

# Lilacs

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of the International Lilac Society

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IN  
THIS  
ISSUE:

**New Botanicals and  
Propagation of Lilacs**



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Firmament'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Etoile de Mai'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman

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*Front Cover: An eye-catching image of 'Evangeline' using Vinette Varvaro's technique*

*Image credit Vinette Varvaro*

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LILACS 2011

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# President's Message

Dear Lilac Aficionados,

The last week of August 2011 has been an eventful week. The East Coast of the United States of America was visited by Hurricane Irene. From the states of Carolinas to the New England states we all felt the fury of mother nature. Here in Virginia, we had begun the week with an earthquake. Around one in the afternoon on Tuesday the house, the trees and the earth shook violently. At my home all the windows were rattling and it sounded like my driveway was invaded by some loud machine angry at the world. One look outside confirmed an earthquake. The trees were doing the Shimmy. Living 45 minutes away from the epicenter and the little town of Louisa, VA. USA we experienced that rare phenomena with anguish. The tremors were felt in New York City and Washington, DC where the Washington Monument, that great obelisk was damaged. Once over, we all assessed the damage. Not too bad for me, a few cracks in the foundation and walls and a few loose tiles in the kitchen. So it was over and what could happen next? We had been warned by the weathermen that Hurricane Irene, a category 3 storm was forming in the Atlantic and was coming our way, and it did. It inched its way along the coast causing havoc deep inland. By Saturday we got the brunt of its fury. This time the trees, perhaps weakened by the earthquake, tumbled to the ground. The electric lines went down, and telephones became useless. Water rose in basements, people scrambled to get gasoline for their generators or to buy non-perishable foods in the few places still with electricity. Gardens were not spared.

Venerable trees that had been there for years now lay on their sides, with their huge root balls exposed. Oaks, Maples, Cedars, Hollies, Sycamores, Birches etc... came crashing down pulverizing everything in their path. My garage now leans to the East. Its only support is the trunk of a huge tree that had the politeness not to fall on it. *Après vous mon ami!* You may think that after Irene our troubles were over but no. The following week Tropical Storm Lee paid us a visit adding torrents of water to the already saturated ground. Rivers rose, roads closed and the opening of schools were canceled. No more please. Our governor declared a state of emergency..

No matter where we live we are affected by the weather and as gardeners we are prepared for the damage when it happens. By the way the lilacs by my terrace are fine except for losing a few leaves. All this bad weather made me reflect on what is worse, Mother Nature or us? We relentlessly destroy habitats to make way for highways, subdivisions or just make a profit from the timber or the land without thinking about the long range consequences. See how the Rain Forest is being exploited without regard to the importance of this huge ecosystem and its impact on the world climate.

We can destroy but we can also preserve. To have the foresight and to recognize the value of preserving our lilacs is part of the mission of ILS. We need to preserve not only the plants but information. Keeping good records is perhaps the most important. ILS Registrar, Freek Vrugtman, recommends and encourages all of us to send to our archivist, Kent Millham, material of interest to the society. The archives are located at the Arnold Arboretum and are kept safe and in order. Thank you to their archivist Sheila Connor and her staff.

I wish someone would take on the task of collecting information on our hybridizers. Time is passing and many over the years are no longer with us. I often hear the name of someone who devoted his or her life to lilacs. Someone who collected, propagated, developed or did important research with lilacs. Not many details are known of those persons. It would be a good effort to compile a book on our ILS personalities. In Russia, Tatiana Poliakova has and is doing just that with the Russians lilac hybridizers. She has authored several beautiful books of great importance. I'm certain that someone among us gifted with the pen and the camera and having the desire to record ILS history could do the same...Anyone out there to take on this challenge?

As you know Karen McCauley, ILS Treasurer and Interim Membership Secretary, has for several months worked on the membership roster. It is now corrected and up to date and the records are being passed to Gloria Schreiber our new ILS Membership Secretary. Our numbers are down significantly. What to do you ask? Everyone can do their small part by bringing one member per year into the society. How you ask? It is simple. If you have the opportunity go and speak to garden clubs or others gardening groups or speak to your friends and neighbors. RVP's this is for you. Organize an event for your region during lilac blooming season, the best time, or at another time Fall for example and sign up new members. We have an excellent booklet on lilacs from Jack Alexander. It is full of information for the beginner and the seasoned lilac gardener. We have a web site that is becoming better and better thanks to the work of Candace Wentz and Brad Bittorf. We have Lilacs, our journal published quarterly. Don't forget to tell potential members about our conventions, how informative and the fun they are and how much camaraderie is generated from those events. We want them them sign up for ILS.

Winter is approaching and many gardeners go into hibernation but now is the time to plan for next year. Our convention 2012 is in Nancy, France. I'm hoping we get to meet many of our Russian, German, English, Belgian, etc., members. Tell your friends and others about this opportunity to go to "Lilac Mecca" plus to see wonderful France. I think that this alone would want to make someone become a member. Dream of lilacs and of the 2011 Lilac convention in Nancy, France.

