



# Lilac Newsletter

Vol. XI, No. 7, July, 1985

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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**INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY,**  
William A. Utley, Ex. Vice-Pres.,  
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\*Mail membership dues to I.L.S. Secretary

1985 Elections To The Board Of Directors

At the Convention in New York, the following people were elected to three year terms (1985-1988) on the Board of Directors of the International Lilac Society.

Mr. Dan Cohen	Mr. William Horman
Mr. William Heard	Mr. Walter Oakes
Mr. Charles Holetich	Dr. Owen Rogers
Mr. Neal Holland	Mr. Roger Vick

They join with those below to form the Society's governing body.

1983-86 Term

1984-87 Term

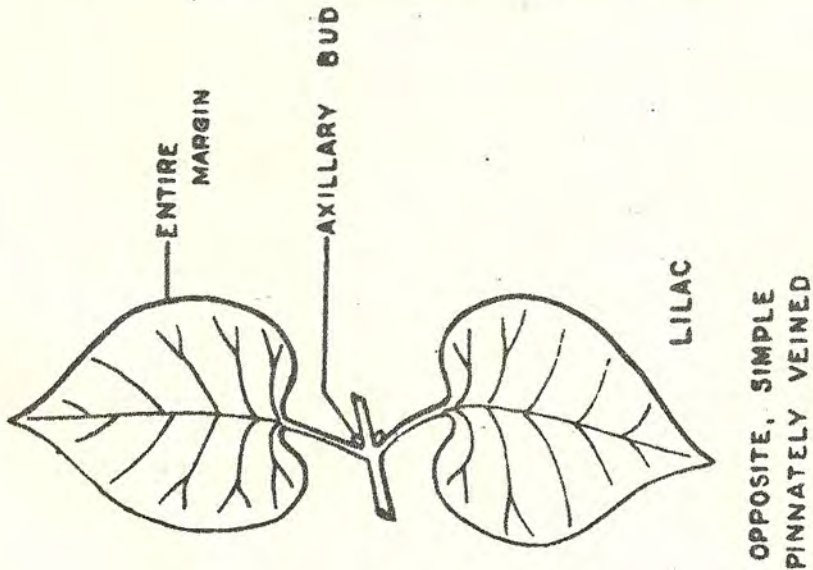
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Election of Officers

It is with pleasure that the Board of Directors announces that the following officers have been elected for 1985-86.

President . . . . .	Mr. Charles Holetich
Executive Vice President	Mr. William Utley
Secretary to the Society .	Mr. Walter Oakes
Recording Secretary . . .	Mrs. Pat Cohen
Treasurer . . . . .	Mr. Walter Eickhorst
Editor Pro Tem . . . . .	Dr. Owen Rogers

These are your officers and they need your help. A single idea from each member would become a flood of good work in our joint goal of promoting the lilac. Let them hear from you.



# Cultivar Names of Lemoine's Lilacs

## Part I

by

*Robert B. Clark*

Meredith, New Hampshire

A little appreciated aspect of lilacs is the fancy names which are given to them by their breeder or nurseryman. Each cultivar, besides its distinctive character of form and/or color, bears a name peculiar to itself, a name which may relate it to something, place or person. It has become customary over the past century and one-half to honor celebrated personages by bestowing his or her name upon a particularly noteworthy lilac. Victor Lemoine, who introduced more than 200 cultivars, resorted to this practice, a precedent which breeders today find difficult to ignore.

I have long been fascinated by the Lemoine selection of cultivar names, as much as by his choice lilacs themselves, and I venture to survey his complete repertory in a five part series beginning with his descriptive epithets. The numerals beside each entry designates the ordinal appearance in Roger's "Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*" (NH Agric. Exp. Sta. Research Rept. 49, Durham 1976). The date following each entry represents the date of introduction by Lemoine et Fils of Nancy. The capital letters S or D stand for single- or double-flowered and the Roman numerals indicate the following color categories adopted by Wister, "Lilacs for America" (Arthur Hoyt Scott Hort. Found., Swarthmore 1953): I white, II violet, III blue and bluish, IV lilac, V pink and pinkish, VI reddish purple, VII purple.

