



Lilac Newsletter

Vol. X, No. 4, April, 1984

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

Single annual	\$ 10.00 (as of January, 1984)
Family	12.50
Sustaining	20.00
Institutional/Commercial	25.00
Life	150.00

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

GROWING LILACS IN PRATT, KANSAS

Through membership with the Lilac Society I became acquainted with the French hybrids, and for that I am very grateful. Most of the lilacs grown in Pratt are common lilacs; few keep records of any other kind they buy. Consequently, there is no one around who knows about lilacs and I know if I lived closer to the area where these beauties are grown, it would make a big difference. It would have been helpful to know more about how to fight the borers that attacked my collection.

If there was more information in the journals from the members telling about their personal experience with lilacs and their evaluation of the different varieties or cultivars it would be more interesting to me. When you can't get to the convention and have no personal contact with other growers, it makes a difference.

I would think the average member would not be interested in hybridizing because of not having space.

I am listing here some of my outstanding lilacs in the hope that others will do the same.

High on the list would have to be:

'Glory' - very large florets, similar to 'Ed Bossier' in color.

I do not have other whites to compare with 'Snow Showers' (Henry Sass) but I don't see how any single could be better. Truly beautiful!

'Esther Staley' is something else for a pink variety and is larger than 'Maiden's Blush', but 'Maiden's Blush' bloomed young and has been a heavy bloomer ever since. I would not be without either one. 'Maiden's Blush' is also similar in color to 'Lucie Baltet'.

A really blue lilac is 'Mme. Charles Souchet' with big florets. I had ordered 'Firmament' for a blue, but when it bloomed, found it to be a mistake.

There is no mistaking that 'Sensation' with it's white-edged florets is truly unique.

'Katherine Havemeyer', 'Pres. Carnot', 'Henri Martin', 'Leon Gambetta', similar in color and all beautiful.

'Charles Joly', 'City of Gresham', 'Monge', 'Andenken an Ludwig Spaeth', 'De Miribel' are also all similar in color and, again, beautiful.

I did not care for 'Primrose', reminded me of a dirty white. I suppose different soils and localities could change colors somewhat. I might mention that 'Maiden's Blush', besides being a heavy bloomer, does not get extremely tall like the others.

If you live in town like I do, you must limit the number of shrubs you can have. If I were just starting out with lilacs now, my first choices would be: 'Glory', 'Snow Showers', 'Esther Staley', 'Maiden's Blush', 'Mme. Charles Souchet', 'Leon Gambetta', 'Charles Joly' and 'Sensation'.

Of the lilacs I have seen, these ones stand out. 'Miss Kim' blooms heavily, is very small here and has strong fragrance which does not smell like other lilacs--it is almost too strong, but is liked by some.

The Newsletter would certainly be more interesting and of more value to the subscribers if we could get individual ideas and comments from others. The more people taking part, the more interesting it would be as we certainly do not all see things the same way, and wouldn't it be dull if we did? People should not be afraid to have a letter published because they fear they cannot write well--the editor will surely take care of serious errors in spelling and grammar.

Mrs. Albert Eubank
502 N. Oak
Pratt, Kansas 67124

To achieve a balance in our NL, we do need more personal communications from members. Our members are from many walks of life - professionals interested in technical and scientific items and who usually have access to horticultural libraries; the many members who are garden hobbyists who wish to learn more about lilacs and where to buy them. I can appreciate Mrs. Eubank's plight because I, too, live in the wide open spaces where horticultural libraries and serious lilac fanciers are few and far between. Members, do take a more active part in the Society by letting us hear your views and opinions. Help your fellow members!

Editor

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BITS OF WIT

Probably those who never made a mistake never made a discovery.

A pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his mouth.

Build a system that even a fool can use, and only a fool will use it.

LILACS IN THE SOUTHERN STATES?

Walter Oakes, our Secretary, has informed me that from the southern states we are getting more interest in lilacs. His reply to requests might be of interest to members who have contacts in Florida and also may help us to locate plants there which do bloom so we could get propagation material or varietal names.

Editor

We do not have many members in the deep south but more keep joining each year as they see our name in special plants lists and articles on gardening.

The accepted information that lilacs would not succeed in the warm states has discouraged gardeners there from growing them. We sent trial plants to several locations in Florida but most of them have been lost either from the climate or lack of care.

I am not convinced, however, that selected varieties would not flower there if the plants could be grown up large enough to develop buds. I have heard from a lady in northern Florida who has gotten flowers but doesn't know what kind they were. A lady in central Florida claimed a white lilac there was covered with flowers. She sent me a pressed sample and it proved to be some kind of privet which is related to lilacs and looks somewhat similar.

