



# Lilac Newsletter

Vol. IX, No. 7, July, 1983

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.

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THE KOREAN EARLY LILAC

BY Robert B. Clark, Meredith, NH

Pink and perfumed characterizes the Korean lilac, Syringa oblata var. dilatata, earliest lilac to bloom at Birchwood. It is a single-stemmed six foot shrub standing on a high banking above Lake Winnepesaukee. Its airy flower clusters completely cover this round-headed lilac. They are paired and loose, measuring eight to ten inches long. "One of the most beautiful of all lilacs", writes Mrs. McKelvey, in her monograph "The Lilac" (1928, page 187), "although", she hastens to add, "every specimen is not of equal decorative value".

The Birchwood specimen came from the Wister garden as Swarthmore ten years ago as Wyoming No. 40. He got it from Cheyenne ten or more years before that, where Dr. A.C. Hildreth, at that time director of the Experiment Station, grew six plants from a U.S.D.A. offering, and that's as far as I've been able to trace it. Professor E.H. Wilson of the Arnold Arboretum collected seed some 35 miles northwest of Keijyo, Korea, in September 1917. It is possible that our plant derives from the Wilson seed. Dr. F.L. Skinner used the Wilson seed in 1921 for his S. hyacinthiflora crosses, several of which he selected for introduction.

I like the natural form, however, for its grace, colour and fragrance of flower plus its autumn foliage colour. Also, I'm trying to grow it as a small tree.

GROWING LILACS IN CALIFORNIA

by Dr. Joel Margaretten

It is important to label your lilacs. Metal tags are best but plastic tags are suitable and inexpensive. Nursery supply stores carry plain tags in various sizes and colors. The lilac's name can be written on the tag with an indelible pencil that won't smear or wash off. Drill a hole in the tag and tie it loosely to a branch with a copper wire. I use copper wire salvaged from a burned out electric motor. There is enough wire in one motor for a thousand labels. If you do not keep burned out electric motors in your garage you can buy scrap wire from any electric motor repair shop.

Persons who have limited garden space or live in an apartment with a balcony can have lilacs. A lilac can be potted in a half wine barrel or in a large redwood tub. Place the tub on some bricks to keep it off the floor and fill it with good soil. Place it in the sun and water a little more frequently than lilacs planted in the garden, as a potted plant dries out faster.

LILAC HYBRIDIZATION

AS SEEN AND PRACTICED BY LEONID KOLESNIKOV

Though I have never made a single cross pollination and my theoretical knowledge on the subject is very sketchy, I have a very high opinion about lilac cultivars introduced by L. Kolesnikov, and of course, many other hybridists of North America and Europe.

While recently reading L. Kolesnikov's book "Lilac", issued by Foreign languages publishing house - Moscow - 1955, I found a number of passages very interesting and worthy to be shared, so here they are:

"There are three main stages in the process of selection, all of them inseparably bound. The first is disjoining the plant's heredity, the next rearing the plant thus acted on, and the last artificial selection, which secures the desired characters and properties.

A plant-selector is able to change its heredity in the manner he wants by exposing it to appropriate conditions of soil, nutrition, temperature, etc.

At its earlier stage a young hybrid is extremely pliant and easily succumbs to the influence of its surroundings.

Prior to crossing, the parents received the best of care and conditions.

The more double the flower, the fewer and feebler are its stamens and the weaker its pistil, which is naturally a great hindrance to artificial pollination. My remedy is to sustain them for a year in severe conditions, having shortened

their roots and transplanted them into less nutritive soil.

As a result of modified conditions and poorer nutrition my "super-double" flowers became less double, while the number of stamens grew and the pistil became normal, i.e., accessible for artificial pollination.

Through many years I have observed that parent plants of cultivated strains on roots of their own produce a larger proportion of cultivated hybrids with a maximum of the qualities, characters, and pre-inclinations planned to appear in them by the breeder.

The pistil can be considered most ready for pollination when its stigma opens and emits little drops of shining liquid, best detected with a magnifying lens. The pollen should be applied very carefully, so as not to hurt the stigma.

Sometimes instead of whole panicles I cross only separate florets, and remove the remainder of the panicle, thus transmitting the whole food-supply to the pollenized floret(s) whose seed is thus formed and matures in better conditions. Once, for instance, when examining a panicle with yet unopened buds I noticed one floret of extraordinary size, structure, and doubleness. I took measures to isolate the bud. Its great size when it flowered and amazing doubleness made it look like a garden daisy. It was very attractive and delicate.

I managed to pollenize the flower and obtained seed. The resulting hybrid No. 126 at its first flowering gave some florets like the one I had found on the maternal shrub. There were a few of them in each panicle. One especially large floret had 63 petals.

At present (1955) I am still perfecting that hybrid.

Cross-breeding is very painstaking work. I practise it quite often, using different methods.

Thus, I sometimes first endeavour to establish a closer affinity between the two plants by grafting one on the other. They flower side by side and long before crossing are already closer related as parts of one plant. After this the crossing itself takes less time than usual.

