



Lilac Newsletter

Vol. VIII, No. 11, November, 1982

INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY

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

Articles printed in this publication are the views and opinions of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the *International Lilac Society*.

This publication, *LILAC NEWSLETTER* (formerly *THE PIPELINE*) is issued monthly. Back copies are available by writing to the International Lilac Society, c/o Mr. Charles Holetich, Royal Botanical Gardens, Box 399, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. L8N 3H8. Please send 50 cents for each copy requested.

President: Dr. Owen M. Rogers,
University of New Hampshire, Dept. of Plant Science,
Nesmith Hall, Durham, N.H. 03824.

Secretary: Walter W. Oakes*
Box 315, Rumford, Maine, 04276

Treasurer: Mrs. Marie Chaykowski
4041 Winchell Road, Mantua, Ohio, 44255

Editor: Ms. Mary C. Smith,
Rte. 2, Bellevue, Iowa. 52031.

INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY,
William A. Utley, Ex. Vice-Pres.,
Grape Hill Farm, Devereaux Rd., Clyde, NY 14433.

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Single annual | \$ 7.50 |
| Family | 10.00 |
| Sustaining | 15.00 |
| Institutional/Commercial | 20.00 |
| Life | 150.00 |

*Mail membership dues to I.L.S. Secretary.

Dear I.L.S. Members:

There are times when I feel rich; other times, I feel poor. Rich, when I have a neat stack of material and articles for the Newsletter and poor, when the mailman doesn't bring more from members before I get to the bottom of that stack.

In addition to the kinds of articles we have been using and will continue to use, we have a need for timely tips and information of seasonal interest. There have been several members who have expressed the wish for this kind of help for the average gardener who likes to grow lilacs.

Such information would include: choice of lilac; source of lilac; when, how and where planted; and how and when it is cared for after it is planted.

I am asking for help from all regions so that we can soon use such practical advice in the monthly Newsletter.

There are members, also, who say they like to read descriptions of various lilacs, where they are planted and how fragrant they are.

So, share with other members your observations and experiences (successful and unsuccessful) in the growing and enjoying of lilacs. Help from the gardener who grows only a few plants is just as valuable as from those who garden by the acre.

I will be waiting for news.

Editor.

PROPAGATION OF SYRINGA RETICULATA AND FORMS

by Joerg Leiss

Sheridan Nurseries Limited

Oakville, Ontario, Canada

Up to a few years ago the "Japanese Tree Lilac" had been known as Syringa amurensis japonica in the trade. The confusion in names comes from the many botanists that described the tree.

Blume described it in 1855 as Ligustrum reticulata. Maximowicz in 1875 used the name Syringa amurense var. japonica. This name was also used by Franchet and Savatier in 1879. However, Hara is to be credited with the now valid name Syringa reticulata.

In 1876 Dr. W.S. Clark of the Agricultural School in Sapporo, on Hokkeido, Japan sent seeds to the Arnold Arboretum where it was grown under the Accession #IIII. One can surmise that considerable seed was sent because within 8 years nurseries such as "Ellwanger and Barry" of Rochester and "H.H. Berger" of San Francisco besides various nurseries in Europe listed the tree for sale. It is a small tree growing to 10 m with a peeling shiny bark similar to cherry. It is usually multi-stemmed and flowers toward the end of June with immense, terminal white flower clusters 50 to 60 cm long and 40 to 50 cm wide. Since it is found in the wild along stream banks, it grows well under moist conditions unlike most lilacs. Sheridan Nurseries grows the tree single stemmed or as an unpruned bush. We found it to be variable in growth and some plants exhibited extreme chlorosis. To grow a more uniform tree

and one that would grow without chlorosis we selected a number of plants, of which the best was named 'Ivory Silk'. When budded onto Syringa reticulata seedlings it produces an upright 2 to 3 m tree within 3 years after budding. The tree calipers well and makes a more oblong crown than the round headed seed form. It flowers after 6 to 8 years and has the further advantage of being hardy as far north as Edmonton, Alberta. Syringa reticulata is quite adaptable to city conditions and is used as a street tree in our area. Herbicides such as Simazin are to be avoided as with all Oleaceae.