Until we can get some solid information, I can only make some suggestions as to what might succeed since they are doing well in Birmingham, Alabama. I would try any of the varieties classes as S. hyacinthiflora and avoid anything classed as S. vulgaris. This would consist of about 30 varieties and a good color range. I would also try, additionally, 'James MacFarlane', a late blooming pink single. If it can be found, the variety 'Lavender Lady' should be tried since it was developed for southern California climate.

Changing weather patterns which bring cold weather into the south will affect lilacs since they need the cold to induce dormancy and develop flower buds, as with peonies.

Walter W. Oakes

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SEASONAL NOTES

An excerpt from GROWING AND TRIMMING LILACS
by Dr. John P. Rankin (The Pipeline 3/77)

Spacing Lilacs

When one is planting a group of bushes and has in mind what he wants and what the contours and conditions of the plot call for, he may set his bushes 12 or 15 feet apart for specimens or singly at a turn of a fence or at a building edge or as accent plants. If a screen is desired, the plants may be closer than eight feet and if his interest, like ours, is in the variety and habit of blooms, he may plant as close as three feet, if there is not much crowding at the rear. It is indeed difficult for one to think of even a small space that could not hold a lilac bush, producing some satisfactory type of horticultural effect, accent-corner cover, long screening, picket fence adornment, or dooryard delight. In fact, the poets, Robert Louis Stevenson, Amy Lowell, Violet Jacob, Wilson MacDonald and Walt Whitman, all emphasize varying aspects of the lilac, as it strikes the mood and sensitive soul of each.

LILACS ENTER THE COMPUTER AGE

The International Lilac Society has come into the computer age. One of the most frequent requests I get as regional Vice President is to identify a lilac. Most of them at quite a distance from my location, with very little information about the plant except that it is single or double and the color. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to correctly identify. For those that I have identified, I asked the inquirer to send me a sucker or rooted cutting to plant in a special area, allow it to grow and flower and compare with those in my collection. Quite often you will get an odd plant that will flower poorly the first three seasons. So one must wait for at least five years to work on it.

My suggestion to the Board is to appoint a committee of experts to make up a list of characteristics of each cultivar and record them for comparison with each others collections, note the differences in location, climate and soil, insert in a computer, cross filed, so that it can be found by checking similar ones with identical characteristics. The group working on the project can start with five cultivars each year until enough material is collected to chart in book form for use by the rest of the members of I.L.S. and the horticultural community.

There is a lot of information in McKelvey's book and others that we have published but they need updating, and much more detail added. The new cultivars registered should include greater detail for identification to avoid duplication. Photographs in color both distant and closeup for details of the florets are important.

It might look like a formidable task, but with a knowledgeable group doing a few at a time the job can be more easily accomplished. We will then have

information about a specialized flower that no other organization has been able to produce.

Dr. Joel Margaretten
Leona Valley, California

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TO ALL MEMBERSHIP:

Your response to our new split ballot was outstanding. The Nominating Committee is happy to say that the comments we received and the names submitted were heart warming.

It is a pleasure to see so many devoted members working for the growth and betterment of the Society.

You should be receiving the ballot the latter part of March; don't put it aside, read it, fill it out and mail it to Dr. Robert Clark in the envelope marked ballot.

Thanks again to all that submitted names and those that volunteered on the ballot. We also want to thank you for your views and support. The feedback was great!

Like they say, "A Good Vintage Wine Improves With Age." - So let it be with "Our Society".

We are steadily improving with knowledge, friends and communications.

for the Nominating Committee

Elsie Kara
Bill Heard
Max Peterson
John Carvill

Starting with the 1984 election, there will be a split ballot of incumbents and non-incumbents. Society members will elect four persons from the incumbent list and four from the non-incumbent list. These electees would be limited to two consecutive terms. And, after one year off the board, they would be eligible to run again.

By using this system, the committee believes that by getting directors from various parts of the country, information can better be dispersed. It also extends the governing body to more people who will bring in more ideas and at the same time, past directors would still be a valuable asset and source of expert information.

From report of the Nominating
Committee
1983 Convention

LILAC SEED EXCHANGE, 1984, ROGER LUCE

The following list of seeds from Sally Schenker was not included in the list published in March 1984.

S. vulgaris cultivars:

'Asessippi'
'Congo'
'Esther Staley'
'Henri Robert'
'Monge'
'Paul Thirion'
'Vestale'

S. patula 'Miss Kim'

Exerpts from RENEWAL PRUNING OF SHRUBS

by Robert B. Clark

Shrubs differ from trees in that they send up new shoots from the ground. When the canes become overcrowded they shade out the young ones on which the flowers of best quality are borne. Ideally a few of the older canes should be removed each year. This practice allows the new shoots to branch freely. The best quality blooms are borne on young wood. If the shrub is renewed completely every few years, a goodly portion of the flower clusters will be large and well placed.