- 2 Alba, Henryi cv., 1934, S V, white
- 3 Albida (Sweginzowii x tomentella) 1930, S I, white
- 6 Ambassadeur, 1930, S III, ambassador, messenger, envoy
- 8 Archevêque, 1923, D VII, archbishop

- 10 Banquise, 1905, D I, ice-belt, ice-floe, bank (of fog)
- 11 Belle de Nancy, 1891, D V, beauty of Nancy
- 26 Bicolor, chinensis cv., 1853, S I, two-colored
- 13 Boule Azurée, 1919, S III, sky blue head or ball
- 16 Candeur, 1931, S I, candor, ingenuousness, openness of heart
- 19 Carmen, 1918, D V, heroine of Bizet's opera
- 36 Congo, 1896, S VI, red (Congo dye for cottons)
- 38 Crépuscule, 1928, S III, twilight, daybreak
- 39 Dame Blanche, 1903, D I, actually the morning mists (from a legend of a widow who wore white)
- 44A Densiflora, Sweginzowii f., S V, densely flowered
- 50 Diplomate, 1930, S III, diplomatist, diplomatic
- 62 Etna, 1927, S VII, E. Sicilian volcano
- 63 Étoile de Mai, 1905, D V, May star
- 64 Excellens, patula cv., E. H. Wilson dwarf seedling, S VI, excellence
- 66 Firmament, 1932, S III, vault of heaven, the sky
- 67 Floreal, nanceiana cv., 1925, S V, Eighth month of 1st Republic calendar (Apr. 20 - May 19)
- 68 Fraîcheur, 1946, S I, freshness, ruddiness, luster, brilliance
- 75 Germinal (Henryi x tomentella) 1939, S VI, Seventh month of 1st Republic calendar (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19)
- 77 Gismonda, 1939, D VI, (heroine in French literature?)
- 78 Gloire de Lorraine, 1876, S VI, glory of Lorraine
- 94 La Lorraine, chinensis cv., 1899, S VI, former province of ne. France

- 97 La Mauve, 1893, D V, Literally mallow; pale bluish purple
- 101 Le Gaulois, 1884, D IV, Gaul, plain talker, figuratively old fashioned
- 102 Lemoinei, 1878, D IV, literally Lemoine's (Lilac)
- 106 Le Printemps, 1901, D V, spring, springtime
- 107 Le Progrès, chinensis cv., 1903, S IV, progress, improvement
- 109 L'Oncle Tom, 1901, S VII, hero of Stowe's 1852 novel
- 120 Marengo, 1923, S IV, Oxford grey; also battle of M., June 14, 1800, Napoleon's victory over Austria, also "poule à la M." (Foul frica-seed with mushrooms) alluding to his victory entrée
- 144 Mont Blanc, 1915, S I, highest peak in French-Italian alps
- 147 Monument, 1934, S I, tomb, memorial
- 148 Monument Carnot, 1895, D V, memorial to "Le Grande Carnot" (See entry 165, Part III)
- 153 Negro, 1899, S VII, black
- 154 Obélisque, 1894, D I, obelisk
- 156 Othello, 1900, S VI, hero of Shakesperian tragedy
- 177 Pallens (reflexa x tomentella) 1931, S V, pale
- 85 Plena, hyacinthiflora cv., 1878, D, III, double-flowered
- 164 Prairial (Henryi x tomentella) 1933, S V, Ninth month of 1st Republic calendar (May 20 - June 19)
- 173 Prodige, 1928, S VII, prodigy, wonder, marvel
- 174 Pyramidal, 1886, D IV, pyramidal, i.e., cone-shaped flower cluster
- 179 Renoncule, 1881, D IV, buttercup

- 182 Rosace, 1932, D IV, rose-window
- 183 Rubella Plena, 1881, D VI, reddish and double-flowered
- 184 Rustica, 1950, D IV, rustic
- 185 Rutilant, nanceiana cv., 1931, S VII, shining, brilliant
- 186 Saturnale, 1916, S III, after Roman god of agriculture
- 194 Superba, Sweginzowii f., 1915, S V, splendid,  
gorgeous, stately
- 197 Tombouctou, 1910, S VII, Timbuktu, port on Niger River,  
Mali
- 203 Vestale, 1910, S I, vestal, guardian to temple of Vesta
- 204 Vesuve, 1916, S VII, volcano near Naples
- 207 Violetta, 1916, D II, heroine of Dumas's "La Dame aux  
Camelias" from which Verdi composed "La Traviata"
- 208 Virginité, 1888, D V, maidenhead
- 210 Volcan, 1899, S VII, Roman god of fire and metallurgy



