



# Lilac Newsletter

Vol. XIII, No. 6, June, 1987

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 . . . . .	\$ 10.00
Family . . . . .	12.50
Sustaining . . . . .	20.00
Institutional/Commercial . . . . .	25.00
Life . . . . .	150.00

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



The 16th Annual Convention of the International Lilac Society was a great success. Andrew Pierce and the Denver Botanic Garden were most gracious hosts. They arranged excellent accommodations, a great program and incredible weather. I was told that there were severe thundershowers in the mountains (where we had been just hours before) and that the hotel was wet with a short, hard shower with high winds but I was inside the hotel banquet hall and never saw a drop.

It was good to see all the old friends coming in Thursday night as we tried to figure out how to get from the main hotel to the north wing and where the Hospitality and the Board rooms were located. Friday morning we went straight to the Botanic Garden for the speakers' program. Peter Green, from Kew Gardens in England, was the first speaker. Peter is the world's authority on the lilac family (Oleaceae) so his talk, illustrated with some gorgeous slides, was most informative. I gave the second talk on the results of some practical research on lilac propagation, establishment after transplanting and how to make cut lilac blooms last longer. In all three areas, it is the initial treatment that determines the outcome. The last talk was given by two people, Dr. James Feucht and Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, both from Colorado State University. They gave a great presentation on "Lilacs in Colorado: Soil Pests and Diseases." All of the talks will be published in the Lilac Proceedings so you can read all the details.

After the speakers' program, we had a whirlwind afternoon with lunch on the patio, a tour of the Denver Botanic Garden and the lilac auction. The auction, as always, was spirited and great fun. It had to be cut short because of time pressures so the remaining plants will be planted out, shipped to Rochester in the fall and available through the auction next year. Plan to be there!

The President's Dinner and Annual Meeting was a gala occasion. The Society is in good financial health and the Board is developing some very challenging new initiatives (more about them in later Newsletters).



Saturday we spent visiting gardens, the mountains and Coors Brewery. Each stop was a program in itself. Mrs. Hagaman's Garden was new and ambitious, the mountains were spectacular and covered with wildflowers, including a tiny orchid that was mightily photographed, and Coors Brewery was - well, what can I say - Coors Brewery. Fortunately, everybody made it through the lounge with the free beer, and the gift shop in time to get back to the hotel for the Awards Banquet. The awards of the Society are always exciting because they recognize outstanding achievements and because they honor some very nice people (Joel Margaretten was even speechless).

I couldn't go on the tour to the Rocky Mountain National Park on Sunday and as I returned to the airport and looked back at the snow covered mountains shining under an absolutely cloud free azure blue sky, I envied them and resolved to make time to include the post convention tours next year.

Next year we will meet at Rochester, New York - 19-22 May. Plan to be there. It will be the 100th Anniversary of the Parks system and Lilac Festival Week in Rochester so you know there will be very special events planned. The Lilac Society, in addition to its full round of internal events, will have a huge auction and will see some of the new lilacs being released to commemorate the lilac breeding work at Rochester. The post convention tour will include the Utley's Grape Hill Farm and a stop at the Cornell Plantation in Ithaca. It all sounds so good that I can hardly wait.

Your Editor



Members Elected  
to the  
Board of Directors

In its formal report to the convention, the Election Committee announced the election of the following people to a three year term (1987-1990) on the Board of Directors of the International Lilac Society.

Mr. Robert Clark	Mrs. Mary Smith
Dr. Joel Margaretten	Mr. Orville Steward
Mr. Max Peterson	Mrs. Lois Utley
Mr. Daniel Ryniec	Mr. Donald Wedge

They join these people to form the Society's governing body.

1985-88 Term

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

1986-89 Term

Mr. John Carvill  
Mrs. Mary P. Cohen  
Mrs. Nancy Emerson  
Fr. John Fiala  
Mrs. Pauline Fiala  
Mr. Winfried Martin  
Mr. Andrew Pierce  
Mr. Wilson Stampe

Election of Officers

The following officers for the Society were elected at the last Board meeting in Hamilton. They will serve until the convention in 1988.

President . . . . .	Mr. Orville Steward
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.



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Editor's Note: Walter Oakes held an Open House at his home on 7 June.  
This is the background information that he prepared to use at that time.

NOTES ON JUNGLE HISTORY  
or  
(WHAT WAS/IS GOING ON HERE?)

We bought the original property 1/T/1954 after it had been vacant and neglected for many years. The yard was a shambles of rusty steel barrels, dead trees and huge old tree stumps. These were cleared out and the land plowed, harrowed and sectioned off. We saved 3 old apple trees, the large sugar maple on the front lawn and, of course, the old American elms. We are delighted that one of them survived the Dutch elm scourge. Later on we were fortunate to buy the lot abutting our north lot line. Its only growth was a huge ramshackle garage which we soon tore down to avoid it collapsing. We built a new garage apartment on the site and the land became part of 'the jungle'.

