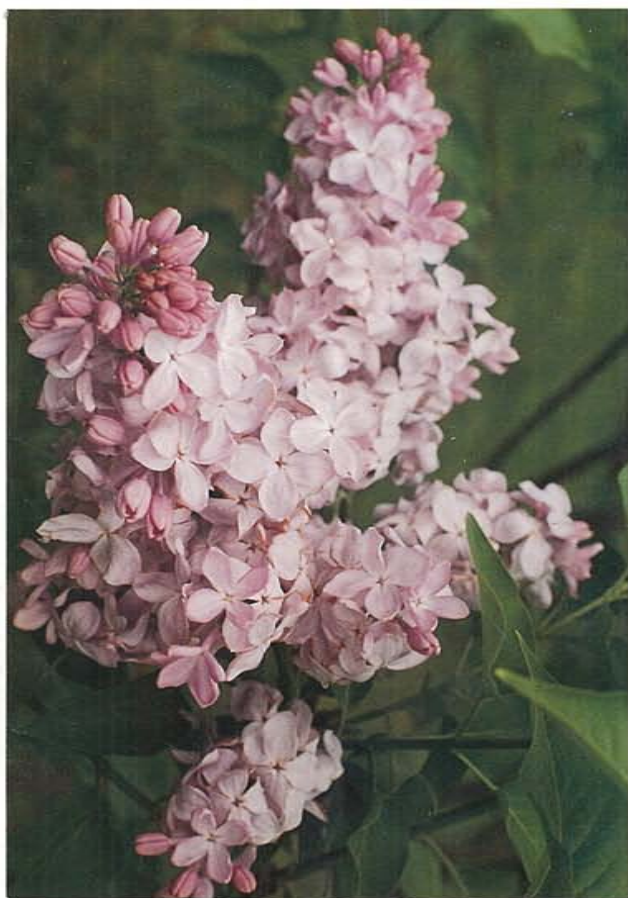


# Lilacs

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 1  
WINTER 1995



*Syringa vulgaris* 'Silver King'

## QUARTERLY JOURNAL

of the International Lilac Society

IN  
THIS  
ISSUE:

Distribution Plan  
Membership Issue

*A Publication of*  
**THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY**

*Copyright 1995 Editor*

ISSN 1046-9761

Copies of this publication are available by writing to the International Lilac Society,  
 c/o Mrs. Pauline Fiala, 6995 Congress Road, Spencer, Ohio 44275. \$5.00 (U.S.)

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### Membership Classification (U.S. Funds)

Single or Family / Annual .....	\$ 15.00
Sustaining .....	30.00
Institution/Commercial .....	35.00
Life .....	150.00

• Mail membership dues to Asst. Treasurer Robert Gilbert

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.

*Published January, 1995*

LILACS 1995

## Cover Story

### Front Cover

*Syringa vulgaris* 'Silver King'. The first cultivar to be offered by the newly reconstituted Propagation and Distribution Committee. 'Silver King' is described in the Committee's report and will be available from Select Plus Nurseries this winter. They are also including information on *Syringa x hyacinthiflora* 'Sweetheart' which will be the spring offering and will be featured on the cover of the Spring issue.

## Editor's Notes

**T**HIS issue of "Lilacs" is a busy one so please take a few extra minutes to look at and respond to the several important things it contains. First note the Membership List. Do we have your name and address correct? If not please let David Gressley know so he can update the Society's records. Second, read the election information and then **BE SURE TO VOTE**. Third, the newly formed Propagation and Distribution Committee is presenting its first offering. They have some exciting plans and some new lilacs so be sure to read their information and order plants. Fourth, start making your convention plans. We have included a tentative program and registration forms. Please note the deadline dates and don't be late. We will publish them again in the spring issue of "Lilacs" but by then the time will be very, very short and you won't want to miss any of the great things that are planned for us by the Bickelhaupt. Lastly, start planning ahead for what you can contribute to the Spring issue of "Lilacs." The absolute deadline will be March 15th so it can be printed and mailed by April 1st. Your input is needed and its absence diminishes us.

We have recently learned of the death of two of our long-time members. Robert Eckhardt of Palos, IL, died on June 8, 1994. He was an ILS member since 1984 and is survived by his wife, Viola Ann Eckhardt. Also we have been told of the passing of Robert Forsythe from Conesus, NY. He was a charter life member of the society and propagated lilacs for ILS for its first plant distribution in the early '70s. He leaves a daughter, Mrs. Evelyn Kemp and his sister, Mrs. Pendergast.

I know I speak for the whole Society as I express our condolences to these families.

## President's Message

**I**T is Winter and time to enjoy another of our Quarterly Journals, a time to compliment and thank all of you who have worked long and hard to make the Lilac a popular, well known and well loved plant, a time to thank Dr. Owen Rogers and his Committee for a wonderful experience at our 23rd Annual International Lilac Society Convention in New Hampshire. Owen, it was indeed a treat to see the splendid late blooming lilacs in full color. The boat trip was great. Thank you.

As we enter this New Year, we can still enjoy one of the most reassuring certainties, that ILS, like most good things, goes on year after year fulfilling its unique role in our world of the genus *Syringa*. Again, a direct tribute to the dedicated and hard working members of our Society.

