



Lilac Newsletter

Vol. VIII, No. 8, August, 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*.

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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.

COMMENTS ON THE 1982 CONVENTION

Letters I have received from attending members at the 1982 convention in Ottawa are most enthusiastic - makes me sorry I missed it.

Max Peterson writes that one of the highlights was the auction, that fun event held on the last evening of the meeting. He thought it amusing to wonder what other guests in the inn were thinking when they heard a gravel voice yell, "Sold to the man in the back row with paddle number six".

He explained that the Ohio chapter made ping pong type paddles which were numbered and painted lilac. Each member used his numbered paddle when bidding and the number was used to register the final bid. It expedited the final tallying, and further, caused exclamations such as, "I spent that much"!

One Mrs. Sipp of Durham, NC was accused of venting her frustration at losing a bid by slamming her paddle down on the table. But, as Max says the event is fun and it affords an opportunity for the members to pick up a wanted lilac, and is a way for the Society to earn a little money.

From Travers Hutchison - "The program was very good on both days. Ottawa is a beautiful city with fine public buildings and beautiful lilacs, gardens, trees, tulips which we all enjoyed.

Hans Schenker presided as auctioneer, assisted by John Carvill, Max Peterson and Bill Emerson. Marie, Elsie and Pauline Fiala kept a record of sales.

The group which attends most years since about 1973 have got to know one another fairly well, and certainly seem happy to pick up the threads of their acquaintance year by year.

Charles Holetich writes, "I had a super time, and in view that I know what it takes to stage a good convention may I sincerely say -- Thank you Trevor and Brenda Cole.

Editor

MORE ABOUT OUR CONVENTION

The Ottawa convention was very impressive. The Canadians gave us the royal treatment with a reception of champagne and the gamut. Our hosts were outstanding; we can readily see why they are called the Royal Canadians.

The tour of the city was most inspiring with the outstretched waterways and carefully manicured lawns. The tulips and lilacs were at their best. The colors were magnificent and breathtaking. We learned that the Queen of the Netherlands sends 10,000 bulbs each year for planting and the City of Ottawa plants another 120,000 bulbs. What an awesome sight; this alone was well worth the trip. The picturesque capital buildings are on a hill; the hillsides are beautifully landscaped with shrubs and lilacs. All the roofs of these buildings are of copper that have turned a shade of green. This can be spotted from miles away and amplifies the beauty of the city.

How do Canadians keep up the parks and roads? They don't believe in welfare; every able person works. A good number are employed by the government; this keeps the money in circulation. Marion Dewar, the Mayor of Ottawa, informed us that they have a good police force and problems are minimal.

The inhabitants of Ottawa are proud of their city and say they would never leave, "We have some bad winters but they only last a few months; the spring and summer make up for it".

There is so much to see in Ottawa, our time was limited and we had to be on the move. We do hope that those "Royal Canadians" will ask us back.

Ohio Chapter I.L.S.

CONVENTION NOTES FROM ELSIE KARA

We stayed at the Chimo Inn and were informed by Myron Zucker that Chimo in Eskimo means Welcome. A warm welcome showed all around us with the scent of lilacs and beautiful arrangements made by Ottawa's Horticultural Society.

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Amherst College is dedicating their sports field to Al Lumley. Since the school colors are purple and white, two beautiful 'Sensation' lilacs will be planted on the field at the dedication ceremony. ('Sensation' is a purple lilac edged in white). We all loved and knew Al as a great lilac enthusiast. I.L.S. thanks Walter Oakes for donating the lilacs from his private collection for this great cause.

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Pauline Fiala sent out all the mailings from the United States and forgot to mail her registration for the I.L.S. Convention; however, those Big Hearted Canadians let her stay.

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Overheard at the Carvill table that the trip was shorter than anticipated, only 277 miles from home.

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The Colonel was in remarkable condition after recovering from many broken bones in his auctioneering arm. The treasury was thankful for that.

