



Lilac Newsletter

Vol. VI, No. 5, May, 1980.

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.

Articles printed in this publication are the views and opinions of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the *International Lilac Society*.

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MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

	<u>1980 (\$ US)</u>
Single annual	7.50
Family	10.00
Sustaining	15.00
Institutional/Commercial	20.00
Life	150.00

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

"A Member Writes"

Back around the first of February we the Emerson's (Nancy & Bill) decided that getting away from the rest of the winter in Delhi, N.Y. where even in Feb. or March it might just dip down to -30° once in a while when the weather decides to get real mean. So, we made the two houses secure, packed our 'lil old Mini Motor-home and weighed anchor on the 17th., heading generally south we stopped first in Rockville, Md. the Wilson, N.C. before dropping down into Fla. where we paid brief visits at probably a dozen or more spots prior to landing in Miami which was our most southern point. From here we changed direction and set the heading mostly westerly for a few days and while winding thru Arizona we took second looks at a number of familiar places (familiar 'cause this is the part of the world where Nancy lived as a child), then on to Long Beach, CA where I'd sort of set my mind on looking up my 8th. grade school teacher - located her without too much trouble, all 82 yrs. young and with a memory like you wouldn't believe, recalling incidents from when I was the neighborhood "bad guy" with my bowl haircut etc.. That was fun.

Next we decided to call on the Margaretten's in Leona Valley as we were so close we just felt that we had to see the Ranch, so, the following Sat. morning we wound our way in the general direction and in due time found Bouquet Canyon, indeed a beautiful place pretty much hemmed-in by nearby mountains, and right at the head of the canyon there was Joel and Tita wait'n at the gate to greet us . Whata SHOW!!! The hillsides and yards were absolutely covered with lilacs, many many 250' rows, and just everywhere you looked there was lilacs, all neatly weeded and labelled. Most of the plants were heavily set with buds and some few were already beginning to break into bits of color - in about another 2 weeks the millions upon millions of

flowers would be ready for market, and it is at this time that the days work seemingly never ends, meticulously cutting stems to the proper lengths, packing and shipping, everything must move like clockwork so that the flowers arrive at the floral shops in prime condition.

Joel has a couple of tractors which he presses into use for road building, terracing and other earth moving jobs, but the larger portion of the labor is simply done by hand (mostly Joel and Tita). Their acreage is blessed with some twenty-five or more springs, about four pumps, one windmill and something like fourteen (some large) steel storage tanks which gives one the feeling that water is an important commodity in this business. The water eventually finds its way into one gigantic irrigation system which ends in small tubes at the base of each shrub - there are 8,000 or more plants, plus more than 400 lilacs species, and drought here is a fact of life. Joel has grown thousands of seedlings, most being the results of his efforts directed toward hybridizing, and then from time to time he has tried his hand at grafting too - continually talking about projects planned for the future.

Being as I'm more interested in and oriented toward the mechanics of this type of operation rather than the horticultural aspects, I'm probably overlooking a great deal of the more interesting factors that an avid lilac lover would certainly have noticed. During the six or seven hours that we spent at MARGARETTEN PARK it was a revelation to know that two people had accomplished such a monumental project in just a comparatively few years. Then as if the busy season wasn't enuf, there are hundreds and hundreds (probably even thousands) of visitors that come from miles around to admire and appreciate the waves and waves of color.

Now, if you might want to hear still more about Joel working his way thru college during the depression, Cattle Ranching in Oregon etc., twist his arm a little,

pry and back him into a corner, he'll break and you'll hear a most interesting story. That in part goes for Tita too - here are two most interesting people.

If everyone in ILS (and that's not possible of course) had the space, the ambition and dedication that one is privileged to see here, then our Society would literally 'Set The World Afire' promoting lilacs.

We consider this visit with such fine people the highlight of our trip.

(March 29, 1980)

Bill Emerson.

* * *

BITS OF WIT

The art of living is to die young - as late as possible.

The trouble with political jokes is that sometimes they get elected.

All success is relative. The more success the more relatives.

There's no fool like an old fool. You just can't beat experience.

It now looks as though the taxpayer will be the first of our natural resources to be completely exhausted.

