



# Lilac<sup>®</sup> Newsletter

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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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*President:* Dr. Owen M. Rogers,  
University of New Hampshire, Dept. of Plant Science,  
Nesmith Hall, Durham, N.H. 03824.

*Secretary:* Walter W. Oakes\*  
Box 315, Rumford, Maine, 04276

*Treasurer:* Mrs. Marie Chaykowski  
4041 Winchell Road, Mantua, Ohio, 44255

*Editor:* Walter E. Eickhorst  
129 West Franklin St., Naperville, Illinois. 60540

*INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY,*  
William A. Utley, Ex. Vice-Pres.,  
Grape Hill Farm, Devereaux Rd., Clyde, NY 14433.

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

A BIOGRAPHY

by Walter W. Oakes

Re: Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names  
in the Genus Syringa by Owen Rogers

Page 7 - D VII Bertha Phair, Phair ca. 1950-56  
Arnoldia, vol. 23, No. 4, 80 (1963) - name  
only

In the early days of our collecting lilacs, we decided to search out those which appealed to us the most and enjoy the more ordinary kinds in someone else's garden. On one of our annual spring tours of the Arnold Arboretum, we selected a few deserving of a place in our planting. Among these were 'Anne Shiach', 'Frank Klager', and 'Bertha Phair'. The plant of 'Bertha Phair' was not more than 18 straggly inches tall and in poor condition. It had one or two thyrses similar in form and colours to 'Paul Thirion' but of noticeably darker tones. We would have classified it in VI (magenta) and not VII (dark purple).

The records at Arnold contained very little information on this variety and its originator. The plant had been sent to them by Philip D. Phair from Presque Isle, Maine. (The City is peculiarly named since it sits in the middle of the Aroostook Valley hundreds of miles from any considerable body of water.) I wrote to Mr. Phair, but the letter was not answered.

No further attempts were made to discover more information about the variety or its originator for several years. When Freek Vrugtman came upon the variety as listed in the "Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names in the Genus Syringa", he found the Arnold information.

Since I live in Maine, he asked me to see what I could do towards filling in this more or less blank

spot in his records of lilacs and their originators. I found no history of the plant except confirmation that it had been named for Mr. Phair's wife. I was more successful in getting Mr. Phair's history.

He was born January 1, 1871, the son of James H. and Eliza Ann (Gallagher) Phair. His early education was in St. John's School of the Episcopal Church. He graduated from Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, in 1894 with a B.Litt and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He received his B.A. from Harvard in 1894 and M.A. from Harvard in 1895, both magna cum laude. From 1907 - 1909 he was an instructor in economics at Trinity College. From 1899-1910 he was Assistant, Library of Congress. In 1910 he returned to Presque Isle to practice law. On February 2, 1905, he married Bertha McIntyre in Presque Isle.

He was active in the civic life of the community and is credited with drafting the charter for the City of Presque Isle when it was about to become a city. He was a Past Master and an Honorary Master of Trinity (Masonic) Lodge and at the time of his death was the County's oldest Bail Commissioner.

Philip D. Phair died at the age of 94 on July 2, 1965 and was buried in Fairmount Cemetery. He was survived by a niece and a nephew. His wife had predeceased him on April 2, 1953. His estate was left to Trinity College which included his home on Main Street and his library. Eventually the homesite was purchased for a bank and the building was torn down.

I was fortunate to talk with a close friend of Mr. Phair who told me that the Phairs had returned to their hometown farming community because his wife did not like living in the city. The friend now has a number of lilacs in his yard which were given to him by Mr. Phair who shared plants with other friends also.

Sometime I would like to see the Phair lilacs.  
Among them may be other good material waiting for  
recognition.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of  
Cassie Lake, Work-Study student, Library, University of  
Maine, Presque Isle, Maine. Her charm, patience and  
tenacity is a tribute to Research Librarians everywhere.

August 15, 1980

Dixfield, Maine.

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BITS OF WIT

The secret of success in conversation is to be able to  
disagree without being disagreeable.

Those who live in glasshouses should take a hot bath,  
that blinds the windows with steam.

The reason a dollar won't do as much for people as it  
once did is that people won't do as much for a dollar  
as they once did.

I don't like to spread gossip, but what else can you  
do with it?

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A LETTER TO OWEN M. ROGERS

Adam Chodun  
Institute of Dendrology  
Polish Academy of Sciences  
63-120 Kornik  
Poland

Dear Sir,

For four years I have worked at the Institute of Dendrology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Kornik, Poland and two years ago I began to work with lilacs. I am searching for good and suitable rootstocks for cultivars of the common lilac. I obtained some results with grafting two cultivars of *S. vulgaris* 'Andenken an Ludwig Spath' and 'Marie Legraye' on *S. reflexa*, *S. villosa*, *S. amurensis* var. *japonica*, *S. josikaea*, *Ligustrum vulgare* 'Chlorocarpum' and *L. tschonoskii*.

Now I am collecting publications about the problem and I am interested in correspondence with persons who are working on problems which influence different rootstocks with respect to growth and blooming of *S. vulgaris* cultivars.

For that reason I write this letter to you with the kind request to help me in finding these contacts.

I sincerely hope you will be of help to me in this matter. I do hope I am not putting you to too much trouble.

With kindest regards,  
Sincerely yours,

Adam Chodun

ROOTSTOCKS FOR GRAFTING LILACS

Can someone help Mr. Chodun? He has written the accompanying letter and I have told him that it would be published in the Newsletter.

If you have had any experience with grafting lilacs, or know of references to graftage, would you please write to him directly. He would appreciate it and our Society would be enlarged by your efforts.

Owen M. Rogers

Note his full and proper use of the name 'Andenken an Ludwig Spath' which we most often shorten and change to just 'Ludwig Spaeth'.