The Ohio Chapter has been promoting lilacs throughout Ohio by displaying them in banks, churches, industrial parks, meetings and taking them to the sick in hospitals. Clare Short is retired and a heart by-pass patient who enjoys taking his lilacs to the sick at Elyria Memorial Hospital.

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New Rooting Compound discovered by the University of Penn.. Les Nichols states that they found that they had wonderful rooting results from cuttings by dipping them in a compound made by mashing young growth from the willow into a pulp then adding a small amount to water and letting it stand for ½ hour. (Why not try it on lilac cuttings and let us know of the results.)

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Father John Fiala will have a new book on lilacs released soon. We are told that it has some beautiful pictures and up-to-date data. We are all looking forward to seeing it.

TRANSPLANTING LILACS

Moving lilac bushes about is not only a necessity but a favorite pastime of gardeners as well, a necessity when bringing new plants to the garden or transferring them from home nursery to permanent location, a pastime when the present site is unsuitable and an alternative one holds promise. We must, however, apply common sense along three lines, principles, proper season, and optimum site, if we can reasonably hope for success in our transplanting operation.

Regarding principles I would remind you that transplanting can be "traumatic" to the plant since it involves uprooting and transporting it, an unnatural process in the extreme when you consider a seedling sprouted in rocky crevices, among brambles or ideally in fertile soils. The gardener first severs the roots, or a large portion of them, has to protect the remainder from drying out during the process, then ensure their re-establishment under the most favorable conditions he can provide.

In a previous column, titled "Pruning", I talked about carbohydrate (C)/nitrogen (N) relationship in the plant's life cycle. Transplanting is a form or application of pruning -- root pruning, and it upsets the C/N balance depending upon the severity or clumsiness of the process and/or the age or dormancy of the lilac. Up to the setting of flower buds a woody plant passes through the nitrogen dominant phase of growth, thereafter it goes into the carbohydrate phase remaining in it variously until the plant declines in vigor or otherwise fails to bloom. Therefore, when we sever the extreme portion of a plant's roots -- that segment containing root hairs -- we

deprive the plant of its ability to absorb water.

If transplanting is done while the plant's leaves are unfolding or have not yet become mature and firm, the leaves wilt, a distress signal. Revival can be restored by insuring adequate moisture in the soil/or cooling the atmosphere about the plant. Recovery depends upon the plant's ability to regenerate functioning roots and the gardener's success in maintaining high humidity around the leaves. An extreme to check wilting would be to reduce the amount of foliage by removing subordinate shoots or basal leaves of primary ones.

These considerations lead to the question of which season is best for transferring from one site to a better one. The preferred time is when the lilac is dormant (I'm referring of course to the common or "French hybrid" lilacs). In the leafless resting state lilacs do not demand attention, so that early spring (late winter) or late fall are prime times for lilac transplanting.

If transplanting is done with a firm rootball and not too many roots are disturbed, the planter can look for good results. If, however, the job is done bare-rooted and large portions of the lilac's roots are broken or severed, the gardener ought prudently to compensate for such reduction of plant capacity by reducing the number of shoot buds accordingly, first the smaller, weaker ones, finally in extreme instances even a percentage of the large primary buds including the tip (potentially flowering) buds.

An alternative season for moving flower-bearing lilacs -- a practice which I've found useful for several years -- is to do the job in mid-summer with a rootball, keeping an eye peeled for incipient wilting. Even though the plant is in full leaf the midseason lilac behaves as if dormant and I've had complete success. Of course,

midsummer transplanting is not for everyone, not the inexperienced gardener, nor the timid one, not in drought, nor extreme heat, not without adequate water available.

The proper site for common lilacs is in full sun, good garden (fertile) soil and adequate moisture, in brief, wherever you can grow maize. Heavy clay soils may require soil drainage or raised beds. Sandy "soils" require a thick mulch or irrigation or both, plus regular fertilizer applications. Nothing practical, of course, takes the place of sunshine for flower production.

