

# Lilacs

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## QUARTERLY JOURNAL

of the International Lilac Society

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IN  
THIS  
ISSUE:

Use of the Lilac Robin and  
Blue Lilac Discussion



*Syringa vulgaris* "Wonderblue"  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



*Syringa vulgaris* "Wedgwood Blue"  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman

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*Cover Photo: Syringa x prestoniae 'Beacon' and Syringa x prestoniae 'Donald Wyman' in the Preston Heritage Lilac Collection at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. Photo Credit Richard Hinchcliff*

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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.

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# President's Message

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Dear Lilacs Aficionados,

September; can you believe how time flies? It seems only yesterday that we were at the convention in Chaska, MN. Hurricanes have blasted their way through several states in the USA. As I write this message many states are dealing with rain and flooding. I wonder how the lilacs have fared? The mighty oaks usually fall but smaller trees bend with the wind and survive. I hope none of our ILS members have experienced the wrath of these terrible storms.

In Virginia, USA, we have received large amount of rain. Hurricane Hannah, the first hurricane to visit that state this year tossed tree branches around and filled the basements with water. I looked at my lilacs after the downpour. Mildew is covering the leaves of most of them.

I want to remind you to step up to the challenge. Every one of us is to recruit one new member. I want to see big numbers when Warren Oakes, ILS Membership Secretary, gives his report next year at the convention. Speaking of that, remember to save the date of May 28, 2009. You must come and experience what a convention is all about. Nothing can replace the camaraderie generated when together at these gatherings. Think about it; everybody there loves lilacs, likes to talk about lilacs, is excited about lilac cultivars old and new, plus you can get rare lilacs at the live auction. Yes, it is all about lilacs, even up to some of us sporting lilac-colored outfits.

In the meantime, do you have questions about lilacs? Join the International Lilac Robin (ILR). It is one of your member benefits. Contact Brad Bittorf, ILS Executive President, and he will sign you in. Take this opportunity to join discussions on every possible subject concerning lilacs, from color, insects and diseases, bloom sizes, cultivars identification etc. This is a very useful forum. Many members already signed up are experts on lilacs. This makes ILR a great place for the beginning lilac gardener to ask questions. Even the most seasoned lilac growers can find answers to their lilac queries.

The ILS Web Page is getting a new life. Brad Bittorf and Candace Bonnett are taking over. Thank you to both of them for stepping forward and taking on this job. That is what is wonderful about societies like ours. Always, there is someone in the wings ready to come forward to take on a task. As you know web pages have a life of their own. Our new team is going to invigorate our web page. Web pages must be continually updated, and having two people working on ours should make it easier to maintain that freshness. I envision a big web page full of information and being user friendly. How about putting a dictionary of lilac terms on the web? I'm sure many of you would like that.

Could everyone do a little research and find out who are the ILS members closest to you? Why this little exercise you ask? Well, maybe you could get together at bloom time and visit each others' lilacs. Or you could form a small informal club and invite others who have an interest in lilacs to join. You could have your meeting at a garden center. Most centers gladly advertise plant societies and customers like hearing talks on new subjects. I know lilacs are not new to us but they are new to many. There are not very many lilac speakers around. I'm speaking at a garden center in February. I will use Bruce Peart's CD to make my presentation. I'm hoping to pick up at least one new member. Remember that is the goal, each of us is to get one new member.

Perusing through the last issue of Lilacs, Vol. 37 No. 3 Summer 2008 I see the pictures taken at the convention 2008. Everybody is having a good time. Gloria Schreiber's picture on the cover is perfect. Yes, there she was on her knees giving a great demonstration on pruning. I think everyone learned how to prune and also how not to be afraid to prune. Good job Gloria! Forty-one of us attended the convention. Let's up that number next year. Karen McCauley, ILS Treasurer, reported that \$3446.00 had been raised during the live and silent auction. That is a great way to support ILS and to get something wonderful in return. I know, I love the lilacs I purchased at the auction. I cannot wait to see them bloom.

Many of us are now preparing for the winter months. It is just a little lull. While resting from our gardening chores we can browse the catalogues and lists. We can dream about the next lilac season and the new lilacs we will be adding to our collection.

A lilac in every garden the world over? Is it just a dream or can it be a reality. I know it is a reality. More and more I hear talk about lilacs being planted in private and public gardens. Also questions on where to find lilacs are popping up frequently. Bruce Peart and Margaret Walton, our world travelers, are trekking to South Africa. They will hopefully confirm that lilacs grow in that part of the world. Come to the 2009 convention and find out.

Just in; Tatania Poliakova, Executive VP for Russia and the rest of Asia has signed up a new collective group into ILS. The Moscow College of Landscape design #18. The college trains specialists in the field of landscape design and urban construction. At their sessions they began a special course of lilacs studies, she says. Bravo, Tatania and a big welcome to all at the College of Landscape Design #18.

You see, the Lilac Renaissance is for real. So, mès amis follow Tatania Poliakova's example, go and sign up that next ILS member. Let's increase our membership for 2009 and cover the world in lilacs.

*Amities,  
Nicole Jordan, ILS President  
September 17, 2008*



# European Newsletter.

---

I have received a new book from Moscow. It is called "Sireni" ("Lilacs") and is written by Dr. Irena Okunova, Nikolai L Mikhailov and A.S. Demidov and published by Moscow Nauka. It is the catalogue of the collection of the Main Botanical Garden of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow and includes an account of the sixty-year history of the collection and its acquisition, together with an indication of its current state. There is a short and precise description of each lilac and there is a central section of 80 colour photographs of the site and the lilacs. A notable feature of the picture section is the collection of new lilacs of Nikolai Leonidovich Mikhailov, namely 'Aria', 'Nina', 'Sheremetev', 'Elena Rosse', 'Skromnitsa', 'Vek' and 'Nikolai Mikhailov'. I hope to be able to show my own pictures of these lilacs next year. It is a book for specialists of botanical gardens and nurseries, landscape designers, collectors and amateur gardeners. Thus it fills an invaluable slot in my own library. At last I can confirm the identities of lilacs I have managed to acquire but for which no pictures had been easily obtainable.

As usual, I have to thank Tatiana Polyakova for sending me this book. I also have to congratulate her on her award for Distinguished Service to this Society. I recently looked up my comment in this Newsletter when she first came into my life. "The answer to this little Regional Vice President's prayers" is what I said about her, but little did I realize then how richly those prayers would be answered. Her service to us, with that of her sister and her colleagues, has been distinguished indeed.

