



Lilac 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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Single annual	\$ 10.00
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THOMAS NICHOLAS CHIEPPO

April 8, 1985 will be known as a sad day, because it registered death of our energetic, innovating and very active President. His activities, goals and associations were numerous, hence words that follow, will describe them only in part.

Born on November 2, 1911 in New Haven Connecticut. Received his B.A. degree from Amherst College in 1933 and Master degree from Columbia University in 1935.

Four days after graduation he inherited the "Chieppo Bus Co." upon passing of his father.

He was founder of New Haven Rehabilitation Center for handicapped and mentally retarded as well as its President 1963-68.

He was on the board of NEBA (New England Bus Association) and member of UBOA (United Bus Owners of America).

Belonged to Knights of Columbus, Knights of St. Patrick and Quinnipiac Club; all in New Haven.

In November 1877 became a life member of I.L.S. Soon after appointed to its Board of Directors and as of May 1984 assumed the position of the President.

On his 130 acre estate at East Burke, Vermont named "Glen of Aherlow" he had a sizable lilac collection dedicated to his late professor and friend A.E. Lumley. Besides lilacs he was interested in flowering shrubs, roses, spring flowering bulbous plants and numerous shade trees, but with attachment to pines.

He leaves behind wife Alice and sons and daughters Nicholas, Mary Alice, Melissa, Tom, Sharon, Timothy and Jonathan.

Those who wish to please Thomas may do so by making a financial contribution to: New Haven Rehabilitation Center, 20 Brookside Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 as Thomas Chieppo Memorial.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE PROMOTES LILACS

by Dr. Owen M. Rogers

In the spring of 1984, the Governor of New Hampshire appointed a commission to promote lilacs in New Hampshire State. He asked me and a number of other community leaders to serve on that commission through 1986. The Commission's purposes include these things:

To promote extensive planting of lilacs throughout the state.

To involve high schools with horticulture facilities to plant and propagate lilacs for local community projects.

To encourage the efforts of state garden clubs in lilac programs.

To solicit the help of service clubs and others to assist financially the high schools, 4-H Clubs or other youth groups in local lilac plantings.

To utilize the newer varieties of lilacs developed by the University of New Hampshire to extend the season of bloom.

To make available to all in the program the best cultural practices for growing lilacs to insure the best results possible.

There have been a number of steps taken to advance these purposes. The state invested \$34,000 in lilac plantings in 1984 and plans a similar amount in 1985. These are state funds so they have to be spent on state and public lands. To encourage private plantings, the Commission conducted a survey of commercial nurseries and made up a list of all the lilacs available for sale in the state. This list was made available to garden clubs, town councils, and anyone else requesting it. The vocational schools were also involved in propagating good lilacs from suckers. That part will be a long term project since it will take some time to grow their small

plants to useful size, but it is important because it involves young people and introduces them to usefulness and profitability of lilac culture. To help people learn about lilacs, I wrote a small brochure on Lilac Culture that can be taken apart into a series of single sheets on such topics as Selection, Site, Planting, Pruning, etc.

Response to the Commission's efforts have been very exciting. All vocational high schools undertook to propagate lilacs and many garden clubs and towns have planting projects planned. We have also encouraged rejuvenation projects and a number of towns have undertaken to clean up, weed and otherwise renovate old plantings. This should be an effective advertisement for our efforts since it is quickly done and the results are immediately obvious.

Industry has also responded to our appeals both in terms of financial support and direct lilac projects. For example, the Indian Heads Banks, with outlets throughout the state, will sell over a thousand lilac plants at a below cost figure as well as provide an advertising program highlighting the "Fragrance of Spring" and the lilac as "A special plant for a special state."

Much of this activity will culminate in May as the wave of lilac bloom moves up the length of the state. The successes in 1985 will be the foundation for the program in 1986. After that, the program will continue if it has generated enough momentum. One of the side issues that will come out of this program will be a listing of all the ideas, projects, suggestions, etc. which we can make available to other states and groups interested in promoting the lilac. Could you use such a packet?

LILAC ESTABLISHMENT

by Dr. Owen M. Rogers

Lilacs are hard to establish after transplanting. The problem is most obvious with bare rooted plants where even with good care the plants seem to set there for at least a year, and without some "tender loving care" will frequently decline and die. The difficulty is slow root regeneration. Therefore, balled and burlapped or container grown plants can be moved with greater chance of success and amateurs should always be steered to such plants. However, if all planting is restricted to those plants with an intact root system, we will have to give up all propagation by suckers and most plants through the mail. Since that is not a reasonable option, the University of New Hampshire decided to set up an experiment to look at some of the problems associated with transplanting bare root lilac plants.

The questions posed were these:

1. Will pruning the top help? Common wisdom says that from 1/3 to 1/2 of the top should be removed at planting time to balance the damage to the roots.
2. Will sod competition affect plant establishment? Many times lilacs are planted in grass and the grass left as a soil conservation measure until the plants get big.