*Nicole Jordan, ILS President*

# European Newsletter.

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After illnesses, and the work following the consequent neglect of 7 acres of garden maintenance, and then two months of major restorations to the house, I have absolutely nothing new to say. Thus, I can either keep quiet for this edition, or I can invite you to take a look at a few corners of the garden which interest me - if not anyone else. In the last edition I showed a picture of my former corporate headquarters of ILS-Europe. There were two things of interest in it. First, I have been asked to name the big white blossomed tree. It was the bird cherry - *Prunus padus* 'Watereri'. In front of it, and my chosen guardian to the entrance of the lilac collection, is *S. v.* 'Firmament'. I love this lilac and I show a picture of it against a clear East Anglian sky to show that it is Heaven's colour - the blue.

Passing this display one enters the original lilac collection. The 2 acres of land here is oriented from west to east so I laid out the original collection geographically with the Californian lilacs in the far west, ranging towards the Chinese lilacs in the far east. The house is midway along this distribution so I show a shot towards the house which is also midway along the plan of the collection so the picture is shot from the east coast of the USA and is taken with Havemeyer's 'Zulu' in the foreground. Then comes a six foot (2m) path which is the Atlantic Ocean and brings us to the Lemoine collection for which I represent with a picture of the distinctive magenta and white 'Etoile de Mai' (Star of May). Leaving the Lemoine bed we travel east through the Netherlands and Germany and on to Poland and the Baltic States - from which I have selected Adolf Vaigla's Estonian cultivar 'Silja'. This brings us to Russia and, since I have written frequently on these lilacs, I show you instead the entrance to the part of our garden that we celebrate as "Russia".

Beyond Russia there is another narrow path which represents the Steppes of Central Asia. If we step across the "Steppes" we find ourselves in my recreation of "China". Here we have the native species and special cultivars like reflexa 'Alba' and 'George Eastman'. Hot favourites of mine are the wonderful *S. meyeri* var 'Spontanea' and the sensational group of wild collected seed grown seedlings of Xin Lu Chen which I call ( for the time being anyway) "*microphylla* CHEX" (short for "Xin Lu CHen EXpedition") .

We have now traversed the 2 acres of the geographical collection and reached the stage where I felt that I could retire from collecting and propagating lilacs and become a sharp talking celebrity. Oh dear! was I wrong! One day, the divine Shelagh took me to our southern boundary and waved her arms to encompass a four acre, triangular area of land bounded by the road which formed the hypotenuse, then a ditch (which had separated two farms since times

immemorial), and our own southern boundary - with these two sides meeting at a right angle. "What about it?" I asked. "It is yours", she said. "I have just bought it". Thus I have spent the intervening years creating a new lilac garden. The old garden was arranged geographically so I decided to build the new garden historically. Starting at the corner of the triangle, where our former boundary met the road, I planted a *Syringa vulgaris* grown from a wild collected seed from the seedbank at RBG Kew. I had been kindly given a specimen of the first *S. vulgaris* cultivar - 'Charles X' - by a prominent member of the Royal Horticultural Society, so it seemed appropriate to plant it next. The next one just had to be the first double cultivar 'Azurea Plena' which was bred by Libert-Darimont in Liege, Belgium in 1843, and following that came, quite naturally, a lovely double white - also bred in Liege and named for herself by the eponymous hairdresser 'Marie Legraye'. It was then that I realised what I had done. These first four lilacs formed a straight line just inside, and parallel to, the hypotenuse of the new triangular site. Reason spoke in my ear and said "If you carry on like this, my son, you will eventually tell the lilac story". And so it came to pass that over the next six years I planted out my own version of the lilac story along the 600 yards (550m) of the boundary of the triangular site. Then I began to fill the inside of the triangle with my tribute beds to the personalities who had bequeathed to us this magnificent range of flowers.

To pass from the old geographical collection into the new one it is necessary to pass through The Ukraine. As one exits this nation, one passes a magnificent lilac with a name which I have tussled with for years. It is 'Ogni Donbassa' which is a majestic seedling of 'Charles Joly' which I offer as my final picture. Its name has bugged me for years. I believe the word "Ogni" has something to do with fire. The syllable "Don", and a location in the State of Ukraina, could only point to the city of Donetsk. The other syllable "bassa" held me up for a while until I remembered the old factories opening their Bessemer Converters at dusk and setting fire to the evening sky. That led me to the German word "bassonverein" and my quest was over. I would appreciate confirmation from any Russian speaker that the name 'Ogni Donbassa' means the "fires of the Donetsk steelworks".

I will end my tour here for now. If you wish me to, then I will continue the journey next time.

