



# **Lilac Newsletter**

**Vol. XII, No. 5, May, 1988**

**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:* Charles D. Holetich,  
c/o RBG, Box 399  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8N 3H8

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

*Treasurer:* Walter E. Eickhorst,  
140 W. Douglas Ave., Naperville, IL 60540

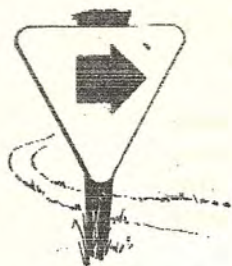
*Editor:* Pro tem. Dr. Owen M. Rogers,  
University of New Hampshire,  
Durham, NH 03824

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

**MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION**

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

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



- DON'T FORGET -

1986 Annual Convention

Everything is ready for a great convention in Hamilton, May 29-31. President Holetich has promised good weather and full lilac bloom. Even if he can't deliver on those things, the warmth of his greeting and the hospitality of the Royal Botanical Garden will be enough to make the meeting memorable.

\*\*\*\*\* SEE YOU IN HAMILTON \*\*\*\*\*

Watching Plants Grow

With the help of time-lapse photography, many of us have watched a bud burst into flower in a matter of seconds. Can you imagine the thrill of watching a seed germinate underground, pushing its roots down through the soil and its leaves up toward the light?

Scientists from the General Electric Company and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are using a medical technique called "magnetic resonance imaging" to see through the soil so they can watch seeds germinate, and see roots grow and absorb water.

A magnetic resonance scanner produces a picture by probing the living object with high-frequency radio waves while it is in a powerful magnetic field. The radio signals "excite" selected atoms in the object under study, causing them to resonate. From this, a computer constructs a picture.

With the scanner scientists have watched seeds germinate and roots draw up water to recover from drought. One image revealed a grey blot in a plant's cotyledons that later was identified as decay from seed rot.

Magnetic resonance imaging has no known effect of plants, so it can be repeated as often as necessary to monitor plant growth and development. The research team hopes to help find ways to optimize growing conditions.

Worm Castings Encourage Rooting

We've long known that earthworms are good for the garden; now a series of experiments reported in HortScience (10/85) may indicate one reason why.

Working with several common houseplants, researchers showed that worm castings are a better medium for rooting than the traditional sphagnum moss or sand. Air layering worked better with pure worm castings than with sphagnum moss. Rooting of stem cuttings was more successful when worm castings were added to the traditional medium of peat and sand.

Harden Your Transplants

Before transferring your plants to the garden, be sure to adjust them to the rigors of the outdoors. Over a period of seven to 10 days set the plants outside where they can be exposed to the elements. Do this for a few hours the first day, gradually extending the exposure time until they can remain outside the entire day (and night). Don't let them be exposed to severe conditions such as a hard freeze or strong, hot winds.

Under the heading "a Secretary's lot is not always easy," consider this letter to Walter Oakes.

Request:

When I went to Boston last year during the Lilac season, I fell in love with a lilac bush that grew about 6 feet or taller. Unfortunately, I forgot the name and was unable to locate a bush.

I am asking if you have pictures with descriptions of Lilac bushes and places and prices with which I can purchase this special lilac from. If any fee is involved please bill me. I need this information as soon as possible. Can you help me?

Response:

There is about as much chance of determining from pictures or description the plant you admired in the Arnold Arboretum as hitting the bullseye in a dart game while blindfolded.

To have a positive identification you must go back to the Arb., locate the plant and write down the name on the tag. Then we can see if a source for it can be found.

There are easily 1400 recognized lilacs - many of them quite similar and the plant you saw may eventually grow to be 12' tall so you can see the problem of getting a positive identification the way you would like to do it.

If I can help further, please write again.

Cordially,

Walter W. Oakes, Secretary



## A Strange Use For Juicy Fruit Chewing Gum

The Kentucky Nursery News some time ago carried the following amusing article by Jim Joseph, a staff reporter with the Post publication.

You say you just barely managed to keep your lawn alive this summer? You say you poured long hours and big bucks into your little patch of green? You say you have it looking halfway decent, but now a pesky mole has claimed part of your real estate as its very own?

Chin up, Bunky, and have a stick of Juicy Fruit. Then give the rest to the mole.

No kidding. It'll kill the little critter.

"It gums up their insides and they die," said Carleen Kearns, public relations manager for the Cincinnati Zoo. However, Ms. Kearns was quick to add that the zoo doesn't recommend the procedure.

"Well, we're for animal life," she said. "That's a pretty sick death for the little guy."

Strange as it may sound, execution by Juicy Fruit is effective.

"It works," said Denny McKeown, VP of Natop's Garden Stores. "It's the only non-insect scent they're attracted to. They consume it, then can't pass it." McKeown, who hosts a lawn-&-garden show Saturday mornings on WCKY, said this has been a particularly bad year for moles, and, therefore a bad one for lawns.

"We had a mild winter and they were able to feed," he said. "We had complaints about moles back in Jan. That's unheard of."

McKeown said if you have moles, it means you already have other problems. Besides gum they eat grubs, which feed on the roots of grass. "The real cure is to treat the lawn with diazinon and eliminate the insects," he said. "The moles will go somewhere else when you kill the reason they're there"

But if you're going to stick with gum, the key is to

use only Juicy Fruit and wear plastic gloves.

"Don't chew it," McKeown said. "Unwrap it and roll it up like a little carpet. Wear plastic gloves because they can be washed and won't hold any human scent."

A human scent will make the moles, um, well, gummy.

"Make a slit in a fresh run, one that's active," McKeown said, "and drop it in. Then push the cut back together so they can't see any light."

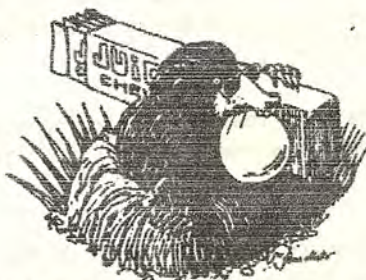
McKeown said he thought it took a day or 2 to kill the mole. He read about the trick in a St. Louis newspaper which credited the Dawes Arboretum near Newark, OH. A spokesman at the arboretum didn't know anything about it.

As for other anti-mole methods, McKeown didn't put much stock in the decorative flower spikes that are supposed to vibrate the ground. "It does little or nothing," he said. "Watching the runs and trying to hit 'em with a spade might work as well."

Mole traps, in which the animals are skewered by spikes, work, too. But, "the average person doesn't like the gory details" like cleaning the mole off the spikes, McKeown said.

A spokeswoman at the Wm. Wrigley Jr., Co. in Chicago said the company was aware of the mole-killing quality of its gum.

"It's a good thing our product doesn't have that effect on everybody," she said.



### GUM IN THE GARDEN

If it were up to the moles of the world, chewing-gum packages might carry warning labels. *Nursery Manager* magazine reports that Juicy Fruit gum can prove fatal to the subterranean pests. Seems the critters like the taste of that particular brand; but when they swallow it, it gums up their insides and they die. To use the gum as a "molecide," unwrap a stick (wear plastic gloves to mask your human scent), roll it up, drop it into a fresh mole run, and cover the hole. It should do the trick within a couple of days.



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## LILAC COLLECTION AT RBG - ITS HISTORY AND EVALUATION

by Charles D. Holetich

Lilac collection at the Royal Botanical Gardens; its historical evolution is based on four major dates. They are: November 1952; November 1960; Summer 1965 and November 1984.

November 1952 witnessed the first tangible planting of lilacs in an area, then known as Longwood Parkway-lilac collection. Most of the cultivars planted in November 1952 (about 25 cvs.) were obtained from Wayside Gardens Nursery, Mentor, Ohio. During years of 1953, 54 & 56 about 135 lilac cultivars were acquired from Rowancroft Gardens, a Nursery at Meadowvale, Ontario (53 cvs.); Rothman Nursery, Rheinbeck, NY (36 cvs.), Kingsville Nurseries, Kingsville, MD (24 cvs.), Sheridan Nurseries, Etobicoke, Ontario (7 cvs.) and a few from other sources.

Only few lilacs were acquired in subsequent years, and few were lost, most likely to wet soil conditions during early springs.

Construction of a new highway forced transplanting of lilacs to its present location, which brings us to the second important date in evolution of the Lilac collection - November 1960.

About 130 cultivars, species, and botanical varieties were transplanted to the Arboretum, on rolling slopes of cleared woodland.

The collection is subdivided into sections which exhibit single or double french hybrids, x hyacinthiflora hybrids as well as species, miscellaneous hybrids.

Next several years produced number of layout sketches, some new additions and number of discards, mainly due to incorrect colour or single versus double florets.

Very important year of 1965 exhibited only 174 lilac taxa, represented by 323 bushes, which, however, was sufficient to catch an interest of Colin Osborne from Hamilton, Ontario to establish in tribute to his wife "The Katie Osborne Lilac Garden Trust," to expand and complete (whatever that means) the Lilac Garden in Arboretum within five-year period. Furthermore, an Endowment Fund was established to ensure the collection's maintenance.

Year of 1969 exhibited 293 Lilac taxa; 1972 over 500 and November 1984 (another important date) made our collection the largest in the world, exhibiting 693 lilac taxa in the collection and about 100 more in the nearby nursery growing to suitable size for transplant.