



# **The Pipeline**

Vol. III, No. 12, December, 1977

**THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY**

*INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY* is a non-profit corporation comprised of people who share a particular appreciation and fondness for lilacs. By exchange of knowledge, experience and facts gained by members, it is helping to promote, educate and broaden public understanding and awareness of lilacs.

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#### *MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION*

Single annual .....	\$ 5.00
Family .....	7.50
Sustaining .....	10.00
Institutional/Commercial .....	15.00
Life .....	100.00

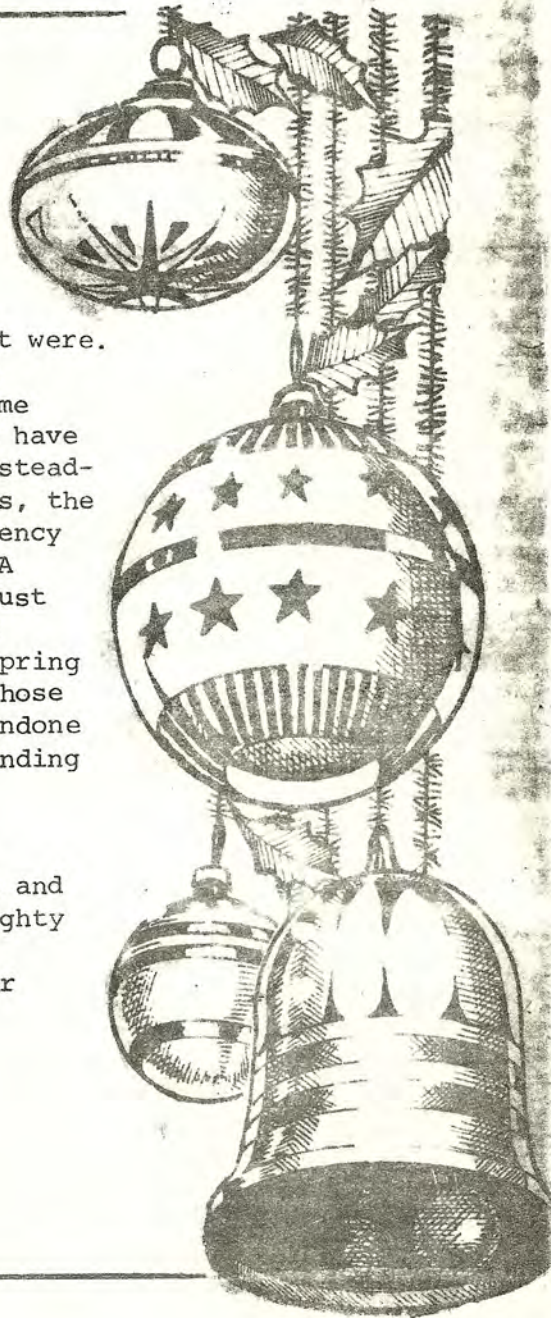
Mail membership dues to I.L.S. Secretary, Walter W. Oakes, Box 315, Rumford, Maine. 04276.



'Tis the season when life seemingly slows to a crawl, the work is done for another year and now we shall rest, reminisce and recall - enjoy the fruits of our labors as it were. A time to give thanks for all those good things that have chanced to come our way, ideas and thoughts that we have shared, friends that have remained steadfast in adversity as well as success, the compassion, benevolence and complacency that we have enjoyed as a Society. A time when we become aware that we must look to the future for a newness of adventure, a trust that life will spring anew with a hope of accomplishing those things which we have had to leave undone for lack of time to fulfill our unending wishes.

We would that all PIPELINE readers might this day express their Thanks and share their Blessings with the Almighty Being that gives life to every earthly thing. May you, each in your own way have a HAPPY, JOYOUS and HEALTHFUL Holiday Season.

Ed.



