



Lilac Newsletter

Vol. XII, No. 11, November, 1986

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*.

This publication, **LILAC NEWSLETTER** (formerly **THE PIPELINE**) is issued monthly. Back copies are available by writing to the International Lilac Society, c/o Mr. Charles Holetich, Royal Botanical Gardens, Box 399, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. L8N 3H8. Please send 50 cents for each copy requested.

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MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

Single annual	\$ 10.00
Family	12.50
Sustaining	20.00
Institutional/Commercial	25.00
Life	150.00

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

***** Mrs. Elsie Kara *****
Rt 1 Box 604-5
Anthony, FL 32617

This address change needs to be noted in your directory of members and on the list of Regional Vice Presidents on the inside back cover. We will have the Vice Presidents listing corrected by December but until then, note Elsie's new address.

In her letter to the Editor she writes:

I have sold the house in Ohio and am permanently here in Florida.

I have brought some lilacs with me and am anxious to see if they'll bloom.

Would love to hear from members in South Carolina, North Carolina and Florida that are growing lilacs. It would be interesting to know how they are doing and what lilacs grow in the south. Any information would be appreciated.

Plant a Lilac Calendar



First leaf



First bloom



Full bloom



Full leaf



End of bloom

How do you decide when to start your spring planting? Instructions to transplant or sow seed "after the last frost" aren't very helpful, unless you can get a psychic to tell you which frost is the last one. The hardiness zone maps in seed catalogues are of limited use too, because the length of the growing season can vary by weeks on opposite sides of your house. You can get much better information from a lilac bush planted in or near your garden.

Years of research at the University of Vermont and elsewhere have shown that lilacs are highly accurate weather indicators. Unlike thermometers, barometers, and other weather instruments, plants reflect the combined effects of all weather factors—temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind, and sunshine—in their seasonal growth.

The study of the relationship between climate and biological events, such as the blooming of lilacs, is called "phenology." It's not a new science. Chinese gardeners were planting by phenological calendars 3,000 years ago, and American Indians taught early New England settlers to schedule planting by phenological signs. A lot of gardeners still plant corn when oak leaves are the size of a mouse's ear.

In the mid 1960s, researchers at the University of Vermont set up a network of volunteers to observe lilacs each spring and record the exact dates of five specific developments in their growth.

Today that network extends throughout the Northeast, and similar groups of volunteers are collecting data in the West and Midwest. According to Dr. Leonard Perry of the University of Vermont's Department of Plant and Soil Science, those observations could eventually result in much more accurate and detailed planting guides and hardiness zone maps.

The research has already proved useful in other ways. In Montana, for example, lilac observers discovered that the alfalfa weevil appears ten days after the first lilac blooms. Farmers who make their first cutting within those ten days can avoid a lot of damage. In Vermont the development of lilac leaves can be used to predict when McIntosh apple trees will bloom, so orchardists can prepare by putting out beehives for pollination.

Why was lilac chosen for this research? Because it's a widespread, hardy plant with few disease or insect problems. Dr. Perry explains that each of the phenological observers assisting in the project is given three bushes to plant in level, sunny locations where they can be checked every day. All of the observers are given the same lilac cultivar, 'Red Rothomagensis,' from the same nursery. That means that any variations in the timing of spring growth can be attributed to weather conditions, not to differences in the plants.

The observers record the dates when

the lilacs reach these stages of growth: (1) First leaf, when the widest parts of the earliest emerging leaves have grown beyond the ends of the bud scales; (2) full leaf, when at least 95 per cent of the leaves have unfurled; (3) first bloom, when at least 50 per cent of the flower clusters have one or more open flowers; (4) full bloom, when all of the flowers are open on 95 per cent of the clusters; (5) end of bloom, when at least 95 per cent of the flowers have withered.

Observations in Vermont indicate that cool-weather crops such as lettuce, root crops, and peas can be planted when lilacs are at the first-leaf stage. Beans, cucumbers, and other tender crops should wait until the lilacs are in full bloom. Dr. Perry warns, however, that such rules of thumb are not infallible. Even lilacs sometimes get blasted by a late frost, and researchers have yet to determine whether the same rules apply everywhere.