This coming year promises to be an exciting one. There is an excellent Lilac Distribution Plan in place, set up by Frank Moro and his Distribution Committee. Much thought and careful plant selection went into the effort. Details of the Plan are presented in another section of this issue of "Lilacs."

Because there are many new lilac gardens / collections being established at this time, there will be a forthcoming feature column in the Journal under the heading of "Tips For Beginners." This is being done in response to requests from many of our members trying to grow lilacs for the first time. Some of our most knowledgeable lilac growers will contribute to this column.

If you have been searching for a certain lilac and no supplier has it, perhaps this next announcement may be your answer. We would like to try out a "Lilac Swap Column" in the Quarterly Journal. You already know how it works — "I will swap such and such" for "such and such." If there is good participation, each issue of "Lilacs" will be eagerly awaited by all members. This is your chance to have contact with your fellow members. Your involvement with this endeavor would insure its success. Please let your "swap desire" be known to our Editor so it can be printed in the next issue while there is still time to "swap and plant" this spring.

It is not too early to plan attending the 24th Annual International Lilac Society Convention to be held at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum in Clinton, Iowa, May 11-13, '95. Beautiful and meticulously maintained landscaping is in store for us along with a full schedule of interesting and educational events. We hope you will be able to be present.

Ah! ILS, always challenging, sometimes frustrating, never boring, and ever fulfilling, it is a great pleasure to serve the Society.

May the blessings of Joy and Good Health be yours in the coming year.

Faithfully yours,  
Reva Ballreich, President

# Tentative Program

1995 International Lilac Society Conference

Best Western Frontier Motor Inn

May 11-13, 1995

## Thursday, May 11:

- 2:00-9:00 p.m. .... Board of Directors Meeting in Board Room  
3:00-7:00 p.m. .... Registration Open (Commons)  
7:00-9:00 p.m. .... Hospitality Suite Open

## Friday, May 12:

- 6:30-8:45 a.m. .... All you can eat continental breakfast  
(Assorted pastries, juices and condiments)  
8:45-9:00 a.m. .... Welcome  
9:00-9:50 a.m. .... Session I: "You Are Selling WHAT?"  
*Robert and Mary Ann Rennebohm*  
10:00-10:50 a.m. .... Session II: "Multi Floral Rose Eradication"  
*Dr. Abe Epstein*  
11:00-12:00 p.m. .... Annual Meeting  
12:05-12:20 p.m. .... Board bus and travel  
12:30-1:30 p.m. .... Lunch aboard the Mississippi Belle II  
1:30-3:00 p.m. .... Gaming/relaxing on the Mississippi Belle II  
3:05-3:15 p.m. .... Board bus and travel  
3:15-4:00 p.m. .... Tour Curtis Mansion  
4:05-4:10 p.m. .... Board bus and travel  
4:10-4:40 p.m. .... Tour & Shop at Smith Brothers General Store  
4:40-5:00 p.m. .... Board bus and travel  
6:00-6:30 p.m. .... Social Hour at Frontier Motor Inn (Cash Bar)  
6:30-9:00 p.m. .... President's Dinner at Frontier Motor Inn

## Saturday, May 13:

- 6:30-8:45 a.m. .... All you can eat continental breakfast  
7:00-8:45 a.m. .... Board of Directors Meeting & Election of Officers  
9:00-9:20 ..... Board bus and travel  
9:20-10:15 a.m. .... Tour Bald Eagle Nursery  
10:20-10:40 a.m. .... Board bus and travel  
10:45-12:00 p.m. .... Guided tour of Bickelhaupt Arboretum  
12:00-1:30 p.m. .... Lunch and '96 Host Community Preview  
at Bickelhaupt Arboretum  
1:30-2:00 ..... Tour Bickelhaupt Arboretum  
2:30-5:00 p.m. .... Lilac Auction at Bickelhaupt Arboretum  
5:05-5:20 p.m. .... Board bus and travel to hotel  
6:45-7:00 p.m. .... Board bus and travel  
7:00-7:30 p.m. .... Social Hour at Clinton Country Club (Cash Bar)  
7:30 p.m. .... Awards Banquet at Clinton Country Club  
9:00 p.m. .... Board bus and travel to hotel

### Hasselkaus Retires

After some 30 years of teaching and research, Dr. Edward Hasselkaus has retired. He has contributed much to the International Lilac Society (note how many of the pictures in Father Fiala's book carry his photo credit) and hosted a meeting of ILS at Madison.

He will continue as Curator of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum at Madison so we will continue to hear from him in his well-deserved change of careers.

## **Election Biographies**

The following people have agreed to run for the five spaces on the International Lilac Society's Board of Directors. Incumbents are noted with an asterisk. The ballot is included as an insert in the middle of this issue. Be sure to exercise your right to vote.

### **\*John Alexander III**

Propagator of Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum since 1976. Lilac enthusiast, author of many articles on lilacs and recipient of the ILS Director's Award in 1984 as well as an Award of Merit in 1992.

### **\*Pauline Fiala**

Executive Board member of ILS. