

Lilacs

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 1
WINTER 2013



QUARTERLY JOURNAL

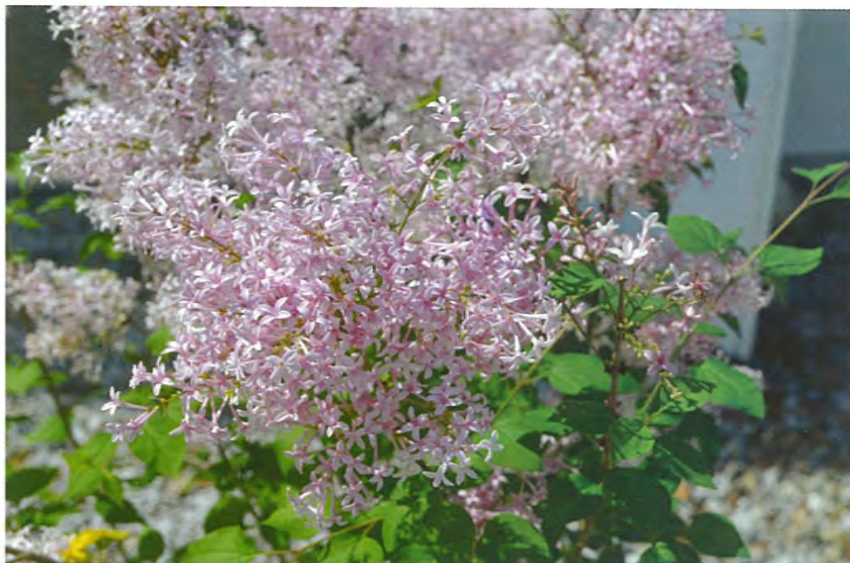
of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

Lilacs in Israel
and New Research on Lilacs



Syringa oblata seedling showing dark purple buds among open flowers
Photo Credit Michael Dirr



More heavy flowering of *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* in southern trials
Photo Credit Michael Dirr

Table of Contents

President's Message.....	3
Executive VP's Message.....	5
An Explanation of the 2012 ILS Presidential Election.....	6
Speakers for the 2013 ILS Convention.....	8
Board of Directors Candidates for ILS 2013.....	10
The Joy of Lilacs: Advancing the Southern Frontier.....	13
Lilacs in Israel.....	19
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> Genetic Resources Pilot Project in Finland.....	21
ILS Membership Roster as of 12/31/2012.....	24
New ILS Members 2012.....	38
<i>Front Cover:</i> Unexpected sight of lilacs blooming in Israel next to desert plants <i>Agave</i> and <i>Opuntia</i> Photo Credit Boaz Greenfield	

Editor's Deadline for Spring Issue:

*****March 15*****

VOLUME 42, NO. 1
QUARTERLY JOURNAL

A Publication of
THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY

Copyright 2013 Editor

ISSN 1046-9761

Copies of this publication are available by writing to the International Lilac Society,
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Membership Classification (U.S. Funds)

Single /Annual.....	\$ 25.00
Family.....	35.00
Institution/Commercial.....	55.00
Life.....	500.00

* Mail membership dues to Asst. Treasurer William F. Tschumi

MASTERCARD and VISA credit cards accepted

International Postage Fee \$10 (Excludes US & Canada) additional to dues.
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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LILACS 2013.....PUBLISHED JANUARY 2013

President's Message

Dear Lilac Friends, Happy New Year! By the time you read this message it probably will be Valentine's Day. Just the same I hope everyone will have a wonderful year. After the end of last year's festivities we turn our attention to the new season coming up, Spring.

The weather in many parts of the world has been extreme. It has been cold, wet, snowy, and none of it user friendly. I know that in Russia many cities are suffering from temperatures way below zero. The same goes for cities and towns in North America and parts of the world. So let us think about lilacs and all the other spring shrubs and flowers that will burst into our garden in a show of colors soon as the days get longer and the temperatures return to normal. I see buds forming on the trees and a few early daffodils are already peeking through the brown earth. Hope; that is what spring brings, hope for new things and for renewal.

Lilacs and roses are the most well known plants in the world. Empress Josephine, Napoleon Bonaparte's beautiful wife, had a garden full of roses collected for her from all over the world. I was curious to see if she also had lilacs in her gardens at the Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil, France. I have found no record of it. But I'm sure she did. She was too much about beauty and perfume to have omitted planting lilacs. They most have graced her gardens. The preoccupation with lilacs dates from long ago. I recently purchased a book, "The Lilac Girl" by Ralph Henry Barbour, published in 1909. The cover is the most beautiful color of lilac. A picture on the front shows a couple elegantly dressed, sitting in a garden. She is holding a bouquet of lilac. On the inside front and back cover are lovely illustrations of a lilac bloom. Actually it is a mystery novel but the author must have loved flowers. Another of his titles is "Kitty and the Roses".

Everyone must plan on attending our annual convention, May 9th to 11th, 2013, in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Dr. Deborah McCown has been planning a great meeting for us. Some information has already been published in the Fall issue of *Lilacs*. The hotel prices are reasonable and there is a lot to see in the city. The lilacs will bloom. Your lilac friends will be there. Plus you will learn a lot about lilacs. The list of speakers is impressive. Conventions are always fun. They are perfect events for new members to attend. If you know someone who has just joined or someone who has never attended one of our conventions, encourage them to join us. About an hour or less from Madison, Wisconsin, is Taleisin, the famous house Frank Lloyd Wright built. It is a great opportunity to visit it...