There has been an interesting correspondence in the ILS Lilac Robin e-mails concerning the merits of two of Fr. Fiala's blue lilacs. There still seems to be confusion about the name of the first one which is 'Wedgwood Blue' since some people seem to sense there is a letter "e" missing. However, the name has nothing to do with a "wedge" made of "wood" because it commemorates the English porcelain of Josiah Wedgwood (1731 - 1795) who set up a pottery in Etruria, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire in 1769. He achieved fame when he produced a replica of the famous Portland Vase. He copied an ancient Greek vase of dark blue porcelain with applied, white cameo-style decorations of classical motifs.. Flushed with this success, Wedgwood began to produce a series of such ceramics that became known by the term "Jasper Ware".

However, in 1938 the factory moved from the Etruscan Works to a factory at Barlaston, just outside Stoke on Trent. The change of locality and the cleaner air resulted in a blue pottery which was paler than the original, and Jasper Ware took on its modern identity of sky blue body with the white, applied, classical motifs. Thus when Father crossed 'Rochester' and 'Mrs. A. Belmont' to breed a lilac with pale, sky-blue florets that had white reverses and a fine, but distinc-

tive, white edge, he cleverly named it 'Wedgwood Blue'. I first noticed this resemblance in Tom Thekathyll's superb picture of the lilac in Tatiana's book "Lilac Time" which I commented on in this Journal in Vol. 37, No. 1, 2008.

This year, for the first time, my own plant matured enough to show this feature also. Though the plant was severely frost damaged, I submit a picture to show what I mean. Sometime I will submit another picture of a flower head lying across my Barlaston period, Wedgwood Blue teapot, to show you what I mean. I know this because I once spent 3 years working as a geologist in that same pottery city of Stoke-on-Trent. (Oh Heck, yes I admit it. I also spent the evenings playing trumpet in a local jazz band!)

The other lilac is 'Wonderblue'. Now I have to confess I do not have expertise here but I am so impressed by this lilac that I have chosen to have it gracing the top corner of my official stationery. Father crossed 'Tiffany Blue' (which I have never seen) with 'Rochester' and introduced it in 1989. He wanted to call it 'Little Boy Blue' because he believed it to be a slow growing form. He was not allowed to do so because, before 1966, John Sobeck of the Descanso Gardens in La Canada, California had already registered a lilac with the name of 'Blue Boy'. Thus the name 'Wonderblue' was registered and, in my opinion, it is more appropriate. My own plant is about 15 years old and now stands with a substantial presence being about ten feet high and eight feet across (about 3m by 2.5m). The florets are single and often are more than one inch in diameter. They open a disappointing muddy mauve colour but this soon fades to leave a lovely pale blue that is enhanced by darker blue markings as if a child has scribbled on the floret surface with a blue crayon. The amount of multipetaling can be quite astonishing and visitors spend much time counting petals and our record to date is 24 on one floret. When fully open the whole plant presents a wall of blue and in seasons less spiteful than our last two it develops a significant afternoon and evening fragrance. Please bear in mind that my picture, also taken this year, is of a frost damaged specimen too.

I am now awaiting mature and trouble free flowerings of Father's 'Blue Delft', 'Blue Danube' and 'Porcelain Blue' so watch this space for further comparisons. Incidentally, if anyone thought my final paragraphs in the last edition were unduly sentimental, then let me say that I would not have three of the five blue lilacs mentioned above without the generous intervention of the late William A. Utey. The other two came, of course, from good old RBG.

The passing of Professor Bugała was reported in the last edition. I never met him but he had close contacts with my good friend and member in Denmark, Ole Heide and both visited each other. I was interested to read in the obituary by Elzbieta Guzikowska of the existence of his unnamed *S. vulgaris* seedlings - labeled simply Kórník 1 - 14. As it happens, I have three of these - Kórník 1, 2, and 8. They were planted out last year but the flower buds were eviscerated by the treacherous April frosts so they did not flower. I will cross my fingers this year and hope to reveal their pictures as soon as possible.



Finally, there is a lilac with a name that has intrigued me for years, and this year it has flowered substantially so that I can now comment on what it is made of. *S. vulgaris* 'Radzh Kapur' was bred by L.A.Kolesnikov in 1955 (according to Anna Pikeleva - Lilacs, Vol. 23, No 4 1994 P. 87).

My bush is now 6 feet (2m) high and has flowered for two years. The buds are deep magenta-red and the florets initially break to this colour but then they fade slightly to a paler magenta-red. The flower clusters are dense with large - one inch plus - single florets which are rounded with raised tips and which develop a pronounced propeller twist. It flowers in the middle of the *S. vulgaris* flowering season. This clearly is a very satisfying element in the collection but what was really bugging my mind was the translation of the name. I spent months searching Russian language dictionaries for a clue but to no avail.

Then, I thought at last to consult the Oracle and, sure enough, in a recent update to his Register Freek Vrugtman points out that the lilac bears the name of a film actor from India. This is confirmed in Tatiana's book and she even shows a picture of him on P. 92. Thus, Radzh Kapur was a Bollywood star of the fifties["Bollywood" refers to the prominent entertainment industry in India] who, at the time, set the hearts of Muscovite maidens all a-flutter. Nice to have you aboard Radzh: it's good to have you as part of the show.

Colin Chapman  
Norman's Farm, Suffolk, England.  
September 12th 2008.  
lilacc@hotmail.com

\*\*\*\*\*DUES INCREASE\*\*\*\*\*

Dues increase by \$5.00 for next year.

Thus, Single/Family will be \$25

Sustaining will be \$35

Institutional will be \$55

Join the International Lilac Robin  
contact Brad Bittorf at [bittorfbradley@yahoo.com](mailto:bittorfbradley@yahoo.com) to sign up.  
On the Lilac Robin you can ask or answer questions  
and learn more about your favorite subject- lilacs!

Phone Numbers Needed!

If you want to talk to and receive calls from ILS members year-round,  
remember to give your phone # to Warren Oakes(Membership Chairman)  
so your phone # can be published in the Winter Issue.

## Convention Corner

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Well, as winter approaches its time to start thinking ahead to next year's convention in Ottawa, Canada. It's never too early to start searching for a good airfare deal. If you plan on cashing in some frequent flyer miles (like I just did) you *definitely* want to start looking now to book your flights. The convention hotel will be approximately 8 miles from the Ottawa International Airport. When the hotel information becomes available, please keep in mind when reserving your room, that it would be very helpful to book the negotiated ILS convention rate. This not only helps the local convention planning committee with monitoring attendance, but also oftentimes satisfies a minimum room obligation. There will be complete information regarding the hotel and registration in the Winter Journal.

If you're contemplating having a convention in your area, please contact me. We're always on the lookout for new sites and would welcome revisiting sites from decades past. Thanks for your cooperation.

*Karen McCauley*  
Convention Chairman  
[mccauleytk@aol.com](mailto:mccauleytk@aol.com)

## ILS Convention 2009

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Come and visit Ottawa, Canada's beautiful capital! Next year, the ILS will be meeting at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on May 28-30. It will be the second time the ILS has met here, the first was in 1982.

