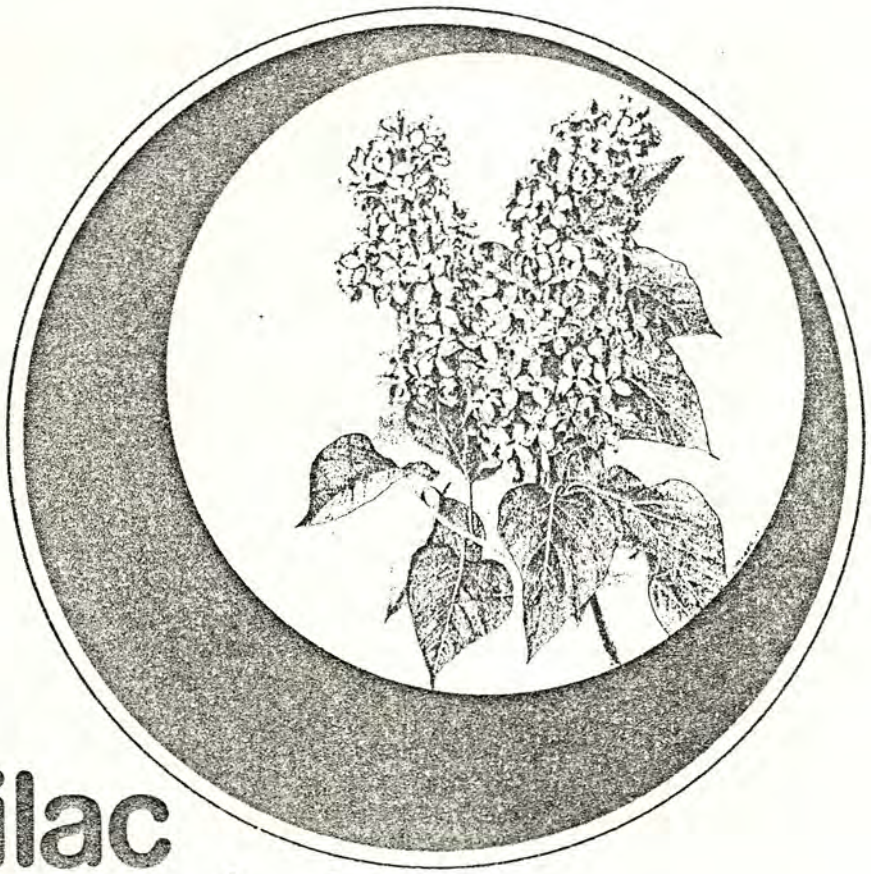


Lilac Newsletter

Vol. IV, No. 8, August, 1978

INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY is a non-profit corporation comprised of individuals who share a particular interest, appreciation and fondness for lilacs. Through exchange of knowledge, experience and facts gained by members it is helping to promote, educate and broaden public understanding and awareness.

This publication, *LILAC NEWSLETTER* (formerly *THE PIPELINE*) is issued monthly. Back copies are available by writing to the International Lilac Society, c/o Mr. Charles Holetich, Royal Botanical Gardens, Box 399, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8N 3H8. Please send 50 cents for each copy requested.

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

Single annual	$ 5.00
Family	7.50
Sustaining	10.00
Institutional/Commercial	15.00
Life	100.00

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

PLANTING FOR SURVIVAL

by: James A. Fizzell
Univ. of Ill. Cooperative Extension Service
Rolling Meadows, IL

Nurserymen make every effort to produce plant material that is healthy, strongly rooted, and capable of surviving the transplanting procedure. The fact that so many plants expire after transplanting is not a reflection on the nurseryman, but more than likely a reflection on the conditions the plant is expected to endure in its new site.

I am called upon regularly to inspect plantings where survival has been poor. It is sometimes a wonder that plants survive at all when their situation is examined. Three factors are involved as a rule: the clay soils of the Midwest, the method of planting and the watering practices used by the ultimate consumer.

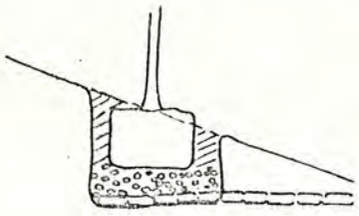
Soils in much of the Midwest are heavy and do not drain well. This is particularly true in newly developed areas where new trees and shrubs are most likely to be planted. Under such conditions, plants will have a difficult time surviving because of excess soil moisture.

Common planting and care recommendations often call for removal of the soil from the planting hole, mixing it with peat moss, putting stones in the bottom of the hole for drainage, setting the plant, filling the hole with the prepared soil, and watering regularly. This practice often results in a drowned plant. It is almost never followed by nurseries on their own property.

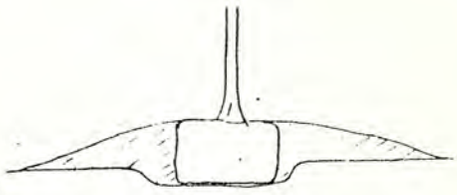
The problem with this system is that it provides a situation in which water runs into the loose soil in the hole faster than it can be absorbed by the surrounding soil. The hole fills with water. The rocks at the bottom of the hole simply compound the problem.

Should the plant somehow escape drowning, the interface where the mix meets the unmodified soil often proves to be an insurmountable barrier. Roots will refuse to penetrate the heavier soil.

How should difficult planting sites be handled?