Examine the branching pattern of the common lilac. Notice that the tipmost buds are in pairs. These buds are larger than the others because they bear the flowers. Compare the shoots of young vigorous canes with the network of branchlets from thick old canes. In this instance, the buds are smaller and flower buds are relatively few for the amount of wood present. Such a contrast in quality of buds indicates that continuous renewal pruning is beneficial.

Lilac and forsythia are spring blooming shrubs. Their flower buds are formed during the previous summer, remaining posed for the right conditions in spring before they expand into bloom. Most authors recommend that such plants be pruned after they flower - the reason given being that pruning before flowering deprives the owner of some of the bloom. But, in the light of what I have just brought to your attention regarding quality of bloom, I am persuaded that pruning be done during the dormant season when the leaves are absent, the better to study the branching structure of the shrub.

Those shrubs which bloom in spring from wood of the previous season constitute the typical class of flowering shrubs. Forsythia, honeysuckle, lilac, mock-orange, spirea and viburnum are prominent members of that group. Old-dark-colored canes should be removed each year until the plant is completely rejuvenated. The cycle usually covers a three-year period, but it can be extended in some cases to five years. The season for pruning shrubs, irrespective of category, is late winter or very early spring in New Jersey and the Northeast. Only with spent blooms of lilac, rhododendrons and Anthony Waterer spirea is disbudding worthwhile. And I would shy away from autumn pruning at least until all leaves have fallen.

Pruning accomplishes essentially the same effects as applying nitrogen fertilizer, since it promotes the development of new shoots. The watchword in pruning is moderation. When a shrub has attained the flowering stage it no longer needs relatively large quantities of nitrogen. Study the individual plant. Observe its branching pattern. Notice its condition. Exercise restraint and Happy Pruning!

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INVITATION FROM BOB CLARK, MEREDITH, NH

The lilacs at Birchwood will peak at or on Memorial Day weekend. Visitors are welcome en route to Burlington, prior to the convention.

(See March 84 issue of Newsletter, page 9 for travellers directions and list of the Birchwood collection.)

TIPS ON LILAC PLANTING

Lilacs need to be planted in a sunny location; one that gets at least 4 hours of sunlight a day. Try to plant in well-drained soils. When planting in soggy areas, try to plant on a small mound so that any surface water will drain away from the plant.

Don't expect fantastic bloom for the first year or so after lilacs have been planted.

Pruning dormant plants down 1/3 from their tops will result in heavier, better foliage the first year, and more vigorous growth.

Water lilacs well when planting. Shake each plant after watering and backfilling, to remove air pockets. Water weekly after that if the rains are insufficient. Organic mulches such as bark and woodchips help to conserve moisture as well as keeping the weeds down.

Own-root plants should be planted at the same level that they are grown in the nursery. Grafted plants need to be planted deeper.

Heard Gardens
Des Moines, Iowa

IT'S GOOD TO ATTEND

Anyone even slightly interested in lilacs would do well to attend the Annual I.L.S. Convention, which this year is May 31 - June 3, and is hosted in Burlington, Vermont by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Chieppo.

I attended my first I.L.S. Convention in Ottawa in 1982, and equally enjoyed the Madison, Wisc. meeting last year. I'm looking forward to this year's gathering because I am certain it will be like past meetings.....informative and fun. Meeting fellow members is easy and enjoyable since we are bonded by common interests. A relaxed atmosphere prevails, punctuated by plenty of smiles and laughs.

For me, visiting another part of the country is always stimulating, rain or shine, blooming lilacs or not. Of course one hopes to see blooming lilacs, but I consider that a bonus treat, and not the main purpose of our gathering.

By attending, each of us have maximum opportunities to exchange knowledge, and ideas, while having a fine time, perhaps even capturing some auction gems for our own gardens.

Hope to see you there!

Bill Horman

Lilac Offer

Wedge Nursery is offering a limited quantity of lilacs for spring 1984

Rare Varieties - Limit 1 per customer

Mrs. W.E. Marshall	12/18"	16.95
Charm	12/18"	16.95
Maiden's Blush	12/18"	16.95
Sensation	12/18"	16.95
Minuet	6/12"	59.95

Lilacs: No limit (limited supplies)

Charles X	12/18"	7.95
Condorcet	12/18"	7.95
Ellen Willmott	12/18"	7.95
Edith Cavell	12/18"	7.95
Marie LeGrave	12/18"	7.95
Mme Florent Stepman	12/18"	7.95
President Grevy	12/18"	7.95
Reaumur	12/18"	7.95
Ruhm Von		
Horstenstein	12/18"	7.95
Vestale	12/18"	7.95

Cost does not include Freight or packing.

Send orders to: Wedge Nursery
R#2 box 114
Albert Lea, MN 56007

WEDGE NURSERY