I'm hoping that Kent Millham, ILS Editor, has received many articles for the journal. We need articles on a variety of topics. I know all of you have an interesting story to tell about lilacs or a lilac personality. All it takes is a little time to write. Just ask someone how did you get involved with lilacs? I'm sure you will have a page or two. Ruth Buchanan has just sent to the International Lilac Robin

(ILR) wonderful pictures she took during the 2012 ILS convention in Nancy, France. Those of you who are members but have not joined the ILR contact Bradley Bittorf, Executive Vice President, and he will enroll you. It is one of your member benefits. It is the perfect way to communicate with others lilacs enthusiasts. You can ask questions, share information and pictures about lilacs.

Thank you to those who have taken the time to write for the Fall 2012 issue of *Lilacs*. Joshua Miller for *Ten Questions with Deborah McCown*, Joan Speirs for *Trouble with Color*; John Bentley for *Finding "Nellie Bean"* and *Lilacs In Nancy* by Tatiana Poliakova including her pictures of the Lemoine lilacs, give substance to our journal. I asked for a poem sometime back and Myrna Walberg answered with a lovely one. Now we need scientific articles and articles on the culture of lilacs.

I would like to see us reprint articles from old issues of *Lilacs*. Some things never change and there is always something to be learned. Karen McCauley discussed with me having a picture data base of all the lilacs. People want to see the color, the shape, the foliage, the bloom etc. of plants. Today it would be easy to do. I know many of you have huge collections of lilac pictures that could form the basis for such project.

We would like to have everyone's e-mail address. Right now we only have a small number. It would be useful in order to send the e-newsletter. I know you don't want to be left out. So when you renew your membership be sure to include your e-mail address. Again let's us talk about membership. I'm sure some of you have innovative ideas on how to attract new members. Please send your suggestions to Gloria Schreiber our membership secretary or to me. Our e-mails are in the journal. It may be that you belong to another society or club and have seen what actions are taken to bring in new members. Let's make it a goal to grow our society this year, 2013. A goal of one hundred new members is very possible to achieve.

Regional Vice Presidents need to organize a lilac event in their region during bloom season to attract visitors. Irene Stark, RVP for the Central Region, started a lilac gathering last year. The New England Region has held a lilac gathering for years with great success. It is the best time to acquire new members. Who can resist lilacs putting on a show.

I'm certain we will have a wonderful lilac year. Presently Mother Nature is working silently but it is exciting to think then in a few weeks the gardens will wake up. Our lilacs will come out of their slumber, perfume the air and surprise us with their beautiful blooms. It is an annual ritual but what a wonderful one. I know we are all waiting for that! See you on the lilac trail...

Nicole Jordan
ILS President

Executive Vice President's Message

2012 has been a year of business travel for me. Since my primary business *does not* involve lilacs, this has represented a challenge for me. It seems that the things that need attention within ILS seldom get enough resources—especially resources in the form of time.

Nevertheless, there are some important issues that should get attention. Among these are membership enhancement, web site improvements, plans and goals for the future of ILS, and impact of the United States federal budget negotiations. I will echo the theme that our President and others have stated—that we must continue to attract new and vital members. Many of you have already done a great job of this. However, we have continued to witness a decline in memberships in many areas.

One of our areas for improvement continues to be our web site, www.internationallilacsociety.org. My vast thanks goes to Candace Wentz. I've found that my role has changed from web site developer to overseer, with Candace getting all the credit for visual and structural improvements, while I deserve some of the blame for the staleness of the site, and lack of a maintained plan for improvement of the web site. We would like to make some (many?) improvements, and the first of these is likely to be the electronic voting mechanism for those who chose this mode of electing their choices for ILS Board of Directors in 2013. (As before, you can request instructions for voting for Board member candidates electronically by simply sending an e-mail with your request to "vote@internationallilacsociety.org" and you will receive a reply with voting instructions.) If there are any skilled web contributors who have time to donate, please alert Candace or me and we may be able to find a role for you.

The ILS has sometimes looked to its future. As it turns out, often during our brief meetings, we deal with short-term issues. The ILS has a very good long-range plan that was put together by Frank Moro and it included many noteworthy goals. It would be a good starting point for some planning of actions we can take to make our future as a society better. To do this most effectively, we need to understand our purpose and goals. I will renew my offer to lead a goal-setting session during one of the next two ILS annual conventions. This would be an interactive session in which ILS members and guests contribute to what they see as the most important things for ILS to represent; and perhaps to determine what things that the ILS must accomplish to see this vision made real.

Another concern that many of you know about, but possibly overlook in the context of the International Lilac Society, is the possible effects of the U.S. budget negotiations, or "sequestration" or the "fiscal cliff." I hope that by the time this is published, an agreement will have been reached. However, even if an agreement is reached, it is likely to have far-reaching effects on scientific and research pursuits. Science and research is sure to remain a popular target for cuts

and diminishment. This may in turn have an effect on topics such as plant studies, climate studies, DNA research, and plant disease investigations. There may be similar effects in reduction of research staffing and cuts in university staff and budgets, as well as possible impacts at federal research and scientific institutes. Keep these points in mind as you communicate with policy makers—and with your neighbors and friends.