In the spring, the first plants set were 3 lilacs from Jackson-Perkins. More were planned and my frustration at not being able to find sources led eventually to my being involved in the founding of the International Lilac Society.

Early on the search for lilacs concentrated on varieties recommended in Dr. John C. Wister's survey report Lilacs for America (1953) and those classed as novelties. Later some were obtained as seedlings from lilac hybridizers for testing and evaluation of relative merits and faults... others to save them from extinction and by propagation if they deserved it, bring them back into circulation... it has all been great fun!

As we searched also for other rare and unusual plants, we became interested in how accurate the ratings of winter hardiness were and decided to commence a long-range experimental program of hardiness testing when there was a chance that insufficient information had led to ratings which were too pessimistic for our area and on north. With solid information, we could then recommend plants which, contrary to professional advice, would grow well in at least half of Maine.

Plants were set primarily with consideration of their particularly needs but also to screen the property from neighbours, street traffic and prevailing north-westerly wind.

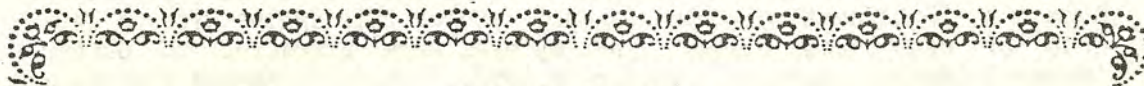


Hundreds of plants have come and gone. There have been some pleasant surprises and many dismal failures but that this would occur was accepted from the beginning. The character of the yard has changed from full sun to part and total shade. Some areas have reverted almost to a natural state where leaves are left to rot and form a natural mulch. The time available for gardening is used to care for limited flower beds and small vegetable garden with a small greenhouse in the winter.

While we don't grow lilacs on a commercial basis, we do try to provide some of those for collectors who are unable to find what they want anywhere else. We occasionally, but reluctantly, ship mail order in spring and fall. Prices are kept low depending on plant size and scarcity of the variety.

Fall is the preferred time for planting lilacs. It gives the plant time to develop roots before the ground freezes which is an advantage to it come spring. They can, however, be planted anytime if they have an adequate root system and are kept well-watered the first season. Some wilting will occur but the leaves will perk up in a week or two. Spraying with water late in the afternoon helps the plant's struggle to take up moisture. Most of these small plants will begin blooming in 2 or 3 years once established. Some may not bloom for 5 years and we have had a few take 8 years. Once the plant's basic needs are met, there is nothing to be done for it except wait and water when dry.

Gloria & Walter W. Oakes, Spring, 1987.



#### Ain't It The Truth!

The reason some people don't recognize opportunity is because it usually comes disguised as hard work. . . . Harpists are plucky musicians who work their fingers to the tone. . . . No person who questions the value of membership in an association can learn the answer until he/she joins.



## FOUR UPSTATE NEW YORK LILAC COLLECTIONS

Robert B. Clark  
Meredith, New Hampshire

This year the early hybrid lilacs bloomed on Mothers' Day in Upstate New York. The Orville Stewards and I made our annual pilgrimage over that weekend visiting Grape Hill Gardens at Clyde, Cornell Plantations at Ithaca, Highland Park at Rochester and the modest collection of James and Sally Gage at Esperance.

Outstanding this year at Highland Park was Skinner's 'Excel', floriferous and feathery at four feet with single pinkish lilac flowers. (Rob Gilbert reports that 'Excel' was outstanding at Arnold Arboretum this spring also). Dr. Skinner used *Syringa oblata* var. *dilatata*, the Korean broad-leaved earliest flowering lilac, crossed with the common lilac of the Balkans to produce a strain of superb early blooming, often very fragrant lilacs suitable for almost any garden no matter how small.

At Grape Hill Gardens, the newly incorporated public research facilities at Clyde, the early hybrid lilacs were gorgeous. Lemoine's 'Vauban', its bluish clusters covering the tall shrub, is the harbinger of lilac-time. Outstanding was 'Sister Justina', another of Dr. Skinner's early hybrids. Its single white flower cluster literally covered the broad-spreading shrub. Nearby is Maarse's 'Primrose' with its pale yellowish blooms. This curious cultivar takes years to establish its yellowness. Upslope is another of Maarse's striking introductions: a semicircle of eight 'Sensation' lilacs with its purple crosses formed by white-edged petals. Dunbar's 'President Lincoln' was outstanding this spring with a heavy crop of deep bluish blooms. But my eyes were attracted to Dunbar's 'General Sherman' which is pinkish in 1987. The fully opened florets are whitish with a dark eye, most attractive.