*Colin Chapman.  
Norman's Farm. Suffolk U.K.  
September 2011.*

*Editor's Note: Yes, we do want to continue on this garden journey next issue!*



# ILS Membership Report

## 4/1/11

Active Memberships:	<b>309</b>
• Life	106
• Complimentary	8
• Honorary	2
• Other	193

### Membership breakdown by location:

USA	232	Japan	2
Russia	25	Macedonia	1
Canada	21	Netherlands	4
Australia	3	New Zealand	1
Austria	1	Norway	1
Belgium	1	China	1
Denmark	1	Belarus	1
France	2	Scotland	1
Germany	2	Switzerland	1
Greece	1	Ukraine	1
Hungary	1	United Kingdom	3
Italy	2		

### 190 Memberships lapsed between Dec07 – Dec09

- They were sent renewal reminder postcards on 1/1/11
- 37 have since renewed
- The remainder were removed from mailing list

### 39 Memberships expired Dec10

- They will receive a renewal reminder on the Spring Journal
- If not renewed, names will be removed starting with the Summer Journal

New members now receive a copy of the Lilac Booklet with an acknowledgement letter in their new member packet.

*Submitted by,  
Karen McCauley  
Interim Membership Secretary*

# Convention Corner

May 3-5, 2012 Nancy Botanical Garden, Nancy France

Well the time is flying by and in a few short months we'll be arriving in Nancy France. The convention details should be finalized by next month and will be posted on our website [www.InternationalLilacSociety.org](http://www.InternationalLilacSociety.org). Unfortunately, the final registration form with pricing was not yet available when the Fall Lilacs Journal went to press, but it will be published in the Winter Lilacs Journal.

The good news is to date we have 29 members (from four different countries) that are planning to attend. To have an official ILS meeting we need 25 members and a board quorum of five, so we're good to go. If you haven't pre-registered yet, please send your \$50 deposit to me as soon as possible. I will be emailing regular updates to all that pre-register. The pre-registration form can be found on our website.

Due to some problems I encountered with the Mercure Hotel website (it didn't have 2012 pricing & availability loaded into their system yet), the hotel has agreed to offer a special convention rate that it will guarantee until March 2012:

**129€ INCLUDES Buffet Breakfast** in a Single Standard Room (with double Bed and complete Bathroom)

**139€ INCLUDES Buffet Breakfast** in a Double Standard Room.

To obtain the convention rate please email Frederic Parfait, Front Desk Assistant Manager at [H1068@accor.com](mailto:H1068@accor.com) with the following:

- Reference the **Lilac Convention RL 11540**
- Dates of stay, credit card number and expiry dates, and your email address.

In the meantime, get your passports in order and make sure they won't expire anytime close to your travel dates. U.S. citizens may enter France for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa.

Good luck with your travel plans and hope to see many of you in Nancy next year. Please email or phone me with any questions you may have.

Karen McCauley  
ILS Convention Chair  
[mccauleytk@aol.com](mailto:mccauleytk@aol.com)  
952.443.3703

## Nominations for ILS Awards for 2012

Please submit the following information to Connie Simonnet, Awards Chairman, at [cvssimonnet@frontiernet.net](mailto:cvssimonnet@frontiernet.net) before March 15, 2012

1. The full name of the person being nominated, and or their used professional title.
2. The contact information, if they are not a current ILS member. Including mailing address, phone number and email address.
3. Why they are deserving of the award, and their accomplishment.

## ATTENTION: ILS Commercial Members

The Retail and Wholesale Source lists on our website ([www.InternationalLilacSociety.org](http://www.InternationalLilacSociety.org)) were recently updated. If you would like your company name added to the lists, or, if you would like to revise your current listing, please contact Karen McCauley at [mccauleytk@aol.com](mailto:mccauleytk@aol.com).

Also, please remember that you may purchase the newly revised Lilac Booklet in bulk (over 50 copies) for the reduced rate of \$1.50 per copy plus shipping & handling.

NOTE: The above benefits are for Commercial members with current memberships only.

# Great Collections: The Brooklyn Botanic Garden

by John Kirk

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On a dank, cloudy day threatening rain in early May the vulgaris lilacs of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) were at their peak. A docent friend who is also a master gardener had arranged for the curator of the lilac collection, Dan Ryniec, to give us a tour. We met at the bottom of the steps of Lilac Hill after traversing the formal promenade from the Eastern Parkway entrance. The famous pre-Mother's Day plant sale was in progress, but we had the Louisa Clark Spencer Lilac Collection of over 140 cultivars almost to ourselves.

The lilacs are set in a sweep of curves on the side of a hill and show very well. The mature, well-cared-for plantings are well spaced in contrasting colors. The hyacinthiflora were in decline, but 'Melissa Oakes', among others, was still pretty. The backbone of the collection, a varied array of Lemoine specimens, many planted in the first two decades of the twentieth century, some rarely seen, were in their glory. The good representation of the many species of latter blooming lilacs promised the need for a return visit.

The ILS met in Brooklyn in 1985 to see the collection and hold their annual meeting. Dan, a current member and past president of ILS, indicated that he has made some changes since he first arrived. The collection when he started was segregated by color. All the white lilacs were in one place, the pink in another, the blue, etc. in others. They were even separated into single floret and double floret spaces by color. Dan moved the plants around so that you could appreciate the different colors better. He has had to keep modifying his plan as space has become constrained and additions made. He apologized for the lack of blooms on some Russian cultivars he had recently put in a new position.