I hope that your spring comes early—but not too early. In May, I anticipate welcoming you to Wisconsin—my home state—for our 2013 annual meeting and convention. A splendid site on an isthmus near the state capital building awaits you. In Madison, you will find a diverse mix of people, a set of beautiful views, and some really lovely lilacs.

Brad Bittorf
ILS Executive Vice President

An Explanation of the 2012 ILS Presidential Election

Fellow ILS Members,

If you were not involved in the 2012 Election of Officers for the International Lilac Society, you may have been confused by the reference in the President's message in the Fall, 2012 issue of "Lilacs." Allow me to fill you in on the events that took place, and the reasons for them.

As you know, the 2012 Annual meeting was held in Nancy, France. Many preparations were in progress prior to the meeting, and the Executive Committee agreed to defer the deadline for elections for Board of Directors until after the annual meeting and convention. This choice led to side effects that we did not immediately recognize.

It is the standard practice of the ILS to announce the results of the vote for Board of Directors during the annual meeting of membership. Then, the next day, the "new" board—including those newly-elected Board members—meets to choose its officers for the following year.

Because we did not yet know the membership of the new board at the Nancy meeting, this could not be done.

Therefore, after the results of the vote for new Board of Directors members was announced, we realized that we needed to elect new officers as directed by the ILS By-Laws. ILS President Jordan asked me to conduct this election. I was selected because I was not up for re-election this year, and because I have some knowledge of our election history and policy.

I consequently discussed the matter with our ILS Nominations chair, who, as is typical, submitted a slate of nominees for the various ILS Officer (leadership) positions. This paralleled how we operate at the Board “officer election” meeting. Again, just as would have happened during the officer election meeting, I opened the floor for additional nominations. (In this case, however, nominations were conducted through a combination of telephone calls and e-mails to each Board member.)

At the conclusion of the nominating period, those who were nominated, and who accepted their nominations, comprised the set of incumbents for all positions except for President. For President, both Nicole Jordan and John Bentley received proper nominations.

Once more, as closely as I could mimic the actions of the “officer election” board meeting, I called for a vote of the members of the new Board of Directors, who are the people who cast votes for officers according to our By-Laws. The voting was done by a combination of e-mail and traditional paper mail.

At the conclusion of the voting period, I enlisted a trusted colleague to assist in the vote count. The slate of incumbent officers was confirmed by vote. And, by a vote of 8-6 with one not voting, Nicole Jordan was re-elected as President of the ILS.

While questions were asked whether it would have been simpler to just wait a year and then conduct elections at our 2013 meeting, I felt that holding a tardy election would be more in keeping with the intentions of our By-Laws, which were the guide for this election. This manner of electing officers took some special effort, but did not cost the ILS any extra money.

I am pleased that we had participation of all seated members of the Board of Directors—an accomplishment seldom possible with our standard practices, since many are unable to attend all conventions. Nonetheless, I highly recommend that we return to our typical method for officer elections in 2013.

As always, I welcome any of your questions.

Sincerely yours,

Brad Bittorf
2012 ILS Officer Election Manager

Speakers for the 2013 ILS Convention

Some of the outstanding professionals committed as speakers for the educational sessions at the International Lilac Society's meeting in Madison May 9-11, 2013.

Woody Barnes

ILS member

*Selecting and Growing Lilacs for
Cut Flowers*

John Bentley

ILS member

The Katie Bentley Lilac Project

Elizabeth Dunham

Knight Hollow Nursery

ILS member

*Tissue Culture Propagation of
Lilacs*

Mark Dwyer

Director of Janesville

Rotary Garden

Sensory Gardens

Prof. Ed Hasselkus

Dept of Horticulture

University of Wisconsin

ILS member

*The History of the Longenecker
Gardens and the Lilac Collection*

Prof. Laura Jull

Dept of Horticulture

University of Wisconsin

ILS member

*Smaller Lilacs for our Smaller
Gardens*

Mike Maddox

Dane County's Master Gardener Program

State Program Director

Wisconsin Master Gardener Program

University of Wisconsin-Extension

*Dane County's Master Gardener
Program*

Prof. Brent McCown

Dept of Horticulture

University of Wisconsin

The Biology of Fragrance

Heather Sabin

Tourism Coordinator

Monona Terrace Center

*Frank Lloyd Wright: American
Architect and Wisconsin Son*

Prof. Mark Schwartz
Chair, National Phenology
Network Committee
UW-Milwaukee

*Lilac Phenology: A key
in understanding plant-climate
interactions*

AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION-----SOLD!

The auction at the annual meeting is one of the Society's biggest fund raising activities. Plants and other lilac "goodies" should be sent to:

Deb McCown
Knight Hollow Nursery
7911 Forsythia Court
Middleton, WI 53562

We will care for the plants and make sure everything is transported to the UW Arboretum – site of the Saturday afternoon auction. We are in luck - Bruce Peart will again be our auctioneer!

