

# **Lilac Newsletter**

**Vol. V, No. 12, December, 1979**

**INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY**

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

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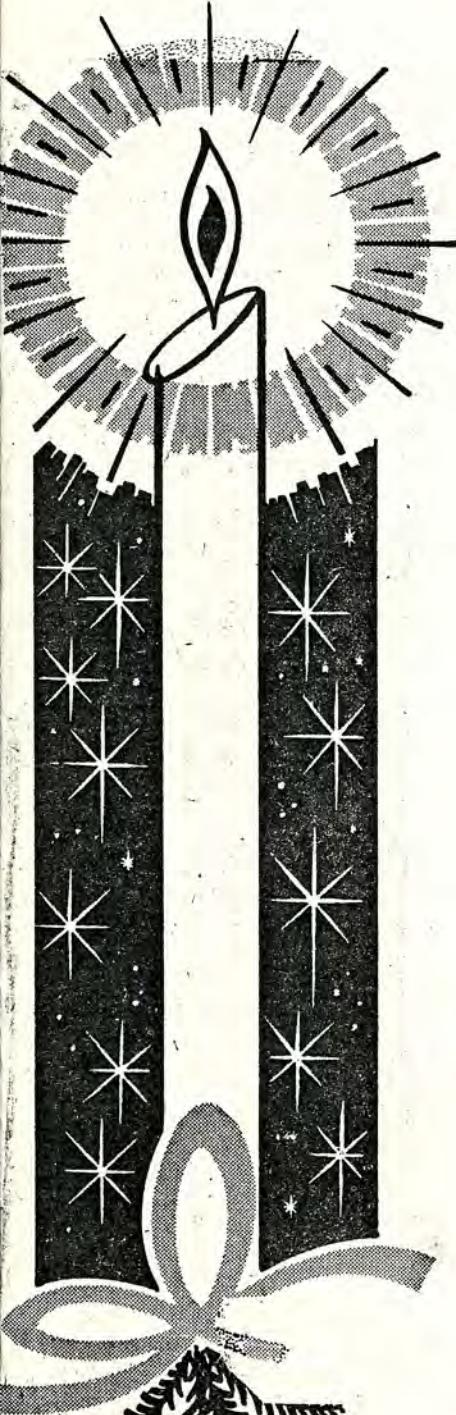
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<i>MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION</i>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
Single annual .....	\$ 5.00	\$ 7.50 U.S.
Family .....	7.50	10.00
Sustaining .....	10.00	15.00
Institutional/Commercial .....	15.00	20.00
Life .....	100.00	150.00

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

# Season's Greetings



Once more the Holy Season is with us, the yesterdays are now but a reflection of our efforts as we have threaded our way through but another year. Today is indeed time which we have been granted for doing, a time for perhaps doing those little things for that someone which we have so long felt important but until this day have left undone - yesterday we've had, today we have and tomorrow we are promised as a time of hope. Tomorrow we can only plan around, and should we each as an individual arrive at the brink of that day, then it too becomes a time for doing.

As we have walked the undulating pathway of yet another year we are privileged to look back upon both our failures and successes, and if we somehow neglect to profit from those failures, then the staircase of life ending in the realms of eternity has arrived at a plateau and our aims are drifting aimlessly along a path of meaningless stepping-stones. All too frequently our materialistic amenities tend to cloud visions of progress, but through the driven purpose and untiring efforts of dedication and aims we will indeed one day arrive at a point of reward for having stood in the position of good judgment.

We are given these days in an atmosphere of Thanksgiving, a time during which we should re-assess our values, set new goals and re-affirm our direction. We are indeed Thankful for the privilege

to disagree in thought while we still ponder our aims for the future and set our sights on a course of still higher and more meaningful deliberations. This then is once again that Holy of Holy Seasons when our hearts are refilled with purpose and challenge, a time when we all acquire new strength through the gracious and everlasting Almighty One, He who guides us in our every move, thought and endeavor, He who lights our way even in darkness.

Let us each in our own way remember the many Blessings which have been our good fortune in this bountiful Harvest of Life, and give generously of ourselves to those that we find around us with less than the acceptable full measure of the Bread of Life.

May each and every one of you enjoy a most JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON and a HAPPY NEW YEAR filled to overflowing with Good Health and yet unknown pleasures.

Editor

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BUY AN I.L.S. MEMBERSHIP FOR A RELATIVE  
OR A FRIEND AS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

THE BREEDING OF LILACS - Walter B. Clarke\*

(\*reprint)

From the time the Clarke Nursery was started, January 1, 1917, we always paid much attention to lilacs and soon had assembled a very good collection. For about thirty years we have been continually adding new varieties and at the same time discarding all except what we consider the very best so as to keep the number of kinds within reasonable limits. It soon became evident that while there were altogether too many varieties in certain color tones there was an extreme lack, amounting in some cases to an almost total absence of good varieties in others. Among the most striking deficiencies it can be noted that until very recently there were very few good blues and practically nothing of any value in genuine pinks. Also, there was an extreme shortage in dark purple doubles which, in fact, still exists. This situation can be amply corroborated by reference to the brochure "Lilacs for America", published in April, 1942.+

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\*Mr. Walter B. Clarke, no stranger to the columns of the BULLETIN, is one of the West Coast's best-known-nurserymen. San Jose, California, is his home.