Among the highlights on the day we visited were a true blue Baltet lilac, *S.v.* 'Bleuâtre', which Dan compared favorably to 'President Lincoln'. It was mentioned by Father Fiala as a favorite breeding lilac of Lemoine although he did not show a picture. It clearly deserves to be part of his short list of blues. *S.v.* 'Volcan' was also quite intense, as were *S.v.* 'Firmament', *S.v.* 'Duc de Massa', *S.v.* 'Leon Gambetta', and *S.v.* 'Serene'. There was no lack of eye-catching specimens. All were well-labeled with redundant tags, so you did not have to keep searching all around the plant to find the name.

Dan and I got to talking about the ILS and, when I asked if there were any specialty nurseries in the greater New York area he could recommend, he suggested I come back and take cuttings of what appealed, so that there might be some interesting additions to a future auction at the ILS annual convention. Such a generous offer could not be refused. Never having tried to grow lilacs from cuttings, I immediately made a supplicating call to Evie and Roger of SyringaPlus who generously offered to help with the cuttings. Later in May I returned and Dan

took cuttings, noting that the best were still flexible, not “woody”, that I placed in a cup a water until they could be inserted into a gallon-sized plastic bag and labeled and put in a cooler with ice packs. The specimens were then driven up to West Newbury, Mass. where Evie, Roger were highly complimentary of their quality. We prepared the cuttings and planted them in a prepared medium. I left the future plants in SyringPlus’s care. If the luck holds which brought the cuttings safely to their new home on the day tornadoes which struck western Massachusetts, perhaps in a couple of years the lilac auction will include a few pleasant surprises for active bidding.

For those who wish to visit the BBG, there is a parking lot, but, for the adventurous out-of-towners and veteran city dwellers, the subway works very well. The Eastern Parkway stop on the 2/3 line drops you a hundred feet from the closest entrance to the lilacs. There are, of course, other horticultural collections which merit a visit. A prior consultation of the worthwhile website, [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org) provides a full description of the garden, the events, virtual tours, and competent directions. The collection is open 8 AM to 6 PM Tuesday to Friday and 10 AM to 6 PM weekends and holidays mid-March to October with an earlier closing time of 4:45 PM the balance of the year. With hotel prices in New York what they are, it may no longer be a viable venue for an annual convention, but an individual day trip from some near, more reasonably priced location is definitely recommended.

## Brooklyn Botanic Garden Cultivar List

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*S. × chinensis*

‘Alba’

‘Orchid Beauty’

‘Saugeana’

*S. debelderi*

*S. × diversifolia*

‘William H. Judd’

*S. emodi*

*S. ‘Hedin’*

*S. × henryi*

‘Lutèce’

*S. × hyacinthiflora*

‘Anabel’

‘Asessippi’

‘Blanche Sweet’

‘Esther Staley’

‘Evangeline’

‘Lamartine’

- 'Louvois'
- 'Maiden's Blush'
- 'Purple Heart'
- 'Summer Skies'
- 'Vauban'
- S. × josiflexa*
  - 'Anna Amhoff'
  - 'James MacFarlane'
  - 'Nellie Bean'
  - 'Royalty'
- S. pubescens* subsp. *julianae*
- S. × laciniata*
- S. meyeri*
  - 'Palibin'
- S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla*
- S. oblata*
- S. pubescens* subsp. *patula*
  - 'Excellens'
  - 'Miss Kim'
- S. pekinensis*
  - 'Pendula'
- S. × persica*
- S. × prestoniae*
  - 'Donald Wyman'
  - 'Hiawatha'
  - 'Isabella'
- S. protolaciniata* 'Kabul'
- S. komarowii* subsp. *reflexa*
- S. reticulata*
  - 'Ivory Silk'
- S. reticulata* subsp. *reticulata*
- S. sweginzowii*
- S. villosa*
- S. vulgaris*
  - 'Adelaide Dunbar'
  - 'Albert F. Holden'
  - 'Alphonse Lavallée'
  - 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth'
  - 'André Csizik'
  - 'Bleuâtre'
  - 'Carmen'
  - 'Charles Joly'
  - 'Chris'
  - 'Comte Adrien de Montebello'