USPS, FedEx and UPS drivers all know where we are located. BE GENER-

Editor's Deadline for Spring Issue

Please send any submissions for Spring Issue

to Editor Kent Millham by March 15

Digital photos should be at least 1 MB

Board of Director Candidates for ILS 2013

The Society is fortunate to have 7 very qualified and enthusiastic candidates running for a 3 year term on the Board of Directors starting in May 2013. The biographical information for each candidate was largely written by themselves. They are simply listed in alphabetic order. The asterisk indicates the candidate is already a board member and is seeking an additional term.

Kelly Applegate

Kelly Applegate is an ILS member from central Minnesota where he grows a collection of 100+ lilac cultivars of mainly *S. vulgaris* and *S. x hyacinthaflora*. Along with a passion for gardening and lilacs, he is also the Director of the Minnesota Purple Martin Working Group; a conservation group of 220 members who work to promote Purple Martins in Minnesota. Kelly's other interests include flying Birmingham Roller Pigeons, Playing clarinet, and growing giant pumpkins. Kelly would like to bring fresh ideas to the ILS Board of Directors to promote growth of the society and awareness for preserving and promoting lilac collections both public and private. Kelly would like to see more tools and empowerment to members to promote lilacs in the communities. Kelly also has an interest in documenting rare cultivars to ensure these plants do not disappear in tangible form.

Guy Giunta*

I have been involved in lilacs pretty much all my life. I remember as a kid moving lilac plants around my parent's house in Massachusetts. When I moved to New Hampshire (the state which has lilacs as it's state flower and which also has a commission called the Governors Lilac and Wildflower Commission) my first job with the Department of Transportation was to care for and plant lilacs around the state. I then proudly became the Chairman of the Lilac Commission which distributes and plants lilacs throughout the State. I have 3 vehicles with lilac and lilacs on the vanity plates and I am always dressing up in the color purple. Quite simply, I am known as the lilac (nut) person of New Hampshire.

Dave Gressley

I graduated from the Ohio State University with a B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1982. I worked at The Holden Arboretum where I maintained and curated the Lilac Collection in the Main Display Garden for fifteen of my twenty years there. I was previously active with the International Lilac Society as a Member of the Board and Membership Secretary for fifteen years. I have been the Horticulturist for The Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio for the past six years.

Bill Horman

Bill joined ILS in 1975 and has attended most of the annual conventions. He has served a full term on the ILS Board of Directors and has served on membership, publication, nominations, auction, awards and convention committees.

He has been a professional horticulturist and nurseryman for over fifty years.

Bill is founder of Sunny Fields Botanical Park, home of Michigan's most diverse lilac collection. Six lilac festivals have been held at Sunny Fields and enjoyed by the public. Bill is a collector and student of lilacs for over 50 years.

He previously served as senior floriculturist for the City of Detroit, where he is a lifelong resident.

Steve McCulloch

Steve has a bachelor's and Master's degree in horticulture from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Steve enjoys all kinds of plants. He is a member of several plant societies and organizations. He has served in leadership roles with many of these organizations including president of the western region of the International Plant Propagators' Society. Steve has spent his professional life in the plant nursery trade with specialization in commercial plant micropropagation. He and his wife Carol own and operate Mountain Shadow Nursery, a wholesale nursery in Littlerock, Washington. Mountain Shadow Nursery uses tissue culture technology to grow and propagate millions of plants every year, including lilacs. Steve enjoys sharing his love for horticulture and mentoring others. In the evenings, he is an adjunct professor of horticulture at the local community college. Currently he is teaching two horticulture classes: Plant Propagation and Horticulture Business Management.

Marymae Meyer*

An ILS member since 2008, Marymae is an Idaho native who grew up on a 240-acre farm along the Illinois River near Peoria, Illinois. She worked in the corporate world in four other states for many years before settling into the Lilac Village of Lombard, Illinois. Using skills learned during her years in marketing, human resources and advertising, Marymae volunteers for the Lombard Park District to help Lilacia Park's horticulturist to mark, catalog and keep current an inventory of nearly 800 lilacs. Deeply fascinated with the origins and originators of lilacs, she wrote Lilacia's Lilac Collection Policy, was host chair of the 2011 convention, and is currently a board director who hopes to further contribute to ILS.

Bruce Peart*

Bruce is a horticulturist by trade as he spent his career at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, Ontario, Canada for 28 years, mainly as Head Gardener of Hendrie Park. During his last 5 years there he was Curator of the Lilac Collection, one of the largest collections of lilacs in the world. He continues to be an active member of the International Lilac Society as a board member for a number of years as well as Auctioneer for the Annual Live Lilac Auction. Bruce

is presently working as a Property Manager north of Toronto. This all works well with Bruce and his hobbies as he and Margaret Walton spend their free time traveling the world, always planning a visit to a couple of gardens in other countries. They have traveled to all continents, with Antarctica being the most recent.

Bruce's PS - There are no lilacs in Antarctica but they are found on all the other continents.

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

If the expiration date on your mailing label reads Dec 12
then your membership has lapsed.

Please renew to continue receiving the Lilacs Quarterly.