+Published by the Arthur Hoyt Scott Horticultural Foundation, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA...

\*The following dissertation is one of several papers concerning lilacs which appeared as a Lilac Symposium in the Arboretum Bulletin, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.. This particular expression appeared in Vol. XI, No. 2 (Spring 1951) and is herein reprinted with the express permission of the Editor of that publication. The only changes being herein made are those involving the updated of certain Nomenclature in accordance with the Int'l Code concerning such.

Editor

Mainly in an effort to see if something could be done toward remedying the above deficiencies, as well as being motivated by plain curiosity, I decided to take up lilac breeding and gathered the first seed for this purpose in 1932. No records were kept but it is quite probable that this seed was gathered from the best single and double varieties in our collection. From this lot of seed the first plant tagged for observation was afterward named 'Kate Sessions' and introduced in 1943. From this same lot I also got 'Alice Eastwood', 'Blue Hyacinth' and 'Pink Cloud'. During the next few years many seedlings were raised, always from the finest known varieties, but no specific records were kept.

In 1937 two lots of seed were gathered. One was entirely from 'Mme. F. Morel' which at that time I regarded (and still do) as one of the very finest French varieties and seemed to possess some of the qualities that I wanted and hoped would be transmitted to its offspring. The other lot was taken entirely from our best miscellaneous doubles which, however, were not kept separate. This seed yielded our two patented varieties, 'Esther Staley', a single pink seedling of 'Mme. F. Morel', and 'Clarke's Giant', a single sky-blue from some unknown double.

In 1938 I made a horticultural trip to Europe and fortunately was able to time it so that I could visit the famous Lemoine nursery at Nancy, France. At that time I was hesitating whether to continue lilac breeding or not but from what I saw there decided that it would be well to continue, so in fall 1938 seed was again gathered and, commencing with that lot, more specific records were kept, so that from then on the parentage of every seedling raised is definitely known. Seed has been gathered every year since.

Very few seedlings received any further attention in spite of the fact that a great many seem to be fully as good as any known named varieties. However, for me that is not enough, as my guiding principle has always been that in order to receive any serious consideration a seedling must be either better than, or different from any lilac previously produced anywhere in the world. Those that can apparently qualify under these requirements and show special promise are given breeding numbers and individual records of observations made on them are kept for from four to

eight years. By that time most have been discarded for various reasons and only a minute percentage survive to be named and introduced.

A constant aim has been to increase the size of the individual flowers. Efforts along this line have been quite successful because while only a few years back those with individual flowers one inch across were usually described as "huge", "enormous", etc., it now is quite common to find them  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide with a maximum to date of a full  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. There is no reason to believe that the possible maximum has yet been obtained. Furthermore, I have never lost sight of my original aim and am still trying to get deeper blues, darker doubles and complete "breaks" in form or color. The hope of getting pure pinks has been definitely attained in two varieties, 'Esther Staley' (patented) and 'Pink Spray' (patent applied for).

In closing I think as a matter of record it might be well to give a complete list of the 19 varieties which have been named as a result of 15 years' work and registered with the American Association of Nurserymen:

'Alice Eastwood'	Double, mauve pink
'Blue Hyacinth'	Single, blue
'Clarke's Giant'	Single, sky blue
'Cora Brandt'	Double, white
'Earliest'	Single, lilac
'Early Double White'	
'Esther Staley'	Single, pink
'Kate Sessions'	Single, blue
'Missimo'	Single, cyclamen purple
'Mood Indigo'	Single, dark purple
'Mountain Haze'	Single, bluish purple
'Pink Cloud'	Single, pink
'Pink Spray'	Single, pink
'Purple Glory'	Single, dark ruddy purple
'Purple Heart'	Single, deep purple
'Splendor'	Double, purplish blue
'Summer Skies'	Single, sky blue
'Sunset'	Double, rose
'White Hyacinth'	Single, white

Of the above, 11 have been introduced and the others will be within the next two or three years, but not necessarily by us, as some have been assigned exclusively or sold outright to other nurserymen.

This breeding work has been extremely interesting, in fact, fascinating, and while I have passed the proverbial "three score and ten" it is altogether likely that I will continue it as long as I am physically able to do so.

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BITS OF WIT!!!

When anybody offers to build you a "pie in the sky" find out where the dough comes from.

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A dime is a dollar with all the taxes removed.

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Toast is the strangest of all foods - it is eaten in the morning and drunk at night.

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Old age is not a penalty; it's an achievement.

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It's not how many years you get in your life; but how much life you get in your years.

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