Perched on the edge of the Ottawa River, the nation's capital offers neo-Gothic buildings, a nineteenth-century canal (now a World Heritage Site), landscaped riverbanks, and fine museums. Its Experimental Farm – in the heart of the city – was founded in 1886, to assist farmers in what is admittedly a tough climate (quite lovely in May, though). It occupies over 1000 acres with research concentrated on eastern cereal and oilseed crops.

The public open areas of the Farm include the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum, which the Friends of the CEF, since 1988, have helped to maintain. Accomplishments of the Friends include the restoration of the gardens of roses, peonies, hostas and more recently, irises, daylilies and the Preston lilacs. Throughout the Farm, lilacs number over 800, with 335 taxa. The largest concentration is to be found in the Ornamental Gardens.

The 64 acres allocated for an arboretum support more than 4000 trees and shrubs. Fifteen of the first 200 plantings in 1889 were lilacs, and two are alive and still blooming today. The CEF is now designated a National Historic Site and a Cultural Heritage Landscape.

The convention will begin on Thursday at 10:00 AM until 12:00 with a Board of Directors meeting. At 2:45 PM a bus will take us for tours of the Governor-General's grounds and the site of the houses of Parliament. On the following two days we will tour the Ornamental Gardens, the Arboretum, and take a jaunt to the "lilac capital of Ontario" – a phenomenon of naturalized lilacs in an area that was among the first settled in this part of Canada.

Lectures, lunches, and lots of lilacs at Ottawa's Experimental Farm (and, of course, the ILS Auction) – we hope to see you there. The next issue of *Lilacs* will have details.

## ILS Auction 2009

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The ILS's annual auction – the society's main fundraiser – will take place Saturday afternoon, the last day of the convention. Donations of lilacs, other plants, and memorabilia are needed to make this a financial success. The public will be invited to participate in bidding. We will have a plant inspector on hand to issue phyto certificates, necessary for moving plants across the US border. For this certificate, plants must be either bare root or in a soil-less mix, preferably the former. We will have suitable materials on hand for packaging your purchases. We are looking for donations from both sides of the border and would like a list of lilacs that you are able to donate. We would like to compile a tentative list of auction plants by March 1, 2009, for publication in spring *Lilacs*.

*Joan Speirs, Ottawa Convention Local  
Chairman*

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*Or*

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# Descanso Gardens Report 2008

---

With the hot and dry weather of 2008 hopefully winding down soon, we should see the end of one of the most unusual seasons of the lilac garden aka our lilac patch!

Before we dismiss the weatherman totally, we want to give him credit for a few showers but not much to write home about. He at last put us into our "own, sink or swim mode". Perhaps this is what made the difference for another banner year in our lilac "planting". We simply can not take ourselves too seriously and must learn to roll with the punches.

Again the early *oblatas* started the parade, followed by the Descanso *hyacinthifloras* and some early *vulgaris* and from there on we were in the "one two step" of the late varieties including 'Sensation' and the beautiful 'Don Wedge'. Between were the ever popular mid-season and late *vulgaris*, among them we gave 'Primrose' a blue ribbon, turning her butter cream face our way and let 'Angel White' have her true place in the sun.

As for our favored specials, the daily guests filling their noses with the diverse fragrances, provided they came early in the day. The general feelings, that mothers know best is truly the case and daughters and sons kept us informed that their mothers indeed loved the lilacs throughout their years.

With the spring sale, we let the volunteers roll out the red carpet and sell by our now track record, that lilacs need to have a good root system to be a future success. Selling the young plants, potted in peat pots is our best bet for good results for whoever has a spot in their garden.

As for the various plantings of ten or twelve plants in individual places we have by now convinced most lilac lovers that just one here and there is not bringing out the true lilac charm. Except in special places like the one just outside Descanso Gardens on a private property. The original owner who was a loyal visitor to the Gardens making him a great friend to anyone and with a 'Lavender Lady' right next to his garage for everyone to see. All he would do was to remove the spent flowers after a great blooming season. He was a man of few words but always a smile on his face. Driving by his home once or twice a month the 'Lavender Lady' is growing on his property welcoming the guests to Descanso all through the year plus crowning glory in the blooming season and Easter celebrations. So with little effort he was making the entrance to Descanso a welcome mat for all to see.

Back to our collection, there is one point to keep in mind, that no matter how little rain we get if the lilacs get the leaves wet and stand in shady places they are prone to powdery mildew. So taking a hose and washing the dew off around midmorning when the sun is coming and rinsing off will help. Shading the lilacs during the hot noon time by filtered shade trees will be beneficial as long as they are not too intrusive with the root system.

Let's remember the old quotation that "He who wants to reign above nature has to subordinate himself to it".

*Rudy Schaffer, Descanso Gardens  
Volunteer Lilac Curator  
La Canada-Flintridge, Ca.*

## Change Coming to Mackinac Island

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One year after the ILS met for their annual convention, Mackinac Island has seen substantial change in their lilac displays. The Park Commission has embarked on a many- year plan to completely overhaul Marquette Park (the 5 acre park directly below the fort); and the Dept. of Natural Resources has completely rebuilt the marina directly opposite Marquette Park. Between the two areas there were over 225 lilacs.

Marquette Park was planted with over 180 lilacs between 1949 and 1951. The idea was to find something that would attract tourists in June as the "season" then was July and August. The first Lilac Festival was in 1949. Many Inns and homes also planted lilacs. The lilac had been well established on the island from the mid 1800s, so the additions seemed to be a natural. Unfortunately, an island promoter in the 80's started the story of a French missionary in the 1600s bringing the first lilac to the island. This myth was widely repeated and printed. In the past few years the tourist bureau has made an effort to dispel the myth and offer the true story of plantings in the 1800's and establishment of the lilacs in Marquette Park and the ILS plantings at the marina.

In the past few years Marquette Park has suffered considerable decline due to poor horticultural practice and the age of the plants. The Park Commission and the Friends of Marquette Park made the decision early this year to devise a plan to rehabilitate the Park and put aside the funds necessary. The funds became available due to some generous summer residents. Discussions went on by phone and email before the Lilac Festival. I met with the Park Commission Director, Phil Porter, during the Lilac Festival and we agreed on a plan for the Park. It was decided that 2 of the lilac "islands" (there are 15) would be rehabilitated each year. We started by working on the 2 islands nearest to Main Street. One island was severely pruned back, gardening fabric removed along

with the pine bark nuggets; considerable turf was removed to allow new growth to develop. Ground hardwood bark mulch (3 inches) was used to cover the non-turf areas. The resulting island was transformed and the new look garnered many positive comments including that of the Park Commission Director. The second island was too far gone to prune back into shape and will be completely removed by backhoe this fall and be replanted in June when I return for the 2009 Lilac Festival. At that time I will also prune out another island and another island will be completely removed next fall.