All membership dues should be mailed to:

International Lilac Society
William Tschumi
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3 Paradise Court
Cohoes, NY 12047-1422
USA

Vote for the Next Slate of ILS Board of Directors

Voting Ballot insert is in this journal

Ballots should be mailed no later than April 20, 2013

Send to the Elections Chairman

Nancy Latimer
P.O. Box 444
Emory, VA 24327

The Joy of Lilacs: Advancing the Southern Frontier

Michael A. Dirr, Ph.D.
Plant Introductions, Inc.
www.plantintroductions.com

Memories . . . to my childhood in Cincinnati, Mom asking me to cut a bouquet from the two giant common lilacs, *Syringa vulgaris*, in the garden, the house then sweet with fragrance. The Olsen House in Cushing, ME, the subject of Andrew Wyeth's paintings of a Maine coastal family and farm, with lilacs, 15 to 25' high, dating from ~1870's. Truly an heirloom plant in northern gardens, often the only vestige of a homestead. Numerous cultivars exist, but lack heat, drought, disease, and insect tolerances for successful culture in the South. 'Tiny Dancer', a 2011 *S. vulgaris* introduction from Plants Nouveau, is described as heat tolerant, with zone 4 to 8 adaptability. Reaches 4-5' high and 3-4' wide, producing violet-purple buds that open to fragrant lavender flowers in 4-5" long panicles. I look forward to trailing it in the Dirr garden.

Several researchers evaluated lilacs for performance in the Southeast. Richard Bir reported excellent performance with *S. vulgaris*, *S. reticulata*, subsp. *pekinensis*, *S. meyeri*, *S. ×prestoniae*, *S. ×josiflexa*, *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla*, subsp. *patula*, *S. ×chinensis*, *S. oblata*, var. *dilatata*, and *S. ×hyacinthiflora*. Work was conducted at North Carolina State's Fletcher Research Station near Asheville, Zone 6b, ~2,000 feet elevation. See *Proc. Southern Nurs. Assoc. Res. Conf.* 48:450-451, 2003.

Dr. John Ruter, Tifton, GA, Zone 8a, conducted a five-year evaluation (1996-2001) of 18 lilacs. I visited Tifton many times and it is one of the hottest parts of Georgia. 'Miss Kim' was one of Dr. Ruter's favorites, but grew only 2.8' by 3.3'. Two others were highly rated including *S. ×laciniata* (7.3' by 9.7'), the most vigorous, and at that time NA 62974, now 'Old Glory' (6' by 4.6'). 'Declaration' (NA 62975) grew 6.6' by 5.2' and *S. meyeri*, 3.7' by 5.7'. All received a rating of *Good* for flowering. 'Old Glory' was not devastated by late season *Cercospora* leaf spot. See *Proc. Southern Nurs. Assoc. Res. Conf.* 49:589-591, 2004.

A note on Georgia weather that reflects lilacs' challenges. Historical average high temperatures for June, July, and August were 89.8°F for Tifton, 88°F for Watkinsville (PII's location), respectively. A blog from a reputable southern garden writer noted that HEAT is not the problem, it is lack of chilling (hours between 32-45°F). I observed lilacs being "fried" in the PII trials. Chill hours for Tifton (1004) and Watkinsville (1731) for 2007 to 2011 would impact

performance. In my estimation, sufficient chill hours occur in Watkinsville for lilacs to flower. There is more to the story than cold (chill hours).

So what to do? Certainly the *S. oblata* complex including var. *dilatata* offers hope. At the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, NC, I observed 'Frank Meyer' (white) and var. *dilatata* performing admirably with flowers in late March. The *S. ×hyacinthiflora* cultivars require less chill hours and are more heat tolerant. The Descanso hybrids have been underwhelming with 'Angel White', 'California Rose', 'Dark Knight', and 'Lavender Lady', tested at PII. In our trial at PII and the University of Georgia, 'Betsy Ross', 'Declaration', 'Cheyenne' (var. *dilatata* type) have maintained reasonably clean foliage into October. 'Cheyenne' has been the best and is now integrated into PII's breeding strategies. 'Declaration' and 'Betsy Ross' are also being utilized with numerous open-pollinated seedlings (November 2012). 'Betsy Ross' has flowered on 3-31-09, typically later than true *S. oblata*.

Hundreds of open-pollinated seedlings of *S. oblata* yielded several selections with deep purple buds and lavender flowers as well as white (photos). Several yellow-foliage variants also appeared, one with white flowers. Worth noting that with our long growing season and cultural techniques, most seedlings of *S. oblata* flower in two years. The compost heap is littered with less-than-stellar *S. oblata*. Flowers were fully open on 3-18-12 and late spring frosts guarantee degrees of injury.

Dr. Josh Kardos, our breeder, has grown *S. pubescens* subsp. *patula* (large leaves) and *S. vulgaris* seedlings. I noted the subsp. *patula* developed rich maroon fall color (see photo). We plan to assess these for flower qualities in 2013. Might mention that foliage of subsp. *patula* was free of disease while *S. vulgaris* was infected. Perhaps subsp. *patula*, based on reasonable success of 'Miss Kim', could lead to a clean-foliaged, heat-tolerant lilac reminiscent of *S. vulgaris*. Josée™, the best for foliage in our trials, has subsp. *patula* in its parentage. Greenleaf nursery recently introduced Sweet Treat™ ('GRESWT'), a selection from 'Miss Kim' with increased heat and drought tolerance. Grows 5-6' high and 4-6' wide and is adaptable in zones 3 to 8.