17 June 1985

AUCTION COMMITTEE EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP IN  
MEMORY OF WILLIAM EMERSON

The Auction Committee wishes to thank the donors to the William Emerson Scholarship Fund. To date a total of \$820 has been received at our 14th Annual Meeting and through the mail. Dr. Owen Rogers will select the recipient who will be recognized in October. The money is to be used for lilac study. The recipient will submit a report of his work and studies to be read at our 15th Annual Meeting in May, 1986 at the Royal Botanical Garden in Hamilton, Ontario.

Donations and checks may still be made payable to ILS and mailed to:

Colonel Hanssen Schenker  
Route 1, Box 130  
Freedom, New Hampshire 03836

Hanssen Schenker  
Past Auction Committee  
Chairman

## REPORT OF 1985 ILS AUCTION COMMITTEE

Because of the large number of plants donated, about 400; and cultivars, about 125; it became necessary to segregate the plants into 2 groups; about 80% being sold as retail in 4 price groups and 20% of the very best and hardest to obtain were auctioned. The expert job of segregation was accomplished by Father Fialq and Dr. Robert Clark. The retail plants were sold on Saturday morning between 9 and 11 as well as in the afternoon between 3:30 and 4:30. The Auction was held between 2 and 3:30. The new method worked out very well. Our Society's Treasury was enriched by \$2,186!

The committee wishes to thank all who contributed their time, talents, plants and money to the success of our sale and auction. Daniel Ryniec and his men at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden cared for the plants and potted them on arrival and then cared for them expertly until they were sold. The lists of plants and their colors and geneology given to those in attendance was most helpful to the buyers. Walter Eickhurst, John Carvill, and Dan Cohen were most helpful in organizing plants, delivering plants to buyers and spotting bidders.

Our Treasurer, Marie Chaykowski, ably assisted by Elsie Kara and Pauline Fialq, do their usually superb job in handling the money. Charles Holetich's slides of the cultivars auctioned were worth a thousand words and Father Fialq's words of wisdom about plant geneology were most helpful. Sally Schenker's notes made reporting much easier. Those spirited bidders and buyers made 1985 our most successful year to date. Plants and lilac-related items were contributed by the Royal Botanical Garden, Agriculture Canada Research Station at Ottawa, William Utley, Dr. Robert Clark, Wedge Nursery at Albert Lea, Minnesota, and Pauline Fialq.

See you at the 1986 meeting to be held at the end of May at the Royal Botanical Garden in Hamilton, Ontario. Hope all found their lilacs to be as beautiful as we found ours on our return home to Freedom, New Hampshire.

Hanssen Schenker  
Auction Committee  
Chairman

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#### Future Lilac Conventions

It's not too early to start making plans to attend Lilac Conventions in future years.

The 1986 convention will be from May 29 through June 1 at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

In 1987, the convention will be in Colorado at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

In 1988, we will return to Highland Park, Rochester, N.Y. to help them celebrate their centennial.

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#### THE CHINESE "COMMON" LILAC Peter Green

The closest relative to the common European lilac is undoubtedly the Chinese Syringa oblata Lindl., which is a valuable plant for gardens because it normally flowers two or three weeks earlier than the more frequently grown European S. vulgaris and its many cultivars.

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varieties within S. oblata var. oblata Rehd., var. dilatata (Nakai) Rehd. and var. giraldii (Lemoine) Rehd. (for example Bean, Trees & Shrubs Hardy in British Isles. Vol. 4, pp. 535, eighth edition), and for some years I have wondered whether var. giraldii might not be identical with the originally described plant cultivated in Beijing (Peking), and other parts of northern China, or whether it truly constitutes a distinct entity. McKelvey, in her monograph, The Lilac (1928) fails to give sufficient and convincing distinctions and a visit to Beijing and nearby Chengde observe the plants grown there and compare them with those I have known in cultivation at Kew and the Arnold Arboretum.

As a result I have come to the conclusion that what has been called var. giraldii represents the type variety of the species. The nomenclatural consequence of this, in accordance with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, is that it should be called var. oblata.