The Marina across the street from Marquette Park was totally rebuilt from fall 07 through May 08. There were 41 lilacs in the Marina before the reconstruction, most planted by ILS in '97. The boat basin was dredged because the average lake height had gone down several feet. The dredged material was deposited on land and the level of the land was raised 2-3 feet. Unfortunately all but 6 of the lilacs at the marina had to be removed. In September the Dept of Natural Resources (DNR, the owner/manager of the marina) asked any of the residents or Inns that wanted the lilacs to come and transplant them. All the plants were replanted in good homes, although I must report that many of them did not survive the experience. During the winter, DNR contacted me about replacing the lilacs. The plan did not gel until I got to the island to see what work had been done. The DNR was not too keen about planting many lilacs, as they were concerned about their ability to maintain them. After much discussion they agreed that they would add 11 new lilacs and replant 4 lilacs that had been kept that were near the garage; six lilacs had been left undisturbed. Once we decided how many and where we would plant, we ordered the plants shipped over night, bare root from Syringa Plus in Massachusetts.

The shipping of the plants was a great story. Evie and Roger at Syringa Plus put aside everything to get our shipment out by the US Postal Service overnight express. Getting items to the island can be a difficult task sometimes and this shipment proved Murphy's Law. The plants should have arrived Tuesday morning about 10 AM. I checked with the Postmistress about 10 AM and the mail had come on the 8 AM ferry but no plants. The Postmistress followed up on the plants and found out the plane had been late leaving Boston and had missed the pickup in Michigan in time for Mackinac Island. I explained how important these plants were and she called the mail transfer facility (an hour away from St Ignace) and had them drive the plants to the ferry in St Ignace. The Postmistress then went over on the ferry at 4 PM retrieved the plants and returned on the 5:30 ferry and handed the plants to me at 5:50. Talk about going above and beyond, seen any post office employees give that kind of service lately!

It was too late that day to start planting so we started promptly at 8 AM the next day. Unfortunately, it was raining, so we worked all day in the rain. Digging a hole on Mackinac is an experience. The "natural" soil there is about 2 inches thick, the rest is crumbly limestone. The lilacs love it but it is very hard to



work the soil. So we dug the holes with a 17 lb 6 ft straight bar and raking the stone out. In order to have enough room for the roots we needed to dig the holes 3 ft wide and break up about six inches of the limestone for a base.

An important ingredient we needed was ground hardwood mulch. There was none on the island and none anywhere near either of the ferry depots. So I took a day and visited some large landscapers 40 miles away. I found what I wanted and returned to the island. The Park Commission and DNR had agreed to purchase the mulch together. The Park Commission has a barge, which they sent with a truck to the mainland. The truck went to the landscaper, purchased the mulch and returned to the ferry dock, loaded the truck on the barge and returned to the island. The barge pier is on the opposite side of the island from the business district, which is where the mulch was deposited, then loaded onto a horse drawn dray and brought to the Park, all that for 10 yds of mulch. Some was used in the Park for the redoing of the lilac islands and some was used at the marina for our work. But we finally got the right kind of mulch on the island. The mulch is very important on the island due to the thin soil. The sun will dry out the soil very quickly and many lilacs on the island fare poorly the rest of the season, thus growing very slowly and with spotty flowering.

On Thursday, the marina was scheduled to have its official opening with dignitaries from all over Michigan. The project had cost over 5 million dollars and was quite a feat to be completed during a northern Michigan winter. We had lost all of Tuesday for planting, so we were a day behind. But we started Thursday early and worked like dogs and finished the work at 3:15 with the opening at 4 PM. We were able to get back and shower and return for the ceremonies. The marina now has 11 new lilacs, 4 transplants and the six that were not disturbed for a total of 21. DNR has said that they would consider planting more lilacs (there are some ideal places) which we will discuss this winter. They are concerned that the lilacs will grow too high and block the view from the street and that the maintenance will be beyond a seasonal staff. We planted 'Saugeana' and 'Lilac Sunday' on the west end entry; 'President Lincoln', 'Betsy Ross', 'Yankee Doodle' and 'Wedgwood Blue' around the miniature Statue of Liberty (west side); 2 'Miss Kim's at the east side sitting area; 2 'Palibin's on the east entry and 'Marie Frances' and 'George Eastman' behind the fence (eastside).

Jan and I spent an exhausting week between the Park and the Marina, but we are proud to say that we have contributed greatly to maintaining the central part of the business district as homage to the lilac. In addition to the planting, I did 10 "walk and talks", spent many hours pruning lilacs all over the island and Jan did her educational time with the kids (over 200 attended including 2 girl scout troops) each day at St Ann's Church (500 'thank you's to Dan Mier at Briggs Nurseries for the generous donation of the Tinkerbelle™s). We always enjoy going to Mackinac, but this year was the most exhausting we have spent there. We would like to acknowledge our supporters: First and foremost is

Mary Maguire Slavin at the tourist bureau, without whose support there would be no lilacs on the island worth looking at; Mary's trusted #1 Chris West, many thanks for all the help; Phil Porter, Park Commission Director, and Supt Cook, thanks for making change happen and the trust given; Tom Paquin, regional director of DNR, thanks for the courtesy and trust; and Father Ray and Jim Moore at St Ann's Catholic Church, words cannot express our gratitude for the care and help you have given to Jan and I. We would like to acknowledge all the many people at the Tourist Bureau, the Park Commission (especially the grounds crew), DNR (especially Harbor Master Patrick and his crew), St Ann's Church and Trish Martin the island's naturalist who has become a great friend. Whew, a lot happened in 2 weeks, we look forward to updating you on next year's events.

Jeff and Jan Young, Lilac Tour, LLC  
St. Albans, VT

*Recently, there has been some confusion on the use of the International Lilac (Round) Robin, which is a chat group for members of the International Lilac Society. Brad Bittorf explains the procedure. This is a valuable member benefit that allows you to discuss any problems or observations about lilacs with fellow members, and also is important in creating new data and observations about lilacs being grown throughout the world. To join the International Lilac Robin, all you have to do is to be a member of ILS, and contact Brad Bittorf at bittorfbradley@yahoo.com.*

## Instructions on use of the International Lilac Robin

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There have been some questions about how to post, or create a new message, in the International Lilac Robin. I've created some instructions. These are for Internet Explorer. If you use another different "web browser" such as Mozilla, Firefox or Safari, these will vary slightly, but you can probably figure it out. (If not, write me, I use Firefox most of the time and I can help you with the other program details if you like.)