Numerous seedlings of *S. josikaea*, *S. villosa*, and *S. wolfii* are now in the second year, a few with flowers. These represent PII's shotgun approach to breeding. Most of the lilac seeds were purchased from Don Allen, F.W. Schumacher, Sandwich, MA. The seeds have high germination capacity and the thousands of seedlings from nine species and subspecies reflect this fact. In 2013, the three species should flower in quantity. Early flowers were lilac and pink and typical for the species in morphology. I expect nothing of worth for the South, but the need to try outweighs the potential negative results.

Syringa reticulata and *S. reticulata* subsp. *pekinensis* are also in the mix. My observations indicate subsp. *pekinensis* is better adapted to Zone 7. Plants of *S. reticulata* at the Milliken Arboretum, Spartanburg, SC, leafed out and flowered early, appearing tired and tatty by mid to late summer. However, China Snow® ('Morton'), a subsp. *pekinensis* cultivar, has performed magnificently. At the Coker Arboretum, University of North Carolina, and at the Raulston, large specimens of subsp. *pekinensis* are extant. For the record, the parent tree of China Snow®, now 45' by 35", was derived from seed collected in Gansu Province, by Joseph Rock, in the 1920's. Original tree resides in the Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL.

Seeds of *S. reticulata* and subsp. *pekinensis* required a warm and cold stratification to induce germination whereas all other lilacs required only 30 days cold-moist stratification. A lesson for any *Syringa* breeder is to collect capsules when brown and starting to split, remove seeds and stratify. As I write this (November 2012), seedlings of many open-pollinated and controlled crosses from this year have germinated. The seedlings are transplanted to 2.5" by 2.5" by 3" cells in a seedling mix and grown under lights in a heated greenhouse. These plants are shifted to 3-gallon containers in April-May and grown to flowering. Ideally, seedlings that flower the initial growing season may be remontant or reblooming. This translates to flowering on new growth without the normal flower bud induction under short days and cooler temperatures.

Exhausted ALL the possibilities for Southern lilacs? Not so, for a cadre of taxa including *S. ×laciniata*, *S. protolaciniata*, *S. pubescens*, and subsp. *julianae*, *microphylla*, and *patula*, along with *S. meyeri* and the hybrids Josée™, Fairytale Series (particularly Tinkerbelle™), 'Red Pixie', Jack Alexander's 'Purple Haze' (sterile), and 'Lilac Sunday' (sterile) will live and/or rebloom in Zone 7. *Syringa ×laciniata* is the most successful based on 33 years' observations. I was always intrigued by the potential of *S. protolaciniata* 'Kabul' and its use in breeding. Acquired several plants from Frank Moro, but they appeared similar to what I know as *S. ×laciniata*. According to Jack Alexander, *S. ×laciniata* is sterile and cut-leaf lilacs Jack observed in U.S. are fertile. Our company spent considerable dollars purchasing *S. protolaciniata* 'Kabul' when everything labeled as *×laciniata* was apparently *S. protolaciniata*. This has been borne out by fruit set (smooth cylindrical capsules) on the cut-leaf plants.

Always hopeful that a lilac or two will rise above the fray and over 50 taxa were tested in containers and in-ground at PII. Selection was based on input from members of the Lilac Society, Fiala's major work, and our accumulated wisdom. Suffice it to add that a limited few have impressed with *S. meyeri*, *S. protolaciniata*, Tinkerbelle™, Josée™, 'Red Pixie', 'Purple Haze', 'Lilac Sunday', 'Betsy Ross', 'Cheyenne', and subsp. *pekinensis* the best. *Syringa komarowii* was beautiful in flower, but at season's close, the foliage resembled

potato chips. Collectively, most of the *S. ×hyacinthiflora*, *S. ×jostiflexa*, *S. ×prestoniae*, and *S. vulgaris* significantly underwhelmed.

The reblooming trait I believe elevates a new lilac to a commercial hopeful and was exhibited in Josée™, Tinkerbelle™, 'Red Pixie', 'Lilac Sunday', 'Purple Haze'. The Bloomerang™ ('Penda') in the group died and before doing so exhibited minimal propensity to rebloom. I observed robust plants at Coastal Maine Botanical Garden in August, September, and October, with only a few scattered flowers. Jack Alexander reported Sugar Plum Fairy™ was the best rebloomer at the Arnold.

PII has conducted considerable trial/homework to determine breeding strategies for heat tolerance and reblooming from thousands of seedlings of *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla*, *S. oblata*, *S. reticulata*, *S. reticulata* subsp. *pekinensis*, *S. josikaea*, *S. villosa*, *S. vulgaris* and *S. wolffi*, all derived from Schumacher seed, only subsp. *microphylla* yielded significant reblooming. The literature clearly tells the same story and most of the rebloomers listed previously have genes of subsp. *microphylla*. From these subsp. *microphylla* seedlings, two, -01 and -04, most prominently, were selected for continued evaluation. Note the clean foliage of 01-11 next to mildewed foliage of Prince Charming™ (photo).

Open-pollinated seedlings of Bloomerang® flowered in the first year. Controlled crosses in 2011 of 'Red Pixie' × Josée™, *S. meyeri* 'Palibin' × Josée™, and *S. meyeri* × subsp. *microphylla*-01-10 yielded numerous flowering plants in 2012. For 2012, Dr. Kardos has seedlings now germinating from nine open-pollinated taxa and 15 controlled crosses.