'Comte Horace de Choiseul'  
'Condorcet'  
'Congo'  
'Dappled Dawn'  
'De Miribel'  
'Desfontaines'  
'Duc de Massa'  
'Edith Cavell'  
'Émile Gentil'  
'Firmament'  
'Frau Wilhelm Pfitzer'  
'Gaudichaud'  
'Georges Bellaire'  
'Gismonda'  
'Glory'  
'Hippolyte Maringer'  
'Jean Mace'  
'Kapitan Teliga'  
'Katherine Havemeyer'  
'Krasavitsa Moskvý'  
'Laplace'  
'Leon Gambetta'  
'Lucie Baltet'  
'Macrostachya'  
'Magellan'  
'Marceau'  
'Maréchal Foch'  
'Marie Legraye'  
'Maurice de Vilmorin'  
'Maximowicz'  
'Mechta'  
'Miss Ellen Willmott'  
'Mme Antoine Buchner'  
'Mme Casimer Périer'  
'Mme Catherine Bruchet'  
'Mme F. Morel'  
'Mme Lemoine'  
'Monge'  
'Montaigne'  
'Mrs. Edward Harding'  
'Mrs. W. E. Marshall'  
'Nadezhda'  
'Naudin'  
'Negro'  
'Olivier de Serres'

'Paul Thirion'  
'Perle von Stuttgart'  
'Pink Mist'  
'Président Grévy'  
'President Lincoln'  
'Président Poincaré'  
'President Roosevelt'  
'Priscilla'  
'Rochester'  
'Romance'  
'Sarah Sands'  
'Saturnale'  
'Sensation'  
'Serene'  
'Thunberg'  
'Vestale'  
'Villars'  
'Victor Lemoine'  
'Viviand-Morel'  
'Volcan'  
'Waldeck-Rousseau'  
'William Robinson'

*S. wolffi*

*S. yunnanensis*

'Prophecy'

## New Board Members

At the Spring Convention in Lombard, Illinois, USA, 5 new members were announced. The 5 new board members are:

John Bentley

John Kirk

Dan Meier

Tatiana Poliakova

Joan Speirs

Note: The board members and committee chairman are always on the last page of *Lilacs*.



# Propagation of Lilacs, by Dr. Deb McCown

There are 5 methods of propagation of lilacs and I want to talk about : 4 briefly and the 5th method in more detail.

1. The first method is by seed. Growing lilacs from seed may result in a plant that is quite different from its parent due to natural genetic segregation of ornamental characteristics. Fr. John Fiala wrote that he removed the female parent's petals before it opened, emasculated the anthers, then dusted the pistil with the desired pollen and covered the flower with a small bag for a day or two to prevent further pollination. Then the bag was removed and the seed allowed to develop normally. Still, pretty tedious work.

Lilac seeds require stratification, a period of damp cold, before they will germinate. You can let nature do this for you with some type of cold frame or you can sow seeds in a moist potting mix and refrigerate them for one to three months depending on the species. It can take up to 6 years for *S. vulgaris* to reach flowering size. The rewards of seedling progeny can be exciting or a total disappointment.

2. Some lilacs are easy to propagate from soft-wood cuttings. This is generally when new growth has reached 4 to 6" and before the stems become woody or right after bloom time. Cuttings may benefit from a rooting hormone or auxin treatment (1500 to 5000 ppm IBA depending on species). High humidity around the cuttings must be maintained until the cuttings root. This is easily done with some sort of clear plastic dome or for large scale propagation this is done with mist or fog.

3. Sometimes very difficult-to-root cultivars are grafted but this is unusual nowadays. Before auxins were discovered it was much more common. Where grafting is important is in the production of standards. A standard is a woody plant grafted to the top of a single straight stem 3 to 4' tall – the best known are probably rose standards or rose trees but the technique also works for lilacs. This is where you want a lilac for the understock that does not sucker. Most common are *S. reticulata* (Japanese Tree Lilac), *S. pekinensis* (Pekin Lilac), or *S. josikaea* (the Hungarian Lilac). I bought the only standard lilac offered in last years ILS meeting auction and it is a lovely addition to a new garden.

4. If you only want to make a single or just a handful of copies of a lilac, division or layering methods will work. Plants that form suckers from roots can be severed or divided from the parent. It seems to work best if suckers are 1 to 2 years old and you need to get as much of the sucker's root system as possible.

Layering is a process that encourages the plant to grow roots from a branch. Select a low-growing branch that you can bend down to the ground without it breaking. Wound the branch at the point it contacts the earth and dust with an auxin or rooting powder. Use a wire to pin the branch to the ground and bury the point with several inches of soil. Layering usually takes a year or two before the branch has enough roots that it can be severed from the mother plant.

5. The majority of lilacs on the commercial market are done either from softwood cuttings in a greenhouse with a mist system or by micropropagation. My company specializes in the micropropagation of woody plants including lilacs. I would like to walk you through the process using a *Syringa komarowii* subsp. *reflexa* that Kent Millham named 'Beautiful Susan' in honor of his wife and sent to me to propagate. We received a small plant Kent had managed to root from a cutting. What we need is soft vegetative growth – no single cell stuff – we need preformed meristems. Micropropagation or tissue culture is done in a sterile environment using a gelatin (agar) based medium to which all sorts of chemicals (required by plants to grow) are added. In order to get Kent's 'Beautiful Susan' into culture we had to kill all the fungal and bacterial spores that are normally all over plant leaves, stems and buds. If we don't kill off all those spores they will out-grow the plant tissue. The sterilization is normally done using a bleach-water solution with a little soap as a surfactant. The tissue is then rinsed in sterile distilled water and put on a sterile agar medium.