#### TRIBUTE TO THE DOORYARD LILAC

It was that incomparable naturalist and keen observer of plants May Theilgaard Watts who traced the story of the lilac shrub on the south corner of the farmstead through several generations of homeowners. The chapter in Mrs. Watt's *Reading the Landscape* points up the endurance of the common lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*.

There it is, on the foundation corner by the old home; we have forgotten who planted it and when. Probably it was when the house was built; by now, when in leaf, the lilac darkens the upstairs bedroom window. It is leggy, too, and scrawny at the base, but sentiment about the old lilac can be strong. The stout fastigate trunks have character. We'll leave it another year; maybe a little judicious pruning will help.

In the Northeast we've always had this sentiment about the lilac and have felt pride that a nonnative thrives for us. In fact, except for the species *S. emodi*, all the lilacs do better with us than in another adoptive home, Great Britain.

Certainly the dooryard lilac made a permanent place for itself when the poets of the Flowering of New England extolled its merits. A bit later Alice Morse Earle spoke of the lilac color as "typical of New England; some parts of celestial blue, with more of warm pink, blended and softened by that shading of sombre gray ever present in New England life ... what Thoreau called a "tender, civil, cheerful color." Its blossoming at the time of Election Day, that all-important New England holiday, gave it another New England significance."

But Alice Morse Earle, our good chronicler of colonial times, professed ignorance of "when it journeyed to the new world." One claim is that the first lilacs were brought from Europe to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by Governor Benning Wentworth, probably in 1750. Another report is the planting of



The first known picture of a lilac, from Matthiolus' *Commentarii*, 1565.



lilacs at Hopkinton, Massachusetts, by Sir Henry Frankland in 1751.

Certain it is, however, that that master gardener Thomas Jefferson made an entry in his own hand on April 2, 1767, in his *Garden Book*: "Planted Lilac, Spanish broom, Umbrella, Laurel. Almonds, Muscle plumbs, Cayenne pepper. 12. cuttings of Gooseberries." This was the second year of entries made by Jefferson in his *Garden Book*, written while he was living at his boyhood home at Shadwell. In her definitive monograph of 1928 Susan Delano McKelvey cites this as the first authentic record of the colonial planting of *S. vulgaris*.

Another well-known agriculturist, George Washington, in his Mount Vernon diaries on March 3, 1785, wrote: Likewise took up a clump of Lilacs that stood at the corner of the south grass plat and transplanted them to the clusters in the shrubberies and standards at the south garden gate.

Later that same month Washington "transplanted ... 9 live oaks, 11 yew or hemlock, 2 Lilacs, 3 Fringe." The following year, in February, his notation was: "The buds of the lylack were much swelled and seemed ready to unfold."

After Thomas Jefferson moved to Monticello in 1770, he included both *S. vulgaris* and *S. persica* in his plans for the tree-shrub semioval planting in front of the house, where they could be viewed from "setting stones." He was undoubtedly advised on plant selection by Bernard McMahon, author of *The American Gardener's Calendar*, and was influenced by naturalistic gardening, as expounded by Thomas Whately and as observed by Jefferson on a tour of English gardens in 1784. In 1807 he left a memorandum for his overseer, Mr. Edmund Bacon to "plant weeping willows in the semi-circle in northeast front, one half way between two shrubs," which would have included the Persian lilac. This species would extend the period of bloom from April 1 to April 28.

The famous plant trader John Bartram appeared in a lilac story in the *New York Tribune*, quoted by Professor Harshbarger in *The Botanists of Philadelphia*:

In 1753 we find Collinson sending in addition to various fruit and shade trees many flowers which seem to have been new to America, to Bartram and others, like Lilacs and Double Narcissus, which Bartram complains are all too numerous as the roots brought by the early settlers had spread enormously.

Even earlier, in 1737, we note that Peter Collinson was sending lilacs to John Bartram and remarked, "Colonel Custis at Williamsburg ... has undoubtedly the best collection in that country."

