



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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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

Does Seed Ripening Affect Next Year's Bloom?

Should you remove developing seed pods after flowering? If you do, will it have any effect on next year's bloom? If you don't, will it cause a biennial bloom pattern (one year good bloom, one year sparse bloom)? These are questions that keep coming up whenever lilac culture is discussed and there is very little scientific data upon which to base an answer or to predict next year's bloom based on this year's performance. Your editor believes that annual or biennial bloom is genetically controlled and that removal of seed pods will have no visible affect on next year's bloom. Recently, Don Wedge sent eight years of bloom records for a block of lilacs that were "...growing in sod - the only care it received was mowing the grass three times during the year. No pruning of any sort - no fertilizing or liming." With this uniform regime, one might expect that all the varieties (nearly 40 of them) would act the same, but this was not so and Don noted that some had distinctly biennial bloom patterns over the eight years while others were reliable annual bloomers.

Here are lists of those showing clearly distinct patterns.

Annual Bloomers

Mrs. W. E. Marshall
DeMiribel
Paul Hariot
Mme Antoine Buchner
Monge
Jan van Tol
Alphonse Lavallee
Marie LeGraye
Montaigne
President Grevy

Biennial Bloomers

Paul Deschanel
President Harding
Jacques Callot
Charles X
Mount Blanc

You'll notice that the lists do not add up to 40. The rest are not here either because the pattern was not clear or there was one or more unpredicted years such that more than eight years will be needed to be sure of the pattern.

Don Wedge is still not totally convinced one way or the other. He does believe that "If removing the old blooms are going to be of benefit, they must be removed as soon as the flower is 'spent' to prevent the plant from having to exert itself on seed development when it might be putting its effort into growth and possibly new strong flower buds."

What do you think? Do the above cultivars act the same for you? Do you have bloom records for others? Write to me and I'll publish your observations in the Newsletter.



LILAC MILDEW

Powdery mildew is the most common fungus disease of lilacs. It covers the leaves with whitish, felt-like patches of fungus although it is usually not visible until late in the season. It is a superficial disease which does not grow beyond the leaf surface layer. Also, since it does not occur in large amounts until late in the season it does not affect the development of next spring's buds nor the food storage necessary for good growth and bloom next year. Therefore, the plants will survive very well with no treatment at all.

There are some cultural things that can be used to reduce the amount of mildew since it grows best in shady, damp situations. Placing lilacs in full sun locations where there is good air circulation will reduce the growth of the fungus. Less mildew will appear in dry years than in seasons with a long, damp fall. There are also variety differences and some are affected much more than others. Among the late blooming lilacs, a number, such as those introduced from the University of New Hampshire, are very resistant and do not develop mildew at all in cool climate locations.

Chemicals exist which will control mildew even on very susceptible varieties. For example, Benlate 50 WP applied at a rate of 80 oz/100 gals (2 tsp.gal) beginning when the very first sign of the disease appear and repeated at the 10 day intervals through the rest of the season will give good control. This represents a considerable effect so it is recommended only for plants in positions where they will be observed close up or for very important plants. Beyond those plants and situations, the value of chemical control has to be weighted against the effort and cost of its application.

Here is another recipe for handling cut lilac blooms as it appeared in the Christian Science Monitor on 6 May 1987. Has anyone in ILS ever tried alcohol?

Q. I love to make bouquets using my flowering shrubs, but some do not hold up well in water. I especially have trouble with lilacs and other shrubs with heavy flower clusters. Is there any procedure I can follow to make them stay perky?

A. Stems of many flowering shrubs will hold up in bouquets if they are picked early in the morning soon after daybreak. Cut with pruning shears or a sharp knife (on a slant), put into warm water, and place in a cool spot to "harden off" for an hour or more before arranging. Most can also be cut in the evening after the air cools. On rainy days, they can be cut anytime. Some, like lilacs or viburnums, with thick stems and heavy blooms, should be pounded on their stems to crush the bottom inch or so. Then we put them in a mixture of rubbing alcohol and water at the rate of one cup of rubbing alcohol (70 percent) to four cups of water. The solution should reach several inches up the stem. Use the same water and alcohol mix for arranging in a vase.

DESCRIBING LILAC COLORS

Trying to describe the color of a given lilac variety with complete accuracy is like trying to paint a perfect word picture of last night's sunset.

Kodachrome slides and natural color photographs can come close, although subject to the physical limitations of printers' ink. Words, which are frequently all the nurseryman has left, are invariably inadequate but we have to make them do.

When lilacs bloom the first season after transplanting, they are almost always "off color," with blossoms smaller and paler than normal.

Thrifty, well nourished, well established plants not only have more blooms, but better coloring.

(Maud Upton)



ROBERT FORTUNE (1813-1880)

Robert Fortune was a Scottish botanist, traveler and plant hunter. In 1842 he was sent to China by the Royal Horticultural Society to collect plants. He introduced many beautiful flowers into England. In 1848 the East India Company sent him in quest of tea plants which he successfully introduced into India. The livelihood of millions today depend on this shrub alone. He introduced *Syringa oblata* and *Syringa oblata alba* into England from China in 1856.

Old Westbury Gardens

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PRESS RELEASE

OLD WESTBURY GARDENS, a former country estate on Long Island, has announced twelve openings in the 1988 Horticultural Intern Program. The Internship offers a full and varied program dedicated to providing practical horticultural training as an adjunct to the more formal classroom studies at universities and colleges. Selected students can expect assignments rotated bi-weekly in all aspects of modern garden maintenance and planning. These include: plant propagation, planning and maintenance of various floral display areas, trail maintenance, arboriculture, demonstration garden and greenhouse management, surveying, herbaceous perennial management, and turf maintenance. Each intern may also be assigned a special interest project. College credit can be arranged.

For further information concerning stipend, student housing and application procedure please contact:

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