The Utley's two-acre lilac collection annually attracts hundreds of visitors from nearby villages and upstate cities, even from Florida and Arizona where "lilac park" has become known though word of mouth. ILS shall be invited to attend its Grand Opening next May during its seventeenth annual meeting at Rochester.



The Cornell Plantations at Ithaca dedicated a memorial lilac walk to the memory of Kevin M. Harris, class of 1972, a budding science interpreter who died tragically a few years ago. Fifty-eight members of family and friends of Cornell Plantations gathered to pay homage to a son whose memory will live on by a remarkable newly planted collection of lilacs adjacent to the Isabel Zucker renovated shrub collection. ILS members attending the Rochester annual meeting at Rochester next spring will want to visit these beautifully landscaped gardens.

The fourth garden we visited was that of Jim and Sally Gage at Esperance where young lilacs are coming into bloom after only a couple of years. The collection is modest but of quality cultivars set on spacious lawns against a towering evergreen background. Those who attend the Highland Park Centennial next May may want to visit this choice collection. Gage Lane is just across the US 20 bridge spanning Schoharie River on the detour from the New York Thruway.

I am immensely encouraged by the number of new lilac collections in the past couple of years. Besides the Ithaca and Esperance gardens, I must mention another, Dan and Pat Cohen's at Greensboro, Vermont. I'm sure there are others of which I've not heard, so I continue to be optimistic. Lilacs are in -- very in.



The Society has published several things that are still available. They include:

Tentative Check List of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*  
by Owen M. Rogers. Order from him. Price \$1.00 to members.

Upton Scrapbook of Lilac Information.

An incredible collection of practically everything about lilacs published during Mr. Upton's time. Two volumes now available.

Book I includes Vol I and II of the Scrapbook

Book II includes Vol III and IV of the Scrapbook

Both books can be ordered from Walter Oakes for \$18.50  
(\$22.50 to non-members)

Gardening on the Prairies by Roger Vick

This volume was announced at this year's convention. While not strictly an ILS publication, it features the most up-to-date and effective methods of home gardening in the Canadian prairie provinces and Northern Great Plains in the USA.

\$15.95 (Canadian), \$11.50 (US). Order from Western Producer  
Prairie Books, Box 2500, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

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#### A FEW TIPS ON PROTECTION FROM SEVERE WEATHER

Be prepared to protect yourself from weather's fury:

- . Heed forecasts of severe weather. Modern meteorology is more accurate than ever
- . Drive with extra care during storms.
- . During a tornado watch, stay tuned to a local radio or TV station. If there is a tornado warning in your area, go to a storm cellar, basement, ditch, or reinforced building. Stay out of auditoriums, supermarket-type buildings, gyms, barns, greenhouses, mobile homes, and motor vehicles.
- . In a thunderstorm, avoid lone trees, small metal buildings, fences, high ground, and bodies of water. Seek refuge in a substantial building, motor vehicle, or tractor cab.
- . Use a lightning protection system to safeguard buildings
- . Be ready to move to higher ground if you live in a flood-prone area.
- . Stock emergency supplies: drinking water, food, medicine, toilet needs, flashlight, battery radio.



## REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

**Region 1 Northeast** - ME., NH., VT., MA., CT., and RI.  
Dan Cohen, Box 71, Sheffield, VT 05866.

**Region 2 Atlantic** - NJ., NY., and PA.  
John Carvill, 138 Old Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110

**Region 3 South** - DC., DE., MD. south and west to the Mississippi River  
Elsie Kara, Rt. 1, Box 604-5, Anthony, FL 32617

**Region 4 Central** - OH., IN., IL., MI., and WI.  
William Horman, 246 Chalmers, Detroit, MI. 48215

**Region 5 West** - MN., IA., ND., SD., NE., MT., and WY.  
Max Peterson, Rt. 1, Box 273, Ogallala, NE 69153

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

**Region 7 Pacific** - CA.  
Louis C. Erickson, 5229 Bardwell Ave., Riverside, CA 92506

**Region 8A Southwest Mountains** - NV., UT., CO., AZ., and NM.  
Andrew Pierce, Denver Botanical Garden, 909 York St., Denver, CO 80206.

**Region 8B South Central** - KS., MO., OK., AR., TX., and LA.  
Vacant.

**Region 9 Eastern Canada** - Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick,  
Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Ontario  
George Kidd, 62 Steeple Hill Cres, R.R. 7, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2H 7V2

**Region 10 Western Canada** - Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia,  
North West Territory and Yukon Territory.  
Roger Vick, Curator, Devonian Botanic Garden, University of Alberta,  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E9

**Region 11 - Members at Large**  
Vacant.