While some are of the opinion that cut flowers stems should be immediately submerged into the water, or even a second cut of stem made in the water as to exclude any air from entering the cell vessels, others feel that it is not important.

When cut flowers stems are brought to a house, 2 - 3 inches of the stem bases should be crushed by a hammer. There are some advocating that the stem should be damaged up to visible formation of fibres, but most agree that one or two hammer strokes are sufficient. Crushed flower stems are then placed into hot water 1/2 or 2/3 of the length of flower stem deep.

When hot water cools down to lukewarm, flowers should then be placed into cold water, arranged and exhibited.

Partial or complete defoliation of flower stems is beneficial. Those advocating such a procedure suggest that foliage cuts should be made separately and used in flower arrangements. Those concerned about air entering the cell vessels would either place cut flowers into the hot water without crushing the stem or not even treat the flower cuts in hot water.

Another method of prolonging the life of lilac flowers (to stay fresh) is by cutting flowers late in the evening prior to the exhibit, crushing three inches of the stem with a hammer and placing into mixture of two ounces of clorox (bleach) per one gallon of cold water. Leave lilac blooms in the solution overnight, prior to the exhibition. Next morning place them into exhibit containers filled with cold water. Clorox water solution is more effective than 'Floral Life' and similar products available in floral shops.

Comments welcomed.

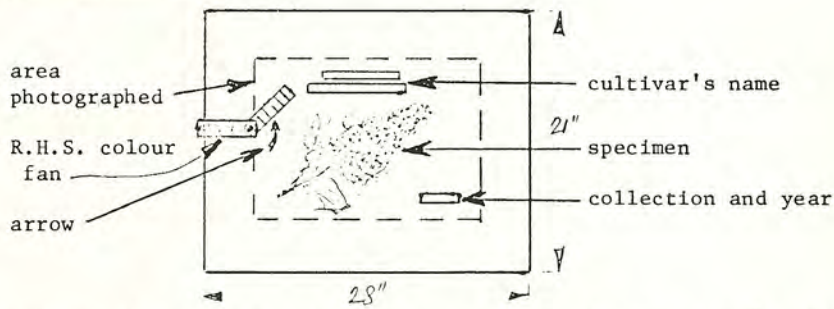
Lower left: Lilac "Etna"

Lower right: Lilac "Carley"



GUIDELINE FOR LILAC PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Construct an easel (photography board) approximately 21" x 28" with a facing to which specimens can be pinned. (e.g. cork board).
2. Cover the easel with a non-reflecting cloth. (I used 2 layers of dark coloured burlap).
3. Prepare labels indicating:



4. Cut flower cluster with a few buds unopened at the tip, and central portion of the cluster open. In many cases several florets at the base of the cluster may be faded.
5. Find corresponding colour of the cluster on the R.H.S. colour chart, pin it to the board with an arrow pointing to the particular block on the colour chart.
6. Use Kodacrome II. film (25 ASA) so that colour rendition is uniform from all contributors.
7. Place the camera on a tripod 24" x 30" away from subject on a sunny day. Limit photography to shutter speed 1/15 to 1/60 sec. and F10 to F16. This will give the necessary depth of field and good colour reproduction on Kodacrome II.
8. Focus on 1/3 of the cluster depth as the available depth of field is 2/3 beyond and 1/3 in front of focal point.
9. Develop film in a Kodak laboratory only.
10. Inform I.L.S. Editor about slides available for evaluation and comparison with slides taken at other collection.

Charles Holetich.

## DR. KARL SAX DIES AT 81

*Karl Sax has died and since he did some of the pioneer work with colchicine (including tetraploid lilacs), I thought you might want to note his passing in the Newsletter. I'll include a copy of the obituary I wrote for the American Society for Horticultural Science and several background things if you'd like to recast the information for the Lilac Society.*

*Dr. Owen Rogers  
University of New Hampshire*

*Dr. Karl Sax, Professor emeritus at Harvard University and an authority on botany, horticulture, genetics and population trends, died October 8, 1973, of circulatory disorders. He was 81 years old.*

*Dr. Sax, who lived in Media, Pa., received degrees from the State College in Washington and from Harvard. He held positions as instructor of genetics in California, plant breeder at Geneva, biologist at the University of Maine's Experiment Station and as faculty member at Harvard University from 1928 to 1959. While at Harvard, he served as director of the Arnold Arboretum from 1947 to 1954.*