The cross *S. ×laciniata* × *S. protolaciniata* 'Kabul' has produced seedlings (see photo). 'Kabul' is supposedly a clone of *S. protolaciniata* and may be genetically different for successful crosses to be consummated. The *S. ×laciniata* label was applied since the plant was purchased as such. Correctly, should be *S. protolaciniata* × *S. p.* 'Kabul'. Jack Alexander confirmed that 'Kabul' is a distinct cultivar. See The Lacinate-Leaved Lilacs, by Peter S. Green in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* 6(3):116-124 (1998) for corroboration.

Related to the above is whether lilacs are self-fertile or need to be outcrossed to produce fertile seeds. Based on fruit development on isolated plants of Bloomerang® and others, lilacs must be self-fertile. 'Red Pixie' seedlings showed high percentages of albinism, indicating "inbreeding depression." 'Red Pixie' is listed as an open-pollinated seedling selection from *S. pubescens* subsp. *julianae* 'Hers'. This is the only occasion I observed albinos in the thousands of seedlings. Certainly, would be interested in readers' experiences.

At every step, the process (journey) has been exciting and educational. Many backyard breeders work with a limited number of seedlings. Sheer volume often works to a breeder's advantage. With thousands of seedlings, the opportunity for success increases. We continue to fine-tune the approach and hopefully will have lilacs for the South (and North) that offer the requisite objectives. In plant breeding the dictums . . . "Good is the enemy of Great" and "We live in the future so might as well plan for it" . . . are the guiding tenets.



Young tissue culture specimens being grown and evaluated by Plant Introductions Inc.
Photo Credit Michael Dirr



Seedlings of 'Red Pixie' at PII
Photo Credit Michael Dirr



One year seedlings of 'Red Pixie' × Josée™
Photo Credit Michael Dirr



Attractive fall color in seedlings of *S. pubescens* subsp. *patula*
Photo Credit Michael Dirr

Lilacs in Israel

In mid-April I returned to see the house where a family with children once lived. The house was abandoned. I looked over the fence and there it was: the great white lilac in full bloom. It's always surprising to find a lilac growing in Israel.

Going back to the places I remember from my childhood helped me locate the lilacs I knew as a kid. It is not known who first brought lilacs to Israel, but French Missionaries who came here in the 19th century planted lilacs in their gardens where they can still be found today. Jewish pioneers who came from Eastern Europe to settle the Holy Land, had a deep love for lilacs.

People I spoke to said: "Lilacs? they don't grow here, they grow in Europe". Indeed they grow in Europe and in North America, were they seed themselves and naturalize, in the garden and outside the garden.

Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to grow lilacs outside their traditional "European zone". Lilacs growing in Israel were always an enigma. I can try to explain how they grow here, but there is more to it than what I know.

In contrast to the lilacs of Europe, Lilacs in Israel are found only in gardens. Handed down like treasures, from generation to generation and tended by devoted gardeners. Were this ancient covenant to disappear the lilacs would vanish with it.

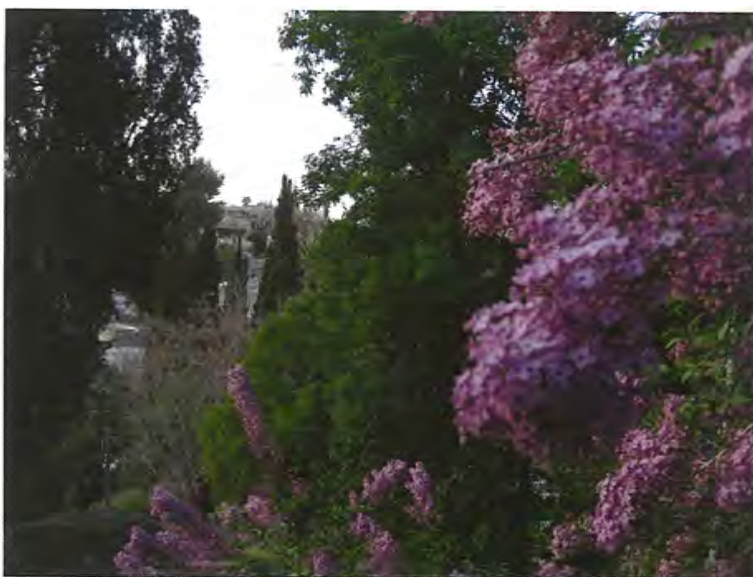
It is important to know the different microclimates of Israel in order to understand the conditions suitable for growing Lilacs. Favorable conditions are: dry air, cold nights, full sun, deep soil and water. Places in Israel where these conditions exist are: Jerusalem, the Galilee and the Golan. Lilacs will not grow in the humid area along the Mediterranean coast. Certain varieties of lilacs grow in Israel better than others, there is much place for experimentation and just trial and error.

Every year, at lilac time, I walk around with this feeling, that there must be more lilacs blooming out there. I don't know, maybe it's only in my imagination.