Propagation

Seeding: The seed ripens towards the middle of October and is best picked early in the morning or when the weather is damp to prevent shattering. It is cleaned and fall seeded in beds covered with a layer of sand 2 to 4 cm thick and mulched with straw. There are 3000 seeds per 100g. Germination does not occur until August of the following year and little growth beyond cotyledons happens in that year. Despite their tender appearance, the seedlings will survive the first winter with only a straw cover. Modification to the seed treatment; such as additional warm-cool periods have not shown earlier germination.

For the second year a high nitrogen fertilizer at the rate of 37 kg of Nitrogen per hectare applied each month from May to August, should produce a 25 cm seedling 2 to 4 mm thick. As this is not of budding size, the seedling is transplanted for another year when it should develop into a 40 to 50 cm, 5 to 8 mm plant at the end of the third season after seeding.

Budding of Syringa reticulata 'Ivory Silk': The 3 year seedling is lined out into field rows at a spacing of 120 cm x 45 cm. Budding by T-bud is done in July when growth has hardened. We like to place the bud in the direction of the prevailing wind. Rubber strips are used as ties. These are cut off when union has taken place. In the spring of the following year, the understock is reduced to 10 cm above the bud. The bud is tied to the understock as soon as it reaches 10 cm. The bud does grow straight without staking up to 180 cm. Very seldom does it branch during the first year. The second year after budding any side branches are reduced to 20 cm along the stem and a light head is produced. In late summer, all side branches are removed from the stem. The third year a good head develops and the stem is kept clean. The tree is ready for sale by fall. Transplanting is easy because of the fibrous root system.

Cuttings: The trend in modern tree nurseries is to produce tree varieties on their own root. We tried to root Syringa reticulata 'Ivory Silk' with the following objectives in mind: Seedlings take as much as four years to be buddable and any reduction of this time would be valuable. The resulting tree grown from cuttings might be more uniform. We therefore, ran a trial of 1000 cuttings treated with #3 hormone powder on July 12th, 1980. Cuttings were 20 to 25 cm long with tips left in. They were placed into a greenhouse bench, in a sand and perlite medium; 10 minute interval, 5 seconds misting was used. 87% were rooted when dug up in October. The cuttings were placed into cold storage until Spring 1981 and planted out into beds. As 80% of the plants flowered, the flowers were removed to stimulate growth. The size of these cuttings was 40 cm

at the end of the season. On June 23, 1981, 9000 cuttings were made. 2560 of these rooted or 35.1%. Because of the larger space requirement these cuttings were made in a shaded outside mist bed. After 6 weeks, not enough root action was observed and we felt the soil temperature was too low. We removed the cuttings, retreated them with #3 powder and placed them in a greenhouse. At this time the results would indicate that our best course of action is to root these cuttings in a greenhouse. We can now produce a field liner of the variety wanted in two summers instead of the four years from seed to understock. Of course we also eliminated the work of budding. I hope that my talk will help to fill a gap because the demand for this tree far out-distances the supply. I am indebted to the Royal Botanical Gardens - Hamilton staff for nomenclature information.

Bibliography:

- McKelvey - The Lilac, McMillan 1928
Hilliers - Manual of Trees
Krussmann - Handbuch der Laubgehölze, Paul Parey,
1960

ELECTION OF I.L.S. DIRECTORS

Every year we ask our membership to play an active role in helping the nominating committee prepare the slate for the coming election. We are looking for enthusiastic, interested members; ones who would be a great asset to our Board of Directors and help move our society forward.

Perhaps, this fits your description perfectly, then we need you. Please submit your name or anyone you know that may fulfill this need and mail to:

Elsie L. Kara, Chairwoman
Nominating Committee
24540 Emmons Rd.
Columbia Station, Ohio
U.S.A. 44028

To be assured of consideration, your suggestions should be received before February 1, 1983.

Following is a list of Directors currently serving:

Elected 1980
(for 3 year term) Due for re-election in May 1983.