How to post on the site

1. Open Internet Explorer
2. Use your favorite ("bookmark") to go to the Lilac Robin web site, or just enter "http://groups.google.com/group/INT\_LILAC?hl=en" into the address window.
3. At the upper right, click on "Sign In."
4. enter your user id (Email) and password.
5. Click "Sign In"
6. To create a new topic, Click on the box that says "+ new post"



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Nadezhda' showing magenta hues in bright sunlight

*Photo Credit Kent Millham*



The beautiful double-blue 'Nadezhda' in less intense light

*Photo Credit Kent Millham*



Amy Plamann, Jack Alexander, and Margaret Walton  
at registration of May 2008 convention  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*



Dr. Giles Waines and President Nicole Jordan in Chaska, MN  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*





By the fireside at the McCauleys at the 2008 Convention  
Connie Simonnet, Gloria Shreiber, and Mary Hopkins  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*



Candace Bonnett ready to pay for her "haul" at the ILS auction  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*



Beneath the Fuchsia hanging baskets at Bailey Nurseries  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*



Bill Horman and Brent McCown discuss lilacs at 2008 convention  
*Photo Credit Bruce Peart*



7. Type your subject in the "Subject Line"
8. If there is anybody outside the lilac robin you want to receive the message, enter her or his e-mail in the "Cc:" box. Otherwise just leave it blank.
9. Enter your message in the "Message:" area.
10. when you are done, click on the box that says "Post Message."
11. If you want to respond to an existing entry, follow steps 1-5.  
Then:
12. Click on the blue title of the subject you want to read. For instance, "European hornet."
13. Click on "Reply" for the message you want to reply to.
14. A window will open with what the other person typed already in it. Keep or delete as much or as little of this as you want.
15. In this same window, add your own message.
16. Click "send"

That's it. Another way is, when you receive a message from the lilac robin (It will have [LILAC] at the beginning of the subject), just reply to it using your e-mail program. The response will go to everybody in the lilac robin mailing list.

*Brad Bittorf*  
*ILS Executive VP*

## Impressions about "Lilacs in China"

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In the Winter, 2008 edition of Lilacs, a fine article by Hongxia Cui was published. This article discussed lilacs in China.

When I first read this, I had some questions and exclamations. These are captured in this article. Perhaps by sharing some of these, we can learn a bit more about lilacs elsewhere.

It is quite fantastic that all species except *S. vulgaris* and *S. josikaea* can be found growing in China. In the Western hemisphere, it is all too easy for us to think that lilacs are from Romania and Eastern Europe exclusively. In fact, far more species are Asian.

The article discusses the importance of maintaining genetic diversity by keeping inner-genus diversity. In other words, we should maintain as many healthy species and cultivars as we can across the lilac genus. Perhaps in the future, a new way will be found to transfer characteristics from one species to another (for those species that cannot cross). Perhaps some disease will injure one species, and we may find traits or genes that are resistant in another species. We cannot yet know all the possibilities of the future, but by preserv-

ing as much genetic diversity as possible in the genus *Syringa* L., we give ourselves maximum options.

Besides our collections such as Royal Botanical Garden, that at Norman's Farm in the U.K, and others that try to have as many cultivars as possible, is there anyone deliberately preserving as many species as possible for future use? Do we store seeds in a seed bank somewhere as a hedge against future catastrophe?

Regarding the mention of some distribution of *S. pinnatifolia*, in China's western provinces, I can add that there is some limited success with it in the U.S. southwestern region as well.

We are reminded both within "Lilacs in China" and within Charles Holetich's article about lilacs in Croatia, that lilacs appear to be native to mountainous regions. So when we see them growing on flat coastal plains, we should keep in mind that originally they clung vigorously to hillsides, perhaps looking down on a village or valley. So a venue such as the hills above Santa Fe, New Mexico, where lilacs have "gone wild" may be closer to their origin than an exception.

The article goes on to discuss the "primal introduction and cultivation of lilacs in China, as recorded. . . ." I'm sure we would all like to read the story of the introduction of lilacs in China through the Tang Dynasty and the Song Dynasty, and whatever history, fanciful stories, or legends there are of lilacs. I found myself wondering, "Just what was the linkage of lilacs to Buddhism and temple cultures?" What happened to the banyan that made an opportunity for lilacs to become the consecrated replacement for it? How did this come about?

Returning to science for a moment, the article says that, "[i]n current decades, lilacs have been used widely in the roadside and the industrial areas; especially for their absorption of gaseous pollutants." How has it been determined that lilacs are effective absorbers of gaseous pollutants? Which gasses does the lilac absorb?

Returning to social and historical aspects of the lilac in China, the article states that "[t]he negative aspect is, inevitably, to result in the decrease in population quantity of lilacs before the special protection has been conducted effectively." Considering efforts we have come to know to preserve special lilac collections in Russia and other places, I cannot help but wonder whether there are any historic collections of lilacs—or perhaps individually-significant plants (such as those at the origin of the Havemeyer-Eaton collection) that are in particular peril. If so, can we assist in any way with their preservation?

The work of Professor Zang is quite intriguing. Are there any promising research programs that can be shared with the International Lilac Society? What of the work on interspecific cross-affinity? What have been the results?

As always, we are delighted to see that the work and knowledge of ILS and its members has become known in places such as China. We welcome continued exchange of information, and we are always happy to share information about our friend, the lilac.

Brad Bittorf  
Executive Vice-President  
International Lilac Society  
Vail, Arizona, USA  
12 September 2008

P.S. On a personal note, I am planning a trip to Thailand during February, 2009. Perhaps I will find a lilac or two while there on the Asian continent.

## European Hornet Damage to Lilacs

In August, Nancy Latimer, ILS Board member and resident of Virginia, reported to me that there were “waspy-looking” insects attacking her lilacs and stripping them of bark.

She also sent several photos of the insect pests. This was also reported on the International Lilac Robin for further input from our members.

After seeing the photos, and a description of the damage done, I determined that it was the European Hornet, *Vespa crabro*, causing the damage. The European Hornet, although originally from Europe, has been in the Eastern United States for at least 40 years. It has been found in the Atlantic States, and as far west as Ohio (and of course, it is still found in Eurasia, where it is originally native to).

The European or Giant Hornet, which is 1-1” in length, caused damage to lilacs and other shrubs by stripping bark off of the twigs and branches. This leads to girdling, and eventual death to the distal end of the branch (area above where the branch is girdled). The European Hornets use the bark in the construction of their nests, and also use the sap exudates from the branch as food.

This insect and the damage it causes shouldn't be confused with the lilac borer; another pest of lilacs that is wasp-like in appearance. The lilac borer causes damage when the larva tunnels inside the lilac stems, eating the cambium and weakening or eventually killing the branches.

Unfortunately, lilacs can't be protected from the European Hornet. The only control is to destroy the nest, which may be within about 100 yards from the affected shrub.