*Boaz Greenfield
November 2012*



Excellent flowering in lilacs grown in Jerusalem
Photo Credit Boaz Greenfield



Syringa × persica grown near cypress trees in Jerusalem Hills
Photo Credit Boaz Greenfield

Syringa vulgaris Genetic Resources Pilot Project in Finland

Common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris* L.), native to Balkan mountains, is one of the most essential landscape plants throughout the whole cool end temperate region. In Finland it is a target species in the National Programme of Plant Genetic Resources and also included in the Finnish Certified Plant Production Scheme. Preservation of field and horticultural crop genetic resources is coordinated by MTT Agrifood Research Finland that also carries the main responsibility for the practical conservation measures.

Several common lilac clones selected from Helsinki were delivered to MTT Agrifood Research Finland, Plant Production Research at Laukaa as potential candidates for the national collection of plant genetic resources. Landscape plants, including woody ornamentals and hardy perennials selected for the Finnish collection of plant genetic resources, are preserved at MTT Laukaa in vitro, in the greenhouse and in field collections. In the future cryo-preservation could act as a back-up stock to the field material. The external threats of the traditional preservation in open-air conditions can be avoided by the use of in vitro and cryopreservation methods. Screening for improved in vitro and cryopreservation methods for lilac was newly initiated at MTT, but further research is required.

A collaborative project between the Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Helsinki and MTT Plant Production Research was started in spring 2012. The main aim of this project is to develop methods for micropropagation and DNA-fingerprinting of common lilac genotypes.

Dr. Lyakh was invited to Finland to advance methods for preservation and cultivation of common lilac genotypes (Picture 1). The study material included common lilac clones of Finnish and Russian origin. For genotype identification, reference samples were requested from international germplasm collections of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University (USA) and Conservatoire et Jardins Botaniques de Nancy (France). Dr. Lyakh brought with her 11 Russian common lilac genotypes as dormant buds for research.

During the year 2012 investigation of in vitro culture was performed. We experienced several types of initiation and multiplication media with different levels of plant hormones for both Russian and Finnish lilac cultivars.

Common lilac genotypes growing at Helsinki were recently evaluated in the Department of Agricultural Sciences. For cultivar identification, microsatellite markers were developed. And evaluation of them is now being continued with

the new reference samples, the Russian material, and samples from the Helsinki area.

As a curator of *Syringa vulgaris* collection at the Central Siberian Botanical Garden Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (CSBG SB RAS), Dr. Elena Lyakh has tested 116 lilac cultivars of foreign and domestic breeding since 1986. At present the collection of lilacs of CSBG SB RAS contains 33 cultivars selected as the most resistant to extreme continental climate of the forest-steppe zone of West Siberia. These cultivars are used in park and garden design and urban plantings in Siberia. The cultivars selected are characterized by high winter hardiness in the southern area of Siberia and can be recommended for wide use in park and garden design in the regions of Eurasia and North America with low winter temperatures and short vegetative period.

The results of the present pilot project will be applied for characterization and conservation of valuable common lilac genetic resources. The DNA-markers may prove applicable also for other lilac species and the results will be used for cultivar identification and for studying the cultural history of plant introductions.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Jean-François Gonot from Conservatoire et Jardins Botaniques de Nancy and Kathryn Richardson from the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University for the reference samples they kindly provided.

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Dr. Elena Lyakh working on in vitro culture of lilacs
at laboratory in Helsinki, Finland
Photo submitted by Dr. Elena Lyakh



Lilacs lining roadside in Helsinki, Finland
Photo Credit Dr. Elena Lyakh

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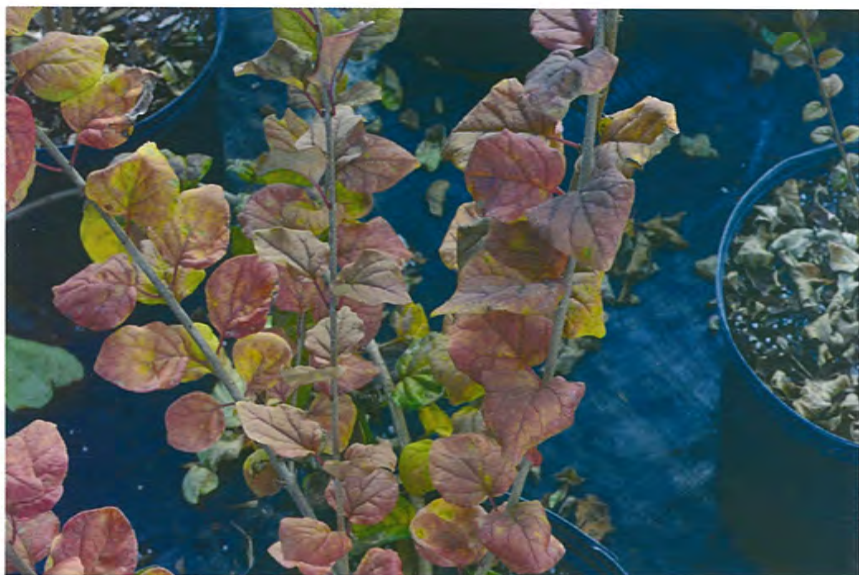
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One year seedling of *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* reblooming
Photo credit Michael Dirr



Fall color in seedlings of 'Red Pixie' x Josee™
Photo Credit Michael Dirr



Specimens of white lilacs in full bloom in Israel

Photo Credit Boaz Greenfield