Thus you may pick your own date for introduction of *S. vulgaris* into colonial America, but in 1893 Henry Thoreau wrote:

Still grows the vivacious lilac a generation after the door and lintel and the sill are gone, unfolding its



sweet scented flowers each spring to be plucked by the musing traveler. John Wister tells us that William R. Prince listed lilacs in his catalog of 1823 and that *S. persica* (cut-leaf form) was cultivated in New York as early as 1801. By 1835 Prince was listing eleven lilacs: "white lilac," "ditto extra large," "great white flowered," "blue or purple," "red," "Charles the Tenth *supurb new*," "purple Persian," "white Persian," "Persian cut leaved," "large Chinese or Siberian," and "large flowering hybrid."

From the early 1970s until about 1950, Victor Lemoine and son Emile were introducing the Lemoine Hybrid cultivars. Mrs. Frances King in 1923 expressed her pleasure:

The association of the lilac for Americans is the immemorial one of the old gardens of New England and the latter's age of innocence. But since the war there is a new and glorious association which let none of us forget: I mean the moving courage of that great Victor Lemoine of Nancy to whom we owe the new beauties of this lovely plant.

Mrs. King mentions collections at Highland Park and Arnold Arboretum, Mr. A.T. Havemyer's collection of Long Island and the gift of plants to Montclair, New Jersey, from Frank T. Presby.

In the first decade of the twentieth century Ernest H. Wilson was collecting the Chinese species, either for the famous English nursery, Veitch and Sons, or for the Arnold Arboretum. The hardy *S.S. julianae*, *reflexa*, *swezingowii*, *tomentella*, *velutina*, and *wolffi* were added to the choices for lilac enthusiasts.

In 1925 Miss Isabella Preston, then horticulturist at the Central Experimental Station at Ottawa, made the cross *S. villosa* x *S. reflexa*, which resulted in the Preston lilacs, many hybrid late-flowering clones being so derived. Dr. F.E. Skinner of Dropmore, Manitoba, also did valuable breeding with the later-blooming species. Of course, the lilac has been a favorite shrub in Canada, since it withstands that climate so well.

For a genus that got confused with the "pipes" of *Philadelphus*, the lilac has done very well in our country. In addition to its variety in size and form, its adaptability to sites, and its beauty of foliage, the fragrance of the lilac flower is one of the most memorable of all flower perfumes.

--Reprinted from *The Cornell Plantations*, Vol. 32, No. 4, Winter 1976/77.

#### Lilacs are small plants

When one sees the big old lilac clumps that have eventually reached the top of the house or barn it is easy to forget that it took many years for them to get that big. A newly planted lilac will stay under eight feet for ten years! Even the old bushes can be kept to six to eight feet by removing one-third of the oldest stems each year.

O. Rogers

#### Lilacs are good fall foliage plants

Donald Wyman used to dismiss lilacs as "two weeks of colour" and no fall foliage value. However, in early November in Durham (N.H.) I still see nice green leaves on the lilac bushes and those green leaves make the Burning Bush and Sugar Maple flamboyant by the contrast. Without the lilac green the other would not be nearly as bright.

O. Rogers

#### Lilac seed pods are useful and ornamental

When the leaves of the lilac finally do fall, the seed pods are left. They are visible and interesting shrub adornments as well as seed holders for seed distribution to ground feeding birds well into winter. Each time the wind blows another handful of seeds is neatly scattered about. After the seed is gone, the pods can be collected for use in cone wreathes. They are much easier to wire in than acorns and can be trimmed to whatever size cluster is desired.

- O. Rogers



#### DID YOU KNOW?

It was written almost three and one-half centuries ago that the common white and blue forms of lilac fruit produced an oil, such being referred to as "Oyle of Ben". The product was neither pleasing nor ill smelling, but rather of a fine quality much sought by the worlds renowned perfumers was herein contained via the fact that the oil did not become rancid.