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Kent Millham  
Highland Botanical Park



European Hornet, *Vespa crabro germana*, stripping bark from lilac branch.  
Photo Credit Nancy Latimer

*The following article was written by David Wilson for Garden Splendor website in April 2006. The Garden Splendor® line of plants are grown by Overdevest Nurseries of Bridgeton, New Jersey, and are sold to garden centers and distributors throughout the eastern United States. The Garden Splendor® line also includes an extensive list of Syringa. In a future issue, David Wilson will write an article about the Garden Splendor® line of plants, and the featured Syringa.*

## From Russia, With Hope

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Syringa 'Nadezhda' (Hope) — A magnificent, double blue Lilac from Russia

It's amazing how the sweet fragrance of French lilacs can instantly unlock fond memories of childhood. Just one sniff and recollections of fun-filled, carefree times spent in my grandmother's garden come flooding back. When reminiscing, I can see with vivid clarity the 10 foot high common lilac bush that grew in the corner of her garden in Ireland, and, incredibly now 40 or more years later, I can still smell with equal clarity the intoxicating fragrance that makes French lilacs everywhere so very special.

Lilacs, my grandmother's favorite

My grandmother had several lilacs in her garden, and I remember helping her pick bunches of white and purple ones to take home to my mother following one of my visits. I also remember noticing one early spring, how some of the bushes had leaves and shoot tips that were wilted and black. I remember examining them and thinking that this must have been caused by a frost. Years later, I was to discover that this was Lilac Blight, a foliar disease that affects many lilacs. Although my grandmother was my first gardening inspiration, she was not a dedicated gardener. She did not have the time or the knowledge to understand exactly what had caused this disfigurement but she did know enough to notice that some varieties seems to be more susceptible than others.

From Russia comes a new variety

Little did we know that about this time (early to mid 1960's), behind the iron curtain, in far off Moscow, Russia, a lilac enthusiast was busy breeding new varieties. He was creating a new seedling that in time would reach us here in the west and rank among the finest selections to be raised anywhere in the world: a variety that is a sturdy, reliable grower; has big, full, sumptuous, double, lilac-blue flowers; produces that delectable fragrance in abundance; and, perhaps best of all, displays a natural ability to withstand the unpleasant effects of Lilac Blight. This is a variety that Granny Wilson (as I called her) would have loved to know about.

A little further on, I'll tell you all about the man who raised it and his fantastic story of fortitude, astonishing dedication, vision, romance and tragedy. First,

let me tell you about this truly wonderful lilac and why it is with pride and privilege that we at Garden Splendor® introduce you to *Syringa* 'Nadezhda' (pronounced Nad-des-dah).

*Syringa* 'Nadezhda' is, without doubt, one of the finest cultivars we have ever trialed. This sturdy growing, disease-free, French lilac produces masses of late blooming, weather-resistant, rich lilac-blue, double flowers that in late spring and early summer saturate the air with the delightfully heady fragrance for which the best French lilacs are so famous.

It is hardy to Zone 3 and above, grows to about 8' tall by 6' wide in 10 years, and, depending on the location, soil conditions, and length of time, may reach to about 12 feet or so at maturity.

The flowers are huge, very full, pyramidal trusses that are around 6-9 inches long. They start out as raspberry colored buds opening to gorgeous shades of light lilac-blue. The individual florets are of heavy substance, broad and thick with a durable structure that enables them to withstand inclement weather well.

#### Disease resistance

If you are like my grandmother (and myself), you won't have the time or the inclination to get out the sprayer. Finding plants that have a natural, inbuilt resistance to disease is a major plus. We have been trialing *Syringa* 'Nadezhda' in our nursery for over five seasons, and I am not exaggerating when I tell you that, of all the varieties we grow, this one is the most blight resistant.

#### What is Lilac Blight?

Lilac blight is a foliar disease that usually occurs on the shoots and emerging flowers in early spring, typically after damp, wet weather. It's not a disastrous disease, but medium to heavy infestations can cause stunted growth, premature yellowing, and eventual leaf drop, resulting in less vigor and reduced flowering. In plain words, it just makes Lilac bushes look "yucky"!

#### What does Garden Splendor® have to do with it?

In our quest to help you make your gardening even more successful and satisfying, our growers at Garden Splendor® evaluate hundreds of acclaimed new plant varieties every year. Exact standards keep many from making it beyond the trial stage. Those (like this one) that display significant improvement over existing varieties become part of our Garden Splendor® product line, while those that deserve added recognition become part of our special Garden Splendor® collections. It is just one example of the care and consideration that goes into our Garden Splendor® product line. We invite you to see for yourself why Garden Splendor® plants are "Plants Worth Remembering"®.

When a variety like this, with exceptional garden potential, emerges in our trials, it serves as a sterling example of our marketing mantra: The best of the



"tried and true" and the most promising of the exciting and new.

The Garden Splendor® product line has many fine varieties with outstanding ornamental characteristics and proven performance. They are available through the Garden Splendor® network of garden centers and encompass an extensive range of outdoor garden plants.

How can I use *Syringa* 'Nadezhda' in my garden?

The exquisite fragrance and attractive color make it wonderful to use just about anywhere. It is ideal for beds and borders, near high profile places like doorways, pathways, around steps, and especially near seating areas like patios, decks, and swimming pools, or in sheltered corners where the delicious natural scent can waft and swirl to sweeten the air. They are effective as informal flowering hedges and screens, or placing in the middle of shrub and mixed borders where they can be used as a colorful accent plant or background. They can be used as single specimens in lawns, or grouped in masses on banks and sloping sites. Since deer do not prefer to browse on them, they are useful in areas where deer are a problem. They are hardy and quick to establish, making them ideal for placing in new gardens among other slower to mature species. They last well as cut flowers, and a few stems placed in a vase or arrangement is a great way to enjoy the heavenly perfume indoors.

Creating hope

Amidst traumatic and tragic circumstances, Leonid Alekseevitch Kolesnikov (1893-1973), dedicated a lifetime to growing Lilacs. He, like many millions of his fellow citizens, admired how after the long, cold, Russian winter, the colorful bloom of Lilacs brought vitality, freshness, and fragrance to the streets, parks, and gardens throughout the vast country. With each spring bloom period, came a renewed sense of hope for better days ahead.

For a young man growing up in pre and post revolutionary times, World War II and later the Cold War, things were, to say the least, rather grim and dismal. He cultivated Lilacs in his garden and studied their culture passionately, traveling to distant parts of the country to acquire knowledge and new varieties, voraciously learning about the best cultural practices of the time, their propagation and breeding. By 1923, he had amassed a collection of over 100 varieties. He particularly liked the varieties emanating from the famous French nursery Lemione et Fils and set about improving their characteristics, concentrating in particular upon those with large, double flowers. He patiently hybridized his best varieties, back crossing his seedlings, continually selecting those with the most desirable traits.

His work was interrupted by World War II. In 1939, he went off to battle, and his wife Olympiada tended the garden and looked after his precious seedlings in his absence. In 1941, when he was at the front, the garden was destroyed by an enemy air bombardment, wiping out his new varieties. One of the large

bombs actually exploded right next to the house, while Olympiada was in the garden; she survived the attack, but the stress and frightening experience caused a serious mental trauma from which she was unable to recover for the rest of her life.