If we are lucky and have successfully disinfested the 'Beautiful Susan' tissue, the shoots will begin to grow – all this is done under artificial light in a temperature controlled environment. The major advantage of micropropagation is that plants grow 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There is no such thing as a soft-wood cutting (seasonally dependant) because the plants are always in active growth. How many microcuttings produced in culture is a math-calendar exercise. We start with one shoot and allow it to grow in culture for 4 weeks. At the end of the first 4 weeks the shoot is large enough to divide to make 2 shoots. At the end of the second 4 weeks we can take those 2 shoots and make 4 shoots. I think you can see a pattern developing. If we are lucky in the initial stage of sterilization and get 10 disinfested shoots you can see how much faster the number of shoots increases.

When we have finally generated the number of cuttings Kent wanted, say 1000, we need to put roots on those cuttings. Some labs root in culture, in the agar, but we do not. For us the culture space is in very short supply and the roots produced in the agar are more like a hydroponics root system than a root system produced in a soil or soilless mix. We plant microcuttings in Pro-Mix BX, a horticultural peat/perlite mix in flats covered with clear plastic domes to maintain high humidity. The microcuttings do not need any sort of auxin treatment and generally are well rooted in 4 weeks. It takes another 2 weeks to

slowly reduce the humidity by cracking the clear plastic domes. When covers are off, plants are ready to ship to customers accustomed to handling rooted microcuttings or are sent to the greenhouse for transplanting into pots for customers who need something a little larger.

Micropropagation is the only technique I know that will allow the generation of large numbers of plants in a relatively short time period. If we successfully isolate tissue in the spring of year one we are likely to have thousands of plants in the spring of year two. No other propagation technique can do that.



Culture on the left is a newly isolated, sterile shoot.  
Culture on the right is an established culture ready to be subcultured for increase or planting



A 1020 flat of rooted microcuttings ready to ship or be sent to the greenhouse for transplanting

## Victor Lemoine, by Joan Speirs

Victor Lemoine (Pierre Louis Victor), 1823-1911, has been called the greatest plant breeder that the world has ever seen. He is the most prolific and revered lilac hybridist. He was descended from gardeners and nurserymen; France had a strong tradition of horticulture, to serve large estates. Victor was born in Delme, Lorraine, France. He received a good education (for the time) and then travelled and apprenticed with three important horticulturists for several years before opening his nursery in 1849 in Rue de l'Hospice, Nancy, France.

By 1852 he was selling his first documented double flower, a double purslane and this was followed by the first double potentilla and the first streptocarpus hybrids. Introductions were made in many plant genera including *Syringa*. Sixty-two years of plant production was done before his death and another 54 under son Emile and grandson Henri, and all this through three wars.

Work on producing double hybrid lilacs commenced in 1870. A double, mutant lilac (*S. vulgaris* 'Azurea Plena') had been discovered and introduced by a nurseryman in Belgium in 1843. Victor had one growing in his nursery and used this as the seed parent in deliberate crosses with his best *S. vulgaris* singles and with *S. oblata*. His wife did the actual transfer of pollen to stigma atop a ladder, as 'Azurea Plena' was tall. Her eyesight and agility were then superior to those of her husband. In all, 214 lilacs, singles and doubles, were originated by the Lemoines until 1955. During Victor's lifetime about 131 cultivars were released; the remainder by son and grandson. These Lemoine introductions are popularly known as the French Hybrid lilacs.

Victor served for more than 18 years as a municipal Councillor. He supported the planting of trees in the streets and managed the affairs of the town's parks. He also started the Nancy Horticultural Society (Société Central d'Horticulture de Nancy). He was the

first foreigner to receive the Victorian Medal of Horticulture of the Royal Horticultural Society. Shortly before his death, he received the George R. White Medal of Honor from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The Lemoine nursery was closed in 1968. Alas, lilacs at the nursery were lost but Lemoine lilacs live on in collections throughout the world. Jean-François Gonot has recovered all of the cultivars from numerous sources and they reside at Jardin Botanique du Montet (Conservatoire et Jardins Botaniques de Nancy).

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"Victor Lemoine" [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor\\_Lemoine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Lemoine), 28/08/2011.

Dear colleagues,

*Syringa* cultivar name registrations 1995-2009

are now accessible online at

<<https://skydrive.live.com/>

?cid=e5a21b57fb1cb7a1&sc=documents&id=E5A21B57FB1CB7A1!106>

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<[www.SyringaRegistry.info](http://www.SyringaRegistry.info)>

# Lilacs in the Mojave Desert

Yes, it's true. *S. vulgaris* is thriving in Landers, California, which is located in the Mojave desert.

In 2006, Rudy Schaffer planted 10 lilacs representing the 7 colors on a small plot of land behind his Swiss friend Chris Gubler's orchid greenhouses. April 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, I visited the site and took pictures of the gorgeous blooms.