Here perhaps I may explain and comment in passing that in accordance with the Code the variety which includes the nomenclatural type of the species is named by the repetition of the specific epithet, in this case Syringa oblata var. oblata. Fortunately this practice does not generally need to concern gardeners but its adoption is spreading slowly and examples are becoming more frequent. The reasoning behind the rule is based on the concept that a species must contain within itself all its constituent infraspecific entities, so that if a variety is distinguished which differs in some way from the species as originally described it automatically infers that the plant known up till then belongs to a separate variety, the type variety. In the past such type varieties were commonly called var. typica, var. genuina etc. but by the present International Code of Botanical Nomenclature such names are no longer acceptable and the 'type' of the species is automatically distinguished by repetition of the specific epithet--technically such names are referred to as autonyms (for a fuller explanation see, for example, the introduction to Bean (op. cit. vol 1, p. 98, eighth edition))

While in China I was able to see S. oblata growing in the Beihai Park, Beijing, in a garden near the Great Wall and, extensively, in a plant nursery at the eighteenth century Summer Palace of the Qing Emperors at Chengde (Hebei Province). In China this lilac was perhaps more floriferous than when grown in Britain and it is undoubtedly a handsome plant. At Chengde I was particularly fortunate to see several hundred seedlings which had just attained flowering size planted in rows in a nursery associated with the Summer Palace. In this population a certain amount of variation in the intensity of the flower coloration was apparent, some being paler and others deeper, but the many plants all exhibited the typical lilac colour one associates with S. oblata.

In an adjacent section of this nursery at Chengde I noticed a lilac with white flowers, although being on my own and having no interpreter with me, I was unable to converse with the gardeners, but by means of sign-language and sketches I was able to confirm that this white plant needs to be propagated vegetatively while the other plants referred to above had been raised from seed. This white lilac was clearly Syringa oblata var. alba Hort. ex Rehd. (S. oblata var. affinis (L. Henry) Lingelsh.), a variety which was in cultivation in Britain at one time but may perhaps have been lost in the west, and in need of reintroduction. One suspects that it is entirely dependent on clonal reproduction and is perhaps a cultivar or, botanically, no more than a form.

Another variety of this species possessing considerable merit is also in cultivation, S. oblata var. dilatata (Nakai) Rehd., a native of Korea. This was brought to the west by E.H. Wilson in 1917 (Wilson 9232) and is still grown. This variety has recently been introduced again from South Korea through the Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium, and seed was kindly sent to Kew where it flowered in the spring of 1983. Var. dilatata is clearly part of S. oblata but the plant's whole character is less stiff, and in its growth is more spreading, its leaves have longer petioles and the inflorescences are looser and more open. In the

autumn the leaves take on a bronze coloration (a colour also to be seen in the young leaves as they open in spring), and in this may provide an added bonus, when other related lilacs display no real autumnal tints.

Finally it may be mentioned that the Italian botanist Pampanini described another variety in 1910, Syringa oblata var. hupehensis. It is only known from its original dried specimen collected in Hubei Province by Silvestri in 1907. I have not seen this material and from the description I am not convinced that it represents a variety worthy of recognition. Only time and the assemblage of more collections for study and comparison will enable a true assessment of its status to be made.

The Plantsman 6:12-13, (1984)

#### REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

The Regional Vice President's purpose is to promote the lilac and The International Lilac Society. They can answer many questions and know the proper referral when they can't. Call on them for information and put them in touch with any groups you find that are interested in lilacs.

Region 1 Northeast - ME., NH., VT., MA., CT., and RI.

Mr. Dan Cohen, Box 71, Sheffield, VT 05866

Region 2 Atlantic - NJ., NY., and PA.

Mr. John Carvill, 138 Old London Rd., Lathan, NY 12110

Region 3 South - DC., DE., MD. south and west to the Mississippi

Mrs. Elsie Kara

Region 4 Central - OH., IN., IL., MI., AND WI.

Mr. William Horman, 246 Chalmers, Detroit MI. 48215

Region 5 West - MN., IA., ND., SD., NE., MT.,  
and WY.

Mr. Max Peterson, Rt. 1, Box 824, Ogallala, NE  
69153

Region 6 Northwest - Alaska, WA., OR., and ID.

Vacant

Region 7 Pacific - CA.

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