In 1942, he was again in combat and was badly wounded. He returned home to Moscow to recuperate and, upon recovery, began to take care of his beloved wife. With the help of a specially trained nurse, he cared for her himself, working as a driver during the day. Her illness meant she required close supervision. He could never be far away from her. In between caring for her and earning a living, he dedicated himself to his hobby and the love of his life - Lilacs.

He hoped that the despair of war would end soon, that his dearly loved wife would eventually recover from her illness, and, throughout it all, he dreamed that Moscow would be a peaceful city with streets beautifully decorated by his lilacs. His favorite expression in times of stress was a Russian saying: "Hope dies last." So prior to his death in 1973, when searching for a name for one of his best new seedlings, he decided to call it "Nadezhda" - which translated means "Hope"!

For us, a word like *Nadezhda* is a little difficult to pronounce, but when we consider the courage, patience, and determination that went into creating such a wonderful variety, I hope you agree that it's worth the effort. If you find yourself struggling with the name, remember when all else fails "Hope dies last."

To find out more about lilacs, go to our Garden Splendor® [Plant Encyclopedia](#).

We also recommend the book *Lilacs - The Genus *Syringa** Fiala, by John Fiala(1988 - Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, USA).

#### In conclusion

We wish to thank Mr. Freek Vrugtman, International Lilac Registrar, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada for his help with nomenclature, the kind people at the International Lilac Society for their help compiling this information, and, in particular, Tatiana Poliakova (Vice President, International Lilac Society - Russia, Australia and Asia regions) for her effort and consideration in furnishing pictures and background information on Leonid Kolesnikov.

Until next time, remember.... Enjoy your gardening. It's good for you!  
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David Wilson

# International Lilac Robin Topics

## 'Wonderblue' and blue lilacs

Sharon Davies 8/26/2008:

Have any of you grown 'Wonderblue'? I decided I wanted it based on what I've read about it. If you've grown it:

- 1) Have you found it to be more tender than most? (Guess this question only works for those in cold climates)
- 2) Do you think it is very fragrant?
- 3) Do you think it is very blue?

To all of you - Can you recommend a blue lilac that is smallish growing, very blue, very fragrant?

Connie Simonnet 8/26/2008

'President Grevy' is smaller than 'President Lincoln'. I have both.

'President Grevy' is a double; growing very rounded for me. I think it is a softer blue, compared to the medium blue of the single 'President Lincoln'. 'President Lincoln' grows very tall and upright, and not so rounded as 'President Grevy'. 'President Lincoln' is very leafy, but what I have noticed during the blooming is that the leaves are not as large. When the bloom is finished I have noticed the leaves then grow even larger.

MarvaLee Petershick 8/27/2008:

'Wedgwood Blue' is one of the best compact blues, stays about 4-5 ft'. Although a *vulgaris*, it is one of the smaller ones. 'Wedgwood Blue' is almost a light sky blue in the Spokane, WA Manito Collections and in my own garden but it gets a lot of shade. It also has a good strong typical lilac fragrance.

Brad Bittorf 8/27/2008:

In many cases, the color you have is related to your soil, sunshine, and sometimes your local weather for the year. I've seen very blue 'President Lincoln's, for instance, and some that are rather drab. The blue ones were in Massachusetts and California—hard to believe these are best in such separated places.

Regarding 'Nadezhda', I like it because it has a double that has both a pink / magenta and a more blue / purple component in a (usually) pretty configuration.

But in my situation it has proven to be a little more temperamental. It's died back here twice...but then grown up from the roots twice. It's bigger now so perhaps one day I'll see the thing bloom here.

P.S. about 'President Lincoln'—I'm sure Dave Gressley would confirm that Cleveland was proud to have the Lincoln funeral train stop there for a ceremony. Some of the 'President Lincoln' in his former reserve garden there were the

tallest I can recall ever seeing.

*Dave Gressley 8/31/2008:*

Ah Brad, I appreciate your memory. In the later years, I began to have thoughts about the accuracy of the label on Holden's *Syringa vulgaris* 'President Lincoln' since it never came close to the bluest lilac Dunbar ever released. I planted another specimen in the Display Garden to see if the flowering was as off blue as the original specimen or whether it was a mislabeled specimen. Unfortunately, I never learned the answer because the duplicate specimen turned out to be *S. v.* 'Vulcan' as did the other three lilacs I planted thinking they were something else. Not to worry...that nursery no longer exists and neither do those three lilacs at Holden. The reserve collection at Upper Baldwin may no longer exist if the plans to convert the collection into a natural area were enacted.

Regardless, President Lincoln's funeral procession did stop in Cleveland where thousands paid their respects to him at Public Square. Reports of the time stated however, that the body was in a rather malodorous condition by the time it was displayed in Cleveland.

Concerning *S. v.* 'Wonderblue' and *S. v.* 'Wedgwood Blue': I had the privilege of touring Falconskeape with Father Fiala after he released the latter and was attempting to register the former as Deborah described. Fr. Fiala hybridized the truest blue lilac flower for acid soil and I think that was his greatest hybridizing accomplishment. There's no mistaking either of these two lilacs with any other specimen. I planted four *S. v.* 'Wonderblue' in a new section at Lake View Cemetery where it defines a walkway. I recall the blue cast of many lilacs in Descanso Gardens alkaline soil whereas it is such a fleeting color for our acid soils of the Allegheny Plateau. Father introduced 'Wonderblue' as a shorter growing version of 'Wedgwood Blue' as I recall him saying at the time. His later interest evolved to reducing the mature height of common lilacs to fit in smaller suburban landscapes.

*Nancy Latimer 8/27/2008*

We had quit a number of visitors this past spring and 'Wonderblue' was the clear favorite among them. For us it grows well and blooms profusely. I believe that it was one of the best lilacs at trials by Dr. Dick Birr near Asheville, NC.

*Mary Anne Ensmen 8/27/2008:*

I received Little Boy Blue also called 'Wonderblue' I think, as a gift from my friend Vera Ward from San Francisco. She ordered it from Forest Farms four years ago. It was a strong looking tube sized plant, and I planted it so I could see it from my back door. However, I was planting a lot of plants at the time and didn't pay much attention (make that any). Last year I was talking to Vera on the phone, and she asked me what had happened to the plant. I looked all

over the ground for the little bush - couldn't find a thing. I finally looked up. My bush is at least eight canes about five feet tall. It is one of the first to bloom here in Hansville, WA Zone 7. It is a beautiful blue, and this year opened all at the same time so it was really all blue.