The plants for the experiment were 2-3 foot 'Charles Joly' lilacs. They were donated by Don Wedge so you know they were of excellent quality. The plants were all bare root and shipped from Minnesota in the early spring just as if they had been ordered by a homeowner. May 22 was the planting date and all the pruning cuts were made on May 24.

The experiment will be run for two years so we don't have complete data yet, but, the trends are very clear. The largest amount of new growth is on plants with no pruning and the least growth on those plants where 1/2 of the buds are removed at planting time. The explanation for this is that newly expanding buds produce auxins (natural plant hormones) which sweep down the stems and cause new root formation just as if rooting hormones had been applied to the bottom of a cutting.

Sod close to a newly planted lilac seriously reduces the lilac's growth in the first year after transplanting. Grass produces a good foraging root system quickly and, in comparison to a newly planted lilac, is better able to compete for nutrients and, more importantly, water and thus dramatically slows the establishment of a new bare rooted lilac.

Therefore, our recommendation for handling a good quality bare root lilac will now say "Don't do any pruning at transplanting time" and "Use mulch, black plastic or clean cultivation for at least a foot (two is better) around newly planted lilacs to prevent competition from other plants... and next year I'll have the data to prove that these are correct recommendations.

* * * * *

BITS OF WIT

The object of planning is to be approximately right rather than exactly wrong.

You can't break old records without making new ones.

Might just as well forget your old troubles; there are more coming.

WHAT ABOUT DOUBTFUL CULTIVAR NAMES OF LILACS?

by Robert B. Clark, Ocala, Florida

The Katzenjammer Kids of my youth were always getting into trouble and their parents and uncles would always turn to books entitled "What to do" and "How to do it". The problem before us is how to treat names of lilac cultivars which find their way into lilac lists but have dubious relationship to actual plants. Some names obviously are misapplied to lilacs and should be summarily excluded. Others require a background in gardening or horticulture to suggest the correct identity of the plant or the authenticity of the name.

About the time that ILS was being organized John Wister and others were revising the 1953 check list "Lilacs for America". The revision was to include a list of unacceptable names. I have before me in Wister's handwriting, dated September 11, 1971, a list of "varieties apparently not offered in any nursery and apparently not grown in any public garden except as noted". Wister's penmanship during his later years was rather difficult to decipher such that he himself sometimes could not read it. I submit that several names published in Dr. Rogers' "Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*" (1976) are of doubtful application and should therefore be excluded from further consideration in lilac literature.

The third page of Wister's list contains thirty-one names which he claimed "are absolutely untraceable 'tho(ugh) reported in reputable arboretums who should never have pretended that they were authentic". This list is arranged alphabetically and many of the names today can be authenticated; however, I find four which I believe are traceable to his own handwriting, namely, Clarinet, Desponda, President Alex and Yowata. In the 1953 check list on page 27 in *italics* is the entry "Clara No. 2 - See DRESDEN CHINA". The designation

Clara no. 2 becomes Clarinet. Similarly DESDEMONA on page 28 becomes Desponda. On page 39 we find no president whose name begins with "A", instead the entry PRINCESS ALEXANDRA might be shortened to President Alex. The fourth doubtful name, Yowata, is a stickler. The closest I can come is Tomato. One further oversight is the entry "Crimson Brilliant", hardly applicable to a lilac; it is instead a crab apple.

What prompts this harangue is the Editor's call for help in the February Lilac Newsletter, page 15. I become annoyed upon finding such strange and unfamiliar cultivar names in reputable journals such as Lilac Newsletter. Once cultivar names are published they enter into the literature of the particular plant to which they are attributed. What to do and how to do it is an unfair burden for the monographer to bear. Happily he has one recourse: list these unacceptable names under "Doubtful and Excluded Names" and have done with the whole matter. Putative names of lilacs which have not come to light in 20 to 30 years, to me, are suspect.

Another example of an untenable name applied to a lilac cultivar is "Le Troyes" which might well have arisen from failure to decipher an almost illegible label. Lemoine named one of his Syringa x chinensis seedlings 'Le Progres'. I believe this is the correct name for that lilac. While I'm on the subject of suspect names among lilac cultivars I shall now take a potshot at the designation "Red Rothomagensis", a reputed cultivar of the Rouen Lilac and actually used in a widespread phenological study without its identity being predetermined. All this happened several years ago and at the moment I do not have the data to hand; however, the story can be told as factual. A midwestern farmer decided to grow a certain dark form of the Rouen lilac for which he found a market and could get a little extra income. He ordered liners from another Midwestern nursery and for want of an authentic name called his plants "red rothomagensis". The accepted name, of course, is Syringa x chinensis f. Saugeana. There is more to the story, much more, but I must not go into it here. It's time instead for a moral.

Many scientific organizations operate under a policy of previewing articles submitted for publication. The ILS has a Publications Committee. Editors of our journals should, in

instances of doubt, request opinions from this board before plunging into print. Readers frequently accept as true anything appearing in print.