*Among the more than 130 scientific papers he authored, those published in the Proceedings of ASHS attest to his versatility, ranging from "Nursery stock investigations" to the "Origin of the Pomoideae." In 1955 he authored a book on population growth, "Standing Room Only," a subject in which he maintained a vital interest through the several visiting professorships he accepted following his retirement from Harvard in 1959.*

*As a horticulturist he developed many ornamental plants, including the tetraploid forsythia 'Beatrix Farrand,' as well as 'Blanche Ames' apple, 'Hally Jolivette' cherry and the 'Merrill' magnolia. He was one of the pioneer plant breeders in the use of colchicine and produced some of the first tetraploid lilacs.*

*The Genetics Society of America elected him president in 1958 and he received an award of merit from the Botanical Society of America in 1956, a Guggenheim Fellowship at Oxford in 1961, the distinguished alumni award from Washington State University, as well as additional honors including an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Maine in 1971.*

*He is survived by his widow Dr. Hally Jolivette Sax; three sons, Dr. Karl J. Sax, Dr. W. Peter Sax and Edward A. Sax; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Services and burial were in Media, Pa.*

### *IN MEMORIAM – Stewart Payne Robinson 1919-1973*

*A Special Memorial Service was held on Wednesday, Nov. 28, 1973 at the First Presbyterian Church, Delhi, New York, for STEWART PAYNE ROBINSON, son of Mrs. Anne Robinson (Director of the International Lilac Society). Stewart Robinson's grandfather and great-grandfather served the same church he did as pastors since 1864. Mrs. Anne Robinson has been an outstanding member and active Director. Our hearts share with her the sorrow in this hour of loss for such an outstanding son.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR . . .

(We are always glad to hear from the membership; every attempt will be made to answer your letters by the best authorities we can find; your comments are most welcome . . . tell us what you are doing . . . what is going on in lilacs your way!)

*From Leona Valley California . . .*

*" . . . How about some articles from Dr. Wister? He must have a head full of wonderful material that has never seen print . . . Have been busy last week transplanting germinated lilac seedlings into pots. At least a thousand of the seeds I brought back came up, add those to my own, at least double that amount and you know what I will be doing for the next two weeks! My rain dances haven't been too successful — had four inches of snow and .1 of rain so far out of a norm of 17 inches . . . will be laying out 10,000 feet of plastic pipe so the lilacs won't go thirsty this summer. Has anyone had any experience with trickle irrigation — pro or con? Charles Horetich drew me a diagram of a sealed hotbed for seeds and cuttings that he says is foolproof . . . with the fuel shortage must give up some of the personal contact for I.L.S. membership. A lot of people could join but have to be contacted . . . will do a lot through the mails . . ."*

*Dr. Joel Margaretten  
(Pacific Far Western Vice-President I.L.S.)*

Joel always writes such interesting letters! Yes, we can see what he will be doing not only for the next two weeks but for years to come. There should be some pretty fine seedlings from the Margaretten Nursery in a very few years. Perhaps Charles Horetich will give us that hot-bed diagram for publication with some info about its merits.

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*From Harkness Road, Amherst, Mass. . . .*

*" . . . enclosed is my listing of 130 varieties that I promised. I have about 600 plants and lots of room for more. As you can see I have spent about 100 hours on the Constitution and By-Laws of the Society and it will be ready for the Directors' Meeting in October '73 at Hamilton . . ."*

*(Prof.) Al Lumley*

Al has a wonderful collection of lilacs as can be attested to by any of the 25 or more members who stopped after the Boston Convention. His bloom at that time was superb! (see Clare Short's article on Lumley's "Primrose" elsewhere). At the Directors' Meeting held last October in Hamilton Al's revisions of Constitution and By-Laws was presented — a wonderful piece of work for the Society. It should be ready for the May Meeting. Its final rendering is now in the hands of the legal experts who agree that Al has done a wonderful job! Many, many thanks from the whole Society, Al! But above all his talents he grows "REALLY SUPERB" Lilacs!

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*From the Curator of Collections, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario . . .*

*" . . . enclosed is a copy of THE GARDEN LILAC for the I.L.S. Archives . . ."*

*Freek Vrugtman*

Many thanks, Freek . . . a very fine presentation on our favorite plant. "THE GARDEN LILAC" by Freek Vrugtman is the Vol. 27, No. 1 publication of the GARDENS' BULLETIN of Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton. Brief history of the lilac and the beginnings of the Katie Osborne Lilac Collection at R.B.G. Well done as Freek always does it!

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Charles Holetich, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, examines *Syringa microphylla* 'SUPERBA' specimen in Section K of our lilac collection. Planted in May, 1966.  
(see photo of the hedge). Photo taken in June, 1973.