This is a follow-up report to Rudy's article "News about the Lilacs in Southern California", in *Lilacs* 35:4 (106). In the article, Rudy mentioned that he had planted 10 lilacs by Lilac Lane in the high desert, next to a large orchid nursery.

It was truly amazing! In a most unlikely place to grow anything, there are orchids, lilacs and cacti thriving side by side!

*Jean Herrington  
Morongo Valley, CA, USA  
September 8, 2011*



Rudy Schaffer, Chris Dubler, and Jean Herrington in orchid greenhouse  
Photo courtesy of Jean Herrington



Lilacs growing in the starkness of the Mojave Desert  
Photo Credit Jean Herrington



Excellent flowering of lilacs in adverse conditions!  
Photo Credit Jean Herrington

# Lilac Open Garden Day

By: Ned and Elizabeth Newton

On May 21st over 25 like minded lilac enthusiasts and friends gathered at Ned and Elizabeth Newton's home to smell and view the lilacs in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. The day was beautiful and the snacks and drinks were more than fun. There was even a spectacular "Happy Lilac Day" cake. All afternoon we enjoyed sandwiches, scones, some Korean goodies, coffee cake, and dumplings, and ice tea, and lemon aid, and sherry, and ....

Jack Alexander was part of the group and filled in for us some good technical information on lilacs, both their joys and problems. Identification of the cultivars as we strolled about was enhanced with his sharp eye. He also was kind enough to sign our copy of his new book, a must for anyone. John Bentley from Salisbury, New Hampshire was down south with us and shared some of his experiences promoting lilac plantings in public places.

During the last 7 years Ned and Elizabeth have collected more than 40 different varieties of lilacs. Ned and Elizabeth started their lilac collection on their honeymoon trip to Montreal almost 7 years ago. After a visit with Frank Moro at Select Plus Lilac Nursery, just outside of Montreal, they returned home with the back of the station wagon stuffed with lilacs. The plants have grown, and this year they were bursting with huge buds.

These small gatherings are a great way for local International Lilac Society (ILS) Members, to come and support our Society and talk with other visitors about the wonders of lilacs and the many benefits of planting them.

This year the *Pseudomonas syringae* was the worst I have seen here. I am use to some die back of the *hyacinthiflora* and *oblata* in the spring just as the flowers are coming out. But, this year, the damage even stretched up into the *vulgaris* plants. It was not as bad on these but certainly damaging. So, the blooming was not nearly as nice as it should have been. Also the collection is still under way and not all of the lilacs are large enough to bloom profusely. Because of this and because of the large range of blooming time for lilacs, not all the plants were blossoming on the very day of the gathering. However, many of the plants were putting on a bit of a show for us.

Next year I think it would be more fun to meet up several weeks later, say the weekend after Memorial Day. So, mark your calendars and look for a visit to the South Coast of Massachusetts and our always beautiful weather. We have a nice row of later lilacs which bloomed beautifully this year. No *Pseudomonas syringae* at all on these plants. I've been warned of the Lilac Witches' Broom (LWB), but so far not an issue.



Some examples of our late lilacs this year are:  $\times$  *josiflexa* 'Agnes Smith' was a beautiful big ball covered with white flowers;  $\times$  *prestoniae* 'Coral' was a nice bright coral color; *wolfii*  $\times$  *reflexa* 'Hagny' is our largest lilac and was full of pink flowers; and the *josikaea* 'Monstrosa' is still a small plant and a long way from a monster, but it put out surprising scattered bursts of pure white flowers.



Attendees at Ned and Elizabeth Newton's Lilac Day  
Photo courtesy of Ned Newton



Jack Alexander examines a lilac  
Photo courtesy of Ned Newton



Members of ILS New England Chapter proudly display the banner  
Photo Credit Ned Newton



Attendees get ready to enjoy the Lilac celebration cake  
Photo Credit Ned Newton

# The New Botanicals and How they were Developed

*By Vinette Varvaro*

May is approaching and to me that means Lilac Sunday at the Arnold Arboretum and I am very excited. Not because I am a grower or a horticulturist or even a gardener but because I'm an artist and I will be exhibiting my lilac prints in the Arboretum's Hunnewell Building.

The flower has been a recurring inspiration throughout my decades of diversified artistic endeavor. Vivid childhood memories of my mother Merrienne's gardens resurface again and again in my art work. In the seventies I created large scale abstract canvases that flowed with the vibrant saturated color of the garden. In the eighties as a fashion designer my designs were decorated with delicate watercolor images of hand painted tulips, iris and chrysanthemum and in the nineties I painted murals filled with fields of impressionistic flowers of all kinds. Today the botanical prints I create are lifelike recreations of the subject I have so long admired.

Currently my career is in interior design. As a designer I choose furnishings, fabrics and art for my clients. I had often used traditional botanical prints in interiors because they are beautiful and because everyone loves a flower but there were some interiors that they were not appropriate for, and I felt the need for something new. I decided to make it myself. Having drawn and painted flowers in one form or another my whole life, it was time for something different, more current and alive, "Alive" became the key. How could I isolate the drama of a live flower and capture its true color and spirit?