Where rock is used in the bottom of the hole, tile should be used to drain water away, either down-hill to daylight or into a drywell.



In severe cases, setting the plant at or near grade (such as in hill planting) may be the only solution.

Select plants grown in soil similar to that in planting site. Dig the hole large enough for the plant going into it. Do not modify the soil going back into the planting hole. If it is necessary to modify the soil in the hole, dig the hole as large as possible and make sure the soil changes gradually from the modified to the natural soil.

If the hole is dug with an auger, be sure it does not leave a shiny surface. Where rock is used in the bottom of a hole because of very poor soil or no subsurface drainage, some provision must be made, either tile or a French drain, so that water drains away from the hole. In such a case, a drywell next to the planting hole may be necessary. Or, if the site has a steep grade, tile may be laid to daylight farther down the slope or into a storm sewer. In severe cases, raised beds, or hill plantings, which allow setting plants above grade, may be the

only solution.

Small plants adapt more easily to adverse conditions. It may be necessary in some cases to plant the smallest size possible in the interest of survival at all.

Finally, be sure your customers realize the plants can easily be over-watered. In normal seasons, it is quite possible that once watered in, the planting will never need supplemental watering.

NOTE: The foregoing article is reprinted from the Spring 1978 OGA NOTES (Ornamental Growers Assn. of Northern Illinois, 4902 Tollview Drive, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008) and is hereby so acknowledged.

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SYRINGA PEKINENSIS

by: J.G.

When a large, hardy shrub with good-looking foliage and attractive fragrant flowers is wanted, Syringa pekinensis is a worthy choice. Native to north China and introduced in 1881, this species has proven suitable for use in zone 4 and parts of zone 3.

Reaching 15 feet, with slender, spreading branches which are brownish red, with cherrylike bark peeling when young, this lilac has ovate to ovate-lanceolate, lightly veined leaves dark green above and grayish green beneath. The most appealing feature of this species is its profusion of creamy-white flowers, which are borne in large panicles often eight inches in width; the heavy fragrance of these strikingly handsome blooms, on a quite day, perfumes the air for considerable distances from the plant. Also of merit is the late blooming season of S. pekinensis, which is at its best some weeks after most horticultural sorts

have flowered.

While the need for such large-growing shrubs in general landscape work is limited, it takes little imagination to visualize the impressively beautiful effect an extensive planting of this exotic lilac would present if used on the parkway dividing a double thoroughfare.

The lilac is not a difficult plant to grow and will do well with minimum care. Any fairly good, well-drained soil will give satisfactory results, but for vigorous growth and good flowers, organic fertilizers do much, especially well-rotted manure, if worked into the ground every two or three years. Purely chemical fertilizer should be used with caution, because of their tendency to induce excessive woody growth at the expense of good flower buds.

Acknowledgment: The foregoing article is herein reprinted from the AMERICAN NURSERYMAN Magazine - Nov. 15, 1961

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BITS OF WIT

When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt

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Always beware of judging people by their appearances

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Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned

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PLANTING AND CARE OF BUDDED LILACS

by: Robert B. Clark
Meredith, New Hampshire

At the recent convention I learned that a certain member was displeased at having received budded plants in the 1977 lilac distribution. I am indeed sorry if anyone is disappointed or feels cheated, since no deception was ever intended. In arranging for the propagation of the two dozen hard-to-find lilacs I was advised that the quickest results could be realized by means of budding of Rouen lilac.

The plants sent out last fall were extra robust, perhaps too much so. Now with a gradual spring, at least at Birchwood, the lower buds have developed while many of the upper ones remain dormant. Accordingly I am pruning the heavy shoots back severely in order to balance the tops with the less vigorous roots. This practice reduces the number of growing points thus throwing the strength into fewer shoots. It is a calculated strategy which should bring the newly set lilacs through the forthcoming winter and prolong the hope of successful transplanting. I used this method a year earlier with 'Flora' which remained dormant all last year but is presently sending out good shoots and keeps my hopes alive for eventual superior bloom.

When receiving grafted or budded lilacs, I make it a practice to remove all suckers below the union. I also set the plant slightly lower than they grew in the nursery thus affording the lilac a chance to get onto its own roots. It goes without saying that the soil and drainage should be excellent since lilacs are long-term plants. Take care to provide fertile backfill in a site that is well drained from the beginning. One final point, see to it that the lilac gets full sun.

Ed Note: Keep in mind also, that among these particular cultivars there very well could be at least a few (perhaps several) that may never strike their own roots. There

are those peculiar individuals within the swarm that are rare to root from cuttings, yet these same individuals will reproduce from grafting or budding, but the root initiation is pretty much the same. I'd go even further in setting the scionswood as much as six to eight inches below the original ground-line. Also, three or four vertical cuts (use the point of a sharp knife, but about 1/8" deep, running such cuts from union up the stem), sometimes will cause the formation of the necessary callous tissue from which the "self-roots" will develop. Then be sure that such portion of the stem is planted below the ground-line.

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How's the U.S. Mail Serving You?

Referring to p. 6 of the June '78 issue you will note that we've been running a Bulk Mailing trial.

Question: Has the delivery service been sufficiently satisfactory in your opinion? I would like to tabulate your response in this matter so that we might best adjust to the most economical and reasonable method of future mailing. Keep in mind that each issue was dropped about the 15th - 20th of each month - when did you receive your copy (approximately)?

Editor

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