It was further claimed that this oil possessed qualities that smoothed the skin, softened and relieved hardness, and was conducive to the cure of the cold affects when related to the tendons and muscles; and when mixed with goose-grease, warmed and dropped in a small quantity into the ear or nose when pain was troubling these areas relief was quickly forthcoming.

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Oh how well your editor remembers; being reared in a rural atmosphere, goose-grease and skunk-oil were sure remedies (in our household) for various aches, pains, etc., normally associated with the common cold, whooping cough, "croop", etc.. If the suspected ailment was of questionable origin, particularly when ice skating or coasting was especially good these home remedies worked like magic - in fact the remedy (or treatment) was considerably more difficult to endure than the ailment.

- Walter E. Eickhorst

#### International Lilac Society Auction

The auction provides funds to our Society to supplement those funds acquired from dues. Our President, Bob Clark, and Exec. Vice-President, Bill Utley, have asked that we organize the acquisition of materials to be sold at future auctions. The availability of exotic, different, and

hard-to-find plants is certain to stimulate interest in bidding and make our auctions even more successful. Small numbers (3-6) of many cultivars are far more interesting than large numbers (20-30) of a few items.

Eastern members from New Jersey and on south are reminded that our 1978 annual meeting will be held in Philadelphia area - now is the time to start thinking about what materials you might wish to donate for our auction. Our New England members should prepare materials next spring and summer for our Convention in 1979 at Durham, New Hampshire. Our mid-Western members should prepare materials during the spring/summer of 1978/79 for the Ohio meeting of 1980. This is merely a guideline and does not prevent members from any area donating materials to be offered at any auction.

As an additional stimulus in this activity members might consider donating lilac related items, such as ceramic plates, cups and saucers, pitchers, glass bottles, etc. with a lilac motif; also oil paintings or colored lithographs and old books or papers concerning lilacs.

The job of the auctioneer will be easier if the donor would provide the following information: (1) name and address of donor, (2) name and age of plant, and (3) other pertinent information (color, single/double, blooming season, etc.) to assist the auctioneer when a plant or object is considered for bidding.

Would area representatives please provide names of individuals, nurseries, or arboreta in your region who might be contacted for possible donations? Donors please notify: Hanssen Schenker, Freedom, NH 03836 (603) 539-6814, giving names and quantity of items at least one month prior to convention time (if possible).

Our auction will offer a considerably wider range of interest if every member will be on the lookout for exotic,



imaginative, hard-to-find, or distinctive items to tempt the impetuous buyer. Remember, it has often been said, that there is, a potential buyer for every object, and the auctioneer welcomes the challenge, but it's up to the membership. Continued success of the auction will demand that as many members as possible contribute something - the auctioneer cannot do the job alone.

- H.S.

STEPPING ASIDE - MOVING UP: March 1977

Rochester, New York - Calvin "Cal" Reynolds succeeds Alvan R. Grant. Cal's particular interest in his life's work is trees (what a beautiful and challenging location to pursue a vocation), he earned his B.S. degree from State College of Forestry in Syracuse (1951) and took a position with the Rochester Park Dept. as Supervisor of Grounds Maintenance in 1952, moved on to City Forester in June of '54 a position which he held for eleven years. In 1965 he joined the Monroe County Park Department as Park Planner in which capacity he served until September 1976 at which time he was appointed to the position of Deputy Director of Parks, becoming Director of Parks the following March.

In this newly won post with which Cal is very familiar he has twenty parks totalling almost eleven thousand acres under his jurisdiction, encompassing all of the many associated facets such as horticulture, floriculture, Park and Recreation activities including a Zoo with some six hundred animals.

This is the widespread, expanding facility that Al Grant retired from and now finds himself looking back upon a job well done. Thus we welcome "Cal" to a BIG challenge in his responsibilities where he can enjoy his work among the many fine trees which his considerate predecessors have

collected, planted and tended over the years.