This is the part where I don't tell exactly how I developed the process to create my prints; it has become my little trade secret. No camera is used and they are not photographs. My prints are light transfer images and all my subjects are freshly cut live flowers. I spend hours twisting and bending stems, snapping flower heads off or adding leaves here and there to achieve the perfect composition. I hate breaking them apart and I do flinch each time, but I have to believe the final results are worth it. The finished product is a digital archival print also known as a giclee print recognized by the art world as a fine art print. The New Botanicals are printed on archival museum quality watercolor paper and are fade resistant for up to 125 years. They are printed by me on an Epson 2880 digital ink jet printer and range in size from 7" x 10" to 12" x 18", and framed the largest size is 18" x 24".

Until April of 2010 all my flower subjects came from my own or friends and neighbors gardens. When April came I saw a notation on my calendar that

read "get lilacs". I had missed the previous season, and wanted to add lilacs to my "Cottage Floral Collection". Cleaning off my desk, with lilacs on my mind I randomly opened a Newburyport Magazine to an article about a lilac nursery in West Newbury called Syringa Plus.. What an odd name I thought, but maybe they would like to trade some lilacs for prints. That is how my amazingly fortuitous collaboration and friendship with Evelyn King and Roger Coggeshall of syringe Plus Lilac Nursery began.

I called and Evie invited me to come to the nursery. I showed her and roger my dogwood print and they treated me to a tour of their breathtaking lilacs. A mutual admiration society was formed from the first, and our work together has flourished ever since.

Evelyn would walk me up to the field of lilacs and we would share what aspects of the plants we were after and gather them accordingly. Between us; the horticulturist and the artist we have created a body of work that is unique, artful and accurate.

The truth of the matter is that I am the recipient of the greater reward from my collaboration with Evelyn and roger. Because of their expertise and generosity many doors into the horticultural world have been opened to me, and I have met so many friendly and knowledgeable people. Among them is Mr. Jack Alexander, Plant Propagator at the Arnold Arboretum, whose enthusiasm for my work has resulted in my (then) upcoming exhibition from April 30 to June 5, 2011. Upon Jack's suggestion I was able to show my work to Marc Devokaitis, the organizer of art exhibitions and consequently be invited to exhibit my lilac prints during Lilac Sunday. My complete collection may be seen at [www.thenewbotanicals.com](http://www.thenewbotanicals.com).

*Editor's Note: the above article was originally scheduled to be published in the Spring Issue of Lilacs.*

## **Wanted: A report on the Fall Gathering at King's Tree Farm and Syringa Plus**

For the next issue, ILS would like to hear about the fun time that was had at the Fall Rouncup in Massachusetts. It would be appreciated by the editor and by the ILS members any attendee could give a brief report of the events and some photos of the meeting



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Ami Schott'  
Image credit Vinette Varvaro



*Syringa* 'Miss Canada'  
Image credit Vinette Varvaro

International Lilac Society

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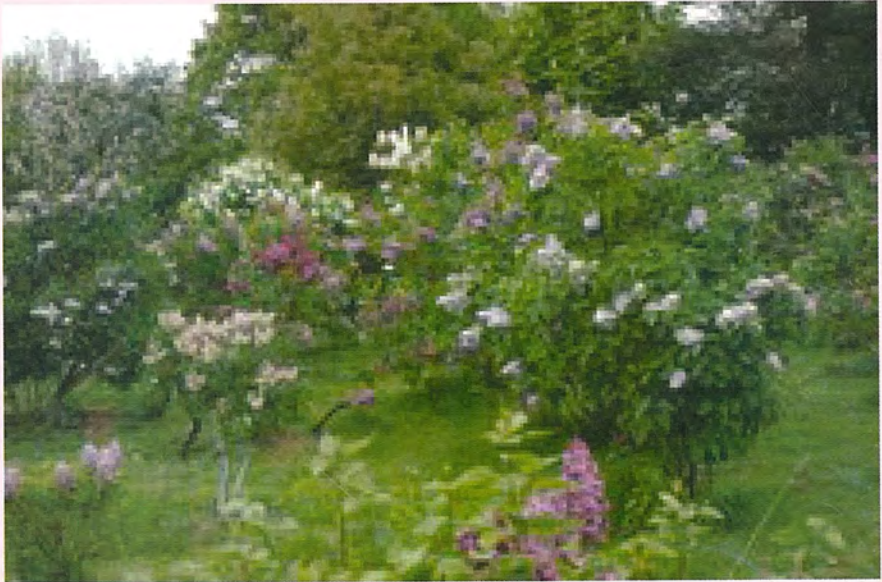
*Syringa vulgaris* 'Silja'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Ogni Donbassa'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



Coin Chapman's house seen through branches of 'Zulu'  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



The "Entrance to Russia" at Colin Chapman's lilac garden walk  
Photo Credit Colin Chapman