Editors note:

I welcome Dr. Clark's suggestion to have articles with doubtful lilac cultivar names reviewed by the committee. Likewise I concur with Freek Vrugtman's views (in article that follows) that printing of doubtful lilac cultivar names is a better choice than not printing at all.

* * * * *

DOUBTFUL CULTIVAR NAMES - A REGISTRAR'S NIGHTMARE

by Freek Vrugtman, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Canada

Every Registrar has to wrestle with doubtful cultivar names; he (or she) may correct them or reject them, but he has to expose them and cannot ignore them. Only by bringing such names to the attention of lilac growers and lilac fanciers may the situation be rectified or corrections be made. -- Let me cite a few examples.

We don't know exactly when "Canada Gem" and "Canada Tree" lilacs appeared on the market. The late Al Lumley brought "Canada Tree" lilac to our attention in 1975. In the September issue of the IIS PIPELINE we informed readers that the J.W. Jung

Seed Co. was selling *Syringa x josiflexa* 'Royalty', *S. x prestoniae* 'Isabella', and perhaps other cultivars, as "Canada Gem" (shrub form) and "Canada Tree" (tree form). In the August 1982 issue of the LILAC NEWSLETTER we reported that the plants we purchased under the name of "Canada Gem" appeared to be identical to *S. x prestoniae* 'Constance'. The 1983 J.W. Jung Seed Co. catalog is the most recent one we have on hand; "Canada Gem" and "Canada Tree" lilacs are still being offered and are listed as *S. x prestoniae*. -- What more can we do than point out the facts?

Syringa prestonae yowata (sic) came to the Royal Botanical Gardens in 1956 as seed; one plant resulted. Shortly after I joined the staff in 1968 I stumbled onto that name, suspected a misspelling and had it confirmed that this should have read *S. x prestoniae* 'Hiawatha'. We corrected the records in April 1968 and discarded the plant in 1971. I am sure the name "yowata" was supplied to the late Dr. John C. Wister between 1956 and 1968 when he was working on a new list of lilac names (1968, unpublished). This list, in turn, was incorporated into Dr. Owen M. Rogers' Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa* (1976). -- It can take a long time to catch up with a misspelling.

The third example appears elsewhere in this issue. In this case the name of what I presumed to be a lilac cultivar was used in the description of a new lilac. It turns out that the unfamiliar (and misspelled) name belongs to an iris. -- It takes the right person with the right knowledge at the right time to unscramble these riddles.

In my opinion doubtful names have to be printed from time to time. Susan D. McKelvey included doubtful cultivar names in her monograph, *The Lilac* (1928). Sometimes additional information turns up, sometimes not. A committee for the special purpose of reviewing doubtful cultivar names might be effective if it consists of individuals with a wide knowledge of plant cultivars, not only lilacs.



from the Registrar's Desk

Freek Vrugtman, Royal Botanical Gardens,
P.O. Box 399, Hamilton, Canada L8N 3H8

Syringa vulgaris 'Lady Uarda', Larsen

See also: Lilac Newsletter 11(3):20 (March 1985) .

Mrs. Gertrude Wister kindly brought to my attention that the flower colors this new lilac is being compared with in the original (Plant Patent) description are not the colors of a phantom lilac, but belong to a once popular Tall Bearded Iris.

'Souvenir de Mme. Gaudichau' was introduced in 1914 by Millet & Fils of Bourg-la-Reine, Seine, France. In the January 1928 issue of the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (53(1):129) the flowers of this cultivar are described as follows:

"... standards ... rich dark bluish-violet; falls deeper, rich royal bluish-purple...; beard blue, tipped deep orange."

It's marvelous to have keen plantsmen (and women) around who can put one on the right trail!

LILAC PERFUME OR LILAC WATER FORMULA PLEASE

I have been trying to find out about how lilac perfume or lilac water is made. Everything I have read implies that these are made from synthetics. I would appreciate any information you can send me on the natural derivation of these scents. Citations to book or articles would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael McDonnell
346 S. Rose, Apt. F
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Editors notes:

Above letter has been mailed to Walter W. Oakes, I.L.S. Secretary who in turn mailed it for inclusion into Lilac Newsletter.

If any of the readers has answers to any of Michael McDonnell questions please mail them to me. I am sure that beside Michael many of our readers would like to read about procedures of obtaining perfume from the lilac.

IN MEMORY

We extend our sincere sympathy to the family of Mr. Donald M. Lupold, Muncy, Pennsylvania who passed away on February 18, 1985 after a long illness.

Mr. Lupold was a member of the Society since its founding and was keenly interested in its activities and plans. His collection of lilacs is outstanding for the inclusion of many rare and unusual varieties. The display of spring bloom on the grounds of his home attract hundreds of visitors each year to admire the lilacs, malus, azaleas and rhododendron

He was our warm personal friend and we particularly admired his modesty, quiet manner, astute judgement, candor, hospitality and generosity.

We will always miss him and especially so in lilac time.

Gloria K. & Walter W. Oakes
April 4, 1985