Marie Chaykowski
Nancy Emerson
Dr. Joel Margaretten
Walter Eickhorst
Winfried Martin
Lyle Littlefield
John Carvill
Pauline Fiala

Elected 1981
(for 3 year term)

George Kidd
Dr. Donald Egolf
Roger Luce
Sarah Schenker
Thomas Chieppo
Maurice Lockwood
John Alexander III
Elsie Kara

Elected 1982
(for 3 year term)

Dr. Robert Clark
Fr. John Fiala
William Heard
Charles Holetich
Walter Oakes
Max Peterson
Dr. Owen Rogers
William Utley

* * * * *

"Why doesn't my lilac bush bloom much?"

"My lilacs are too tall and they're an eyesore."

"I'm looking for smaller lilacs, where can I find them?"

If you have heard any of these questions from your friends or neighbors why not send them an ILS membership for Christmas or as a birthday gift or even as a 'thank you' to someone who has given you a favor.

Editor

LANDSCAPE LILACS

Little-leaved lilacs blend into their surroundings because their foliage is fine-textured, their flowers refined as to size and sweetness, while their canes, if not the right proportion, can easily be kept within bounds. In short, these true lilacs can become components of the garden without calling attention to themselves as lilacs. Lilac or pink their flowers are small-sized for lilacs. Often they are borne in profusion along slender branches, and they bloom at the same season as those of the common lilac.

There are several distinct species and derivative cultivars of little-leaved lilacs. Syringa microphylla literally means little-leaved lilac. Its cultivar 'Superba', introduced by Chenault in 1934, is a free-flowering pinkish form well named and worthy of any garden.

Meyer's lilac is a more compact plant with reblooming possibilities, depending upon the dampness of the season. Its cultivar 'Palibin' is a dwarf or slow-growing form to eye height, now much planted and with good reason. It is easy to grow, sending out suckers which may be separated by a spade and planted elsewhere only to bloom in a year or two. Its pale lilac flowers are deliciously sweet.

A third cultivar, not yet distributed, is a deeper toned form of Syringa julianae, found in the Rochester park bearing its name: 'George Eastman'. This is a graceful shrub which should soon be available to ILS members as stock can be developed.

'Miss Kim', a dwarf or slow-growing form of Syringa patula from Korea, is still another favorite landscape lilac. The account of its discovery was

told in an early issue of the Lilac Newsletter.

Landscape lilacs are found among species of the common lilac. For example, the first lilac to be brought out of China, Syringa laciniata, is a small shrub with arching canes and cut leaves. It bears great wands of lilac-colored small flowers. A hybrid, S. laciniata X S. pinnatifolia, made by Upton, has not been widely distributed but is certainly worthy of cultivation.

But the landscape lilac par excellence is the Rouen or Varin lilac, Syringa X chinensis. Its florets resemble those of the common lilac, one of its parents, and are borne in similar clusters but in much greater profusion. Its leaves are smaller and of more refined texture, but the shrub is capable of attaining large proportions, up to 10 or 12 foot height and spread, and therefore not adapted to restricted sites such as a small city plot. Several forms according to flower color are recognized.

The early-flowering hybrids of S. vulgaris X S. oblata, especially the Korean form, dilatata, made by Dr. F.L. Skinner, merit widespread attention not alone for their extreme hardiness but also for their smaller stature. I have a misidentified cultivar (under the name of 'Dr. Chadwick') which appears pale lilac but soon fades to white. It is also precocious, that is, it blooms while still small, and would seem to belong among rock garden plants.

Finally, and not to be overlooked is the last to bloom, a small tree from Japan, Syringa reticulata with its huge creamy pompoms amid glossy dark green leaves. It is a distinctive tree, to 25 feet in height, with cherry-like bark, and requires a large garden to show it off.

IN MEMORIAM

We have received word of the death last spring of Mrs. Stanley M. Rowe, Sr.. She was a member of the Society since the early years of its founding and her interest continued in its success. She enjoyed her lilac collection of more than 150 species and cultivars and Mr. Rowe observes that she was able to keep each one of them and their name in her mind. She was a charming and delightful lady who is sadly missed by family and friends.