*Deb McCown 8/28/2008:*

As the nursery that introduced both 'Wedgwood Blue' and 'Wonderblue' to the commercial market for Fr. Fiala I thought I would give you a brief history. Bruce is correct that the spelling is 'Wedgwood Blue' and not Wedgewood Blue. Ed Hasselkus once told me he thought 'Wedgwood Blue' one of the finest blue lilacs available. Fr. Fiala wanted his lilac named Little Boy Blue (this is first handknowledge from Roy Klehm (Song Sparrow Nursery and Beaver Creek Nursery) who was also instrumental in introducing many of Fr. Fiala's crabapples and knew him well. The registrar apparently refused the name because (if memory serves correctly) there was already a lilac named Boy Blue. So the cultivar name registered was 'Wonderblue' - all one word. But Roy said Fr Fiala wanted it called Little Boy Blue and that was the name he was going to use. Thus there is much confusion in the industry but Little Boy Blue and 'Wonderblue' are the same plant. In our catalog, we are careful to use both names.

*Freek Vrugtman 8/28/2008:*

Just a footnote from the Registrar: The correct cultivar names of the two lilacs mentioned are: 'Wedgwood Blue' (Only one "e" in Wedgwood; this cultivar was named for the characteristic blue color used by Josiah Wedgwood, 1730-1795, the English potter and designer. This is a very common misspelling found in American catalogs). 'Wonderblue' is one word. ('Wonderblue' is the registered cultivar name. Little Boy Blue is a rejected name, and Wonder Blue is a misspelling; alas both versions still turn up in American catalogs.).

*Josh and Paula 8/29/2008:*

For what it's worth, my 'Wonderblue' has been very hardy and has grown quite a bit in the 2 years that I have had it. It is one of my two favorite blues to date. As far as shades of blue in individual florets, it is the most impressive to me with incredible streaks of blue hues in the individual petals. Overall, it isn't the most strikingly blue shrub, in my opinion. 'Wedgwood Blue' remains my favorite regarding overall blue color. It never fails to grab my attention when I see it in collections. Evie King told me when I wanted to purchase the "bluest" lilac, that she would recommend 'Wedgwood Blue'. I tend to agree that it seems to be the bluest overall, at least in our region and with our soil type. Unfortunately, it has been very temperamental and tends to have erratic growth habits for me, but I love it just the same. To date, these are my favorite single blues. I have yet to see my 'Blue Delft' flower, but hope someday to compare the blue hue of its flowers with the other blues that I have.

## Witches-Brooms

*Frank Moro 9/09/2008*

Some great news from us is we have opened a tissue culture lab and will start putting out big numbers of lilacs in the next couple of years as far as cultivars are concerned. If anybody has any favorites let us know and we will look into doing them. Also we have been doing a study on witches-broom. I noticed 2 summers ago that some of our container lilacs I had put aside and tried a test on began to react positively to fertilizer and specific watering patterns. Some lilacs have completely rid themselves of the stunted growth and have this year put out growth of 8-12 inches.

*Evie King 9/10/2008:*

We are very interested in Witches-Broom and Lilacs.

Frank - have your plants been tested in the lab for the virus MLO or it's new name (phytoplasma )?

Maybe Jack Alexander at the Arnold Arboretum will comment on this problem. Craig Hibben from NY did extensive work on this serious problem in the 1970/1980's and has given us updated info in the ILS Journals.

Does anyone else in this group have evidence of Brooming in their collection?

*Frank Moro 9/10/2008*

No the plants have not been tested as of yet and this is what I would like to have done in the future. they are named cultivars that are already in collections. I am just very impressed with the recovery they have done to outgrow the stunting

*Jack Alexander 9/11/2008:*

First, I am not an expert on phytoplasmas (the new name for MLOs).

They live in the vascular system of plants and can probably be eliminated through tissue culture by using the meristem as the source of the initial "cutting".

Perhaps Deb McCown will comment.

Years ago, Craig Hibben told me (if I remember correctly) that the LWB organism migrates down the stem, toward the roots of lilacs during winter (at least in our northern winters.) Since grafting of lilac is usually performed in winter, I asked about the possibility of using it as a method of propagating LWB disease free plants even though the parent was infected. He agreed that it might work.

*Freek Vrugtman 9/11/2008:*

This is a followup on Evie King's query, "Does anyone else in this group have evidence of Brooming in their collection?"

I hope no one in this group is harbouring *Syringa* (Villosae Group) 'Charisma' and/or 'Shantelle' in their collection. 'Charisma' and 'Shantelle' are propagated



from a witches'-broom on Syringa 'Royalty' caused by phytoplasma. These two diseased selections were put on the market independently by two different nurseries about 2002. We alerted ILS members in the Quarterly Journal 33(4):114-123, Winter 2004 issue.

I have just checked the internet; 'Charisma' is still offered for sale on a website updated this month. 'Shantelle' is also offered for sale on a website updated for 2008.

Caveat emptor – "Let the buyer beware"; and if you happen to have it, burn it.

*Frank Moro: 9/12/2008:*

Just to clarify our findings. I am just looking over the progression or regression of the witches broom on the lilacs we have. No propagation is being done at the moment and if I do propagate them it will be only out of research to see if the disease shows up in later years in the new plants. I agree with Freek not to sell or buy plants that will cause problems down the line. I remember Charles Holetich once told me on one of my visits that he had seen some of the lilacs grow out of the witches broom in the collection at RBG and this always stood in the back of my mind. So we decided to do a little studying of the broom on our own.

*Deb McCown 9/12/2008:*

Frankly, I've had no experience with lilac phytoplasmas but suspect you are correct that they could be eliminated just like we do with viruses. Get the plant to grow very fast (usually heat) and they out grow the virus so you can take a virus-free meristem.

## New Members

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- Bussinger, Larry and Cookie, 7915 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Bloomington, MN 55420
- College of Landscape Design #18, Chechulina ul., dom 3, korp.1, 105568 Moscow, Russian Federation
- Dito, Katie, 8664 Blue Jay Lane, Byron, IL 61010
- Donahue, Susan McDonnell, 4847 Stillwood Spur, Akron, OH 44333
- Donnelly, Ruah, P.O. Box 905, Conway, MA 01341
- Evens, Joyce, 1206 Sharon Acres Road, Forest Hill, MD 21050-122
- Garretwood Farms Lawn & Garden Center, Mary and Milton Roegner, Honesdale, PA
- McInerney, John, 1188 Suncrest Road, Powlet, VT 05761
- Norris, Fran and Paul, 2925 Tyler Court, Woodridge, IL 60517

### Editor's Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles for the Winter Issue is December 8th.

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*Syringa vulgaris* 'Radzh Kapur'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Zulu'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



*Syringa x chinensis* and *Syringa x chinensis* 'Metensis' at the  
Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa  
*Photo Credit Richard Hinchcliff*



Lilacs at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa  
*Photo Credit Richard Hinchcliff*