In sum, reasonable success in blooming capacity may be realized, indeed expected, provided proper consideration is given to the right site selection, careful transplanting procedures during dormancy and thought for the plant's minimum requirements for growth and development.

-Lilacs-

IN MEMORIUM

From the Kennebec Journal, July 16, 1982 of Augusta, Maine, we learned that our dear member Cora Lindsey Lyden died July 9 at the age of 90.

She held the position of president or director in many organizations, not to forget her work with lilacs.

Many may remember her from the I.L.S. Convention at Durham, NH. She was a writer for numerous publications, always cheerful and friendly, for which she will always be remembered.



from the Registrar's Desk

Freek Vrugtman, Curator of Collections, Royal Botanical Gardens, Box 399, HAMILTON, Ontario CANADA L8N 3H8

"Canada Gem" lilac

In the September 1976 issue (vol.2, no.9, p.2) of the I.L.S. PIPELINE I reported on my findings concerning the "Canada Gem" and "Canadian Tree" lilacs offered for sale by the J.W. Jung Seed Co. of Randolph, Wisconsin. We obtained three plants of the "Canada Gem" lilac in April 1976. Dr. James S. Fringle, plant taxonomist at the Royal Botanical Gardens, took a critical look at these plants last May, comparing their flowers with those of the Syringa X josiflexa and S. X prestoniae cultivars in our collection. He found that our "Canada Gem" appears to be identical to S. X prestoniae 'Constance' in both vegetative and floral details, and that it does not closely resemble any of the other cultivars.

It must be emphasized that this identification is valid only for the plants in the RBG collection; it provides evidence, however, that what is in the trade as "Canada Gem" lilac is a mixture of S. X prestoniae cultivars.

Syringa X hyacinthiflora 'Grace Mackenzie',
Skinner, 1942

When the late Dr. Frank L. Skinner of Skinner's Nursery, Dropmore, Manitoba, Canada, registered his new lilac cultivar 'Grace Mackenzie' he listed its parentage as S. X persica X (S. oblata var. dilatata X S. vulgaris). (Woody Plant Register, List No.1 (AAN Register 57). American Association of Nurserymen. 1949.) This past May Dr. James S. Pringle studied the plant in the RBG lilac collection; this plant was received originally from the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Morden, Manitoba, and there should be no doubt about its authenticity. Dr. Pringle has found no evidence of S. X persica parentage and recommends that 'Grace Mackenzie' be classified as a S. X hyacinthiflora cultivar.

It should be noted that the correct spelling of 'Grace Mackenzie' appears to be with a small "k"; in the Skinner's Nursery catalogue of 1942 the cultivar name is written in capital letters throughout; in the 1949 AAN Register and in Horticultural Horizons (1966) Skinner spelled the name "Mackenzie".

The following article appeared in the St. Edward Advance of Albion, Nebraska. It appeared under the by-line of Skeedee Scribbles by Jean Strand.

Editor

How did the Lilac bushes know that we may not have a good corn crop? Have you heard that old farmers' saying? If the lilacs bloom lavishly in the spring, with lots and lots of flowers, we are to have a good corn crop. But if the flowers are few the corn crop is to be slim. Now I don't know how a common old lilac bush can predict if the corn crop will be good or not, but I do know that our bushes outdid themselves the past couple of years. Bushels of beautiful flowers not only looked pretty, smelled magnificent, but gave us a ray of hope that a good corn crop would be ours in the fall. And it was.

But... this spring our faces fell, as we noted there were only a few clusters of flowers on the very top branches. And it wasn't only our own lilac bushes, there were others whose springtime beauty was noticeable less this year.

We dismissed the fact with an inward smile. How could an old lilac bush know anything about such things?

Now we recall that observation, as the rains began their never ending patter for several weeks now and farmers are unable to plant a kernel of corn. And time goes on and on and still no corn is being planted. With the extremely late planting, how will our corn crop turn out?

Were those Lilacs telling us something? I hope not!