"The best thing to do is to observe your own indicator plants and your own garden," Perry says. "Lilacs are just the starting point; you can use many other perennial plants as well. It takes a few years to make meaningful observations, but the longer you do it, the more reliable they become. Eventually you'll be able to use your own observations and records, in addition to the weather reports, to decide when to put the tomatoes out."

Did you know that Daniel Rymiec and Don Wedge have been actively trying to get lilacs planted around the refurbished Statue of Liberty. Their initial plan was to place them there for the July celebration. That didn't happen but Don and Daniel have continued their efforts. As an update, here is the text of a letter sent by Don Wedge to the Statue Landscape Architect. All of us endorse this plan and hope it will become a reality.

Mr. Michael Adlerstein
11 West 19th St.
New York, New York 10028

Dear Mr. Adlerstein:

We understand that you are the Landscape Architect for the Statue of Liberty Island. We of the International Lilac Society were in hopes that some French Lilac Hybrids could be included in the plantings.

It seems quite appropriate to our Society that varieties of Lilac produced by the Famous French Hybridizer Victor Lemoine be planted using Red, White and Blue blooming varieties which are the colors in both the French and USA flags.

The three varieties we are suggesting are:

Madame Lemoine -- White	1890
Charles Joly -- Reddish	1896
President Grevy-- Bluish	1886

These varieties were introduced about the time the Statue of Liberty was built and are still varieties even today among the best known and most propagated.

Our Society would consider it an honor to furnish up to 15 2-3 ft plants for this purpose. Daniel Rymiec of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden would be our Lilac Society Contact person in the New York City Area. He would also supervise and plant with the help of members of the Botanical Gardeners Union, if that would be desired.

Would appreciate a word from you on how you feel about this proposal.

Hopefully,

Don Wedge

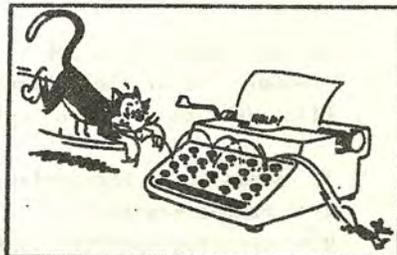
HELP WANTED

Your Secretary's file of information on lilacs available from commercial and private sources is critical to meeting the need for this information from correspondents. We are pleading with members and readers of the Newsletter to help us to do a better job by sharing information they find on lilacs in new catalogs and lists.

When we are able to provide factual and current information, we often gain new members and enhance the value of the Society to those interested in lilacs.

Thank you.

Walter W. Oakes, Secretary



SIMPLE AND HELPFUL

Check the address label on the envelope. If it reads December 1986, it's time to renew your 1987 membership.

Select the membership category on the inside of the front cover of the Lilac Newsletter and mail the cheque to Walter W. Oakes, Box 315, Rumford, ME 04276 - USA members, or to Charles Holetich, c/o Royal Botanical Gardens, Box 399, Hamilton, Ontario, if you are a Canadian member. Make cheque payable to International Lilac Society.

Act now and eliminate necessity of mailing the reminder notices.

ILS Membership Committee

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

6

Region 1 Northeast - ME., NH., VT., MA., CT., and RI.
Dan Cohen, Box 71, Sheffield, VT 05866.

Region 2 Atlantic - NJ., NY., and PA.
John Carvill, 138 Old Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110

Region 3 South - DC., DE., MD. south and west to the Mississippi River
Elsie Kara, 24540 Emmons Rd., Columbia Station, OH 44028

Region 4 Central - OH., IN., IL., MI., and WI.
William Horman, 246 Chalmers, Detroit, MI. 48215

Region 5 West - MN., IA., ND., SD., NE., MT., and WY.
Max Peterson, Rt. 1, Box 273, Ogallala, NE 69153

Region 6 Northwest - Alaska, WA., OR., and ID.
Vacant

Region 7 Pacific - CA.
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Region 8A Southwest Mountains - NV., UT., CO., AZ., and NM.
Andrew Pierce, Denver Botanical Garden, 909 York St., Denver, CO 80206.

Region 8B South Central - KS., MO., OK., AR., TX., and LA.
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**Region 9 Eastern Canada - Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick,
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**Region 10 Western Canada - Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia,
North West Territory and Yukon Territory.**
Roger Vick, Curator, Devonian Botanic Garden, University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E9

Region 11 - Members at Large
Vacant.

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