On behalf of ILS we extend our heartfelt best wishes to both these men as one steps aside to enjoy the fruits of his labors, and the other as he moves up to head one of the finest public park systems in North America.

-Editor

THANK YOU -

In essence, President Bob Clark received the following message under the date line of November 16, 1977; --

At a recent meeting of the Main Botanic Garden, USSR Academy of Sciences, I was presented the Director's Award of the International Lilac Society which was awarded to me at the Sixth Annual Meeting held in Amherst, Massachusetts in May of 1977. Please accept my hearty thanks for the high recognition of my work.

The activity of ILS is extremely important, and I wish every success in the efforts of this Society which unites both those who grow and appreciate as well as the breeders of lilacs throughout the world.

Sincerely yours,  
Signed: N. Mikhailov

ANNUAL MEDAL AWARDS - reprinted from  
The Nastursium-Ma.Hort. Soc., Sept. 1977

"The Jackson Dawson Medal, awarded for skill in the science and practice of hybridization and propagation of hardy woody plants:

Dr. Donald R. Egolf, Cytogeneticist at National Arboretum in Washington, DC  
Dr. Egolf has earned the respect of both botanists and



horticulturists with his work on viburnums, pyracanthas, crepe myrtles, and altheas. He is also deeply involved with the production of new cultivars of lilacs of special temperature tolerance. He is skilled in bringing about successful results in difficult plant crosses. Dr. Egolf has used embryo incision and special methods of increasing propagation where difficulties have arisen. It is a pleasure to present this medal to one who has accomplished so much in horticulture.

ACCOLADES - -

ILS member Paul R. Young was awarded the Garden Writing Citation of the American Horticultural Society at the annual Congress of that group in Pasadena, Calif. on October 29, 1977.

For 25 years he was garden writer for the Cleveland (Ohio) News. After his retirement from the News in December 1976, he wrote gardening columns for the Free Press (another Cleveland newspaper).

And, for many years Paul was supervisor of school gardens in Cleveland, developing the outstanding system of gardens for children in that city. During those years he wrote a series of lessons to be used in classrooms and also a teachers' manual to accompany them.

- I. Zucker

FOR SALE:--

The late Paul Sandahl, long-time Parks Supt. of Des Moines, Iowa had a copy of "THE LILAC" (A Monograph), by Susan Delano McKelvy, published by McMillen & Co., LTD, St. Martin's Street, London - 1928...This 581 page hard cover book is extremely rare and has an exceptional amount of documentation. (Mr. Sandahl and John Wister worked jointly on the original design of EWING PARK LILAC ARBORETUM in Des Moines).

Price is negotiable - offers of more than \$25.00 (do not send money) will be considered.

Mrs. Paul L. Sandahl  
c/o William R. Heard  
5355 Merle Hay Road  
Des Moines, Iowa 50323

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LIBRARIANS PLEASE NOTE

The name of this monthly publication of the International Lilac Society, "THE PIPELINE", will be replaced by "LILAC NEWSLETTER", starting with Vol. IV, No. 1, January, 1978.

The Legend of Santa Claus

In Lycia, a 4th Century Bishop named Nicholas of Myra started the legend of St. Nicholas as patron saint of boys, performing miracles in their behalf.

The cheery, apple-cheeked Santa Claus (from the German Sinter Klaas), is a produce of the imagination of the early Dutch settlers. Until 1820 he was a foot traveller, or occasionally rode in a wagon, dressed wholly in furs.



BITS OF WITS ---

The most successful leaders are those who recognize the creative potential of everyone on their team and make productive use of it.

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People can be divided into three groups:

Those who make things happen,  
Those who watch things happen, and  
Those who wonder what happened.

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If you expect perfection from people, your whole life is a series of disappointments, grumblings and complaints. If, on the contrary, you pitch your expectations low, taking folks as the inefficient creatures which they are, you are frequently surprised by having them perform better than you had hoped.

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No one on this earth can promise  
you security - only opportunity.

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