Or otherwise just before bloom I remove the stamens from the florets of a maternal strain and then draw up the panicle near to another growing on a neighbouring shrub. Then I smear the pedicels and peduncles with honey or molasses to attract insects. When those alight on the panicle I instantly cover them with a net. Within the net they crawl from flower to flower, saving me trouble and doing my job better than I ever could myself. As a result the seeds germinate quite well."

If the above information triggers further discussion and comments about lilac hybridization procedures, and thus offers new opinions and know-how, then many will benefit.

I would certainly like to know about selection and breeding procedures used by Edward J. Gardner. Would you?

Charles Holetich  
c/o Royal Botanical Gardens  
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Hamilton, Ontario  
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MONEY PAID FOR LILAC PLANTS AT 1983 ILS AUCTION

Dear Charlie,

Enjoyed being with you again at Madison. Am enclosing the auction data if needed for plant propagation for '84 meeting. My sincere thanks for your coloured slides and comments!

I really enjoyed the Canadian Beer - Many Thanks - drinking it gave me a much needed rest and a chance to catch a second breath.

Your plants earned \$771.35 for ILS.

Best regards,

Hanssen Schenker.

P.S. My sincere thanks for the plants!!

Wisconsin Arboretum

'Bleuatre' \$9.00  
'Andenken an Ludwig Spaeth' 7.50  
'Congo' 5.50  
'Macrostachya' 5.00

Heard Nursery

'Anabel' 16.00  
S. oblata dilatata 8.50  
'Asessippi' 5.00

Holden Arboretum

'Primrose' 5.00 & 4.75

W. Horman

'Jessica' 10.50  
'Mount Baker' 9.00  
'Serene' 8.50  
'Hallelujah' 8.00  
S. komarowii 7.50  
'Le Printemps' 7.50



'Reamur' 7.50  
'Diplomate' 4.50  
'General Sheridan' 4.50  
'Montaigne' 4.50  
'Prodige' 4.50  
'Edmond Boissier' 4.00  
'Jules Simon' 4.00  
'Michel Buchner' 4.00  
'Patrick Henry' 4.00  
'Virginia Becker' 4.00  
'Paul Hariot' 3.50  
'Marechal Lannes' 3.00  
S. villosa 2.50

Wedge Nursery

'Pocahontas' 10.00  
'Katherine Havemeyer' 10.00  
'Mme. Lemoine' 9.00  
'Paul Thirion' 9.00  
'Pres. Poincare' 9.00  
'Charles Joly' 8.50  
'Pres. Lincoln' 8.50  
'Olivier de Serres' 7.50  
'Firmament' 7.50  
'Belle de Nancy' 6.50  
'Andenken an Ludwig Spaeth' 6.00  
'Congo' 6.00  
'Monge' 6.00  
'General Sheridan' 4.50

Royal Botanical Gardens

'Freedom' 22.50  
'Frank Paterson' 22.00  
'Nike' 18.50  
S. sweginzowii 14.50  
'Tom Taylor' 13.00  
'Krasavitsa Moskv'y' 12.95

'Souv. de Mme. Louis Gielis' 12.00  
'Esther Staley' 11.50  
'Miss Canada' 11.00  
'Marshal Zhukov' 11.00  
'Turgot' 10.50  
'Geheimrat Heyder' 10.50  
'Rochester' 10.50  
'Sensation' 10.50  
S. reflexa 10.00  
'Anne Shiach' 10.00  
'Frank Paterson' 10.00  
'Excellent' 9.50  
'Etoile de Mai' 9.00  
'Nadezdha' 9.00  
'Romance' 9.00  
'Sylvia' 8.50  
'White Hyacinth' 8.00  
'Jesse Gardner' 7.00  
'Donald Wyman' 6.50  
'Utro Moskvu' 6.00  
'Milton' 6.00  
'Mrs. Harry Bickle' 6.00  
'Charles Joly' 4.50  
'Dwight D. Eisenhower' 4.50  
S. reticulata 4.25  
'Danton' 4.00

Total Lilacs sold - 150  
No. of Lilac cultivars - 69  
ILS Treasury enriched by \$1,457.00

Hanssen Schenker,  
Auction Chairman.

CORRECTION:

Miss Hillstrom deserves much credit for writing so engagingly about our favorite plant. However, I find one tiny inaccuracy in the account of the Rouen lilac. Mrs. McKelvey in her monograph "THE LILAC" (page 401) gives the history of this hybrid in detail. Herr Willdenow, without thorough investigation, proposed the botanical name Syringa chinensis and we are stuck with a misnomer. The Rouen or Varin lilac never knew China.

Bob Clark

Miss Hillstrom's article reprinted in the April 1983 issue first appeared in THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURIST, April 1982.

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FUTURE CONVENTION SITES

- 1984 - Burlington, Vermont  
Contact Tom Chieppo, 10 Brightwood Rd. ,  
Woodbridge, CT 06525
- 1985 - Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn, NY  
Contact Daniel Ryniec, Brooklyn Garden, 1000  
Washington, Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225
- 1986 - Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Canada  
Contact Charles Holetich, Box 399, Hamilton,  
Ontario, Canada L8N 3H8
- 1987 - Denver Botanic Garden (not yet confirmed)
- 1988 - Rochester, NY 100th anniversary of  
Highland Park collection.