REGARDING OUR LILAC PROJECT

Since the early settlers in southern Ontario, the most beloved of flowering shrubs has been the common lilac; often appearing in profusion around old farm buildings, the haunting beauty and fragrance of its lavender or white flowers are unforgettable, as witness many old abandoned farms. But the lilac has come a long way from the common species of Persia, many hybrid selections have been developed with variations in form and colour, these are often referred to as French Lilacs because much of the pioneer hybridizing was done in France. You only have to tour the lilac section of the ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS to realize what gorgeous blooms of many shades and colours have been developed, but they seem to have lost the original fragrance.

We in Midhurst are fortunate that Isabel Nash, a life-long resident of Midhurst, while travelling north and approaching Cobalt was amazed with the profusion of Common Lupine along the roadside, the floral emblem of Cobalt. This started Mrs. Nash thinking of a flower that might typically represent our own area of Vespra; after checking into climatic and soil requirements she came up with a favorite of her own, the lilac. The Council accepted the lilac as our floral emblem and it appears on the Vespra Township Crest. The Vespra Horticultural Society started this project in 1970 and have been promoting the planting of lilacs by residents of the Township ever since. Isabel became known as the "Lilac Lady" because of her effervescent enthusiasm.

Our most recent project was the planting of lilacs along the right of way bordering the cemetery which lies among a stand of pine. Mrs. Nash along with the able assistance of Charles Holetich of the ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS chose the needed plants as follows:

'Andenken an Ludwig Späth'	'Isabella'
'Belle de Nancy' (2)	'Ivory Silk' (2)
'Charles Joly' (2)	'Mme. Lenoine'
'Congo'	'Nellie Marie'
'Dappled Dawn'	'President Poincare'
'Donald Wyman'	'Prodige'
'Esther Staley'	'Redwine'
'Frank Patterson'	

Syringa x chinensis

Syringa x chinensis f. Saugeana

Syringa reticulata (Japanese Tree Lilac)

The plants are all thriving, thanks to the water carried to them during the summer months by Isabel (there is no water in the cemetery). We are looking forward to the display of bloom and colour in the future.

Walt Whitman, the American Poet wrote of lilacs in his elegy on Lincoln - one verse of which is:

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the
white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped
leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the
perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle - and from this bush in the
dooryard,

With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves
of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

Vespra Horticultural Society,
Mrs. M. Frankom,
President.

WHEN IT'S LILAC TIME IN VESPRA

Plant a lilac
Watch it grow-
Give it time--

Then-
You will know
The joy it brings,

In an oft-forgotten corner,
In a lonely spot
Plant a Vespra lilac,
It will brighten things a lot.

You will share its beauty
With them
Who pass your way...

It's lilac time in Vespra
Plant one---today.

Vespra Township

— LILAC PROJECT —

Isabel Nash, Chairman - Midhurst, Ontario

Dear Property Owner:

Lacking the obvious attractions of a big city, how can the small rural area draw attention to its charms and make itself memorable? The village or township emblem seems one answer - something easily recognizable, unsophisticated and easily photographed.

Vespra Horticultural Society has decided on the "LILAC" as an emblem for Vespra Township. You have a choice of three hundred and fifty varieties.

We are asking everyone in Vespra to plant lilacs on his property. As well, we hope public buildings will use them in their planting.

It is hoped that, in a few years, people throughout Ontario will be driving to see Vespra in lilac-time.

This project can only be successful if we have the co-operation of everyone in our township.

Our slogan for the '70's is "PLANT LILACS".
In the '80's visit Vespra to enjoy LILAC-TIME.

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1) Give your neighbour a lilac slip
- 2) Nursery Lilac Gift Certificate for - Christmas, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Birthdays, etc.
- 3) Give a lilac shrub for a prize.

Editor's note: The foregoing letter was sent to each resident living in Vespra Township, Ontario in the year 1970 when this project was started.



from the Registrar's Desk

Freek Vrugtman, Curator of Collections, Royal Botanical
Gardens, Box 399, HAMILTON, Ontario, CANADA L8N 3H8

INFORMATION WANTED

Syringa vulgaris 'Bertha Phair', Phair ca. 1950-56

In his Supplementary Registration List of cultivar names in Syringa L. - Registered 1963 (ARNOLDIA 23(4):80) Dr. John Wister lists this new double, purple lilac, a seedling of 'Paul Thirion' raised by Philip D. Phair of Presque Isle, Maine. -- QUESTION: Who is (or was) Philip D. Phair? I am searching for biographic information and would like to hear from anyone who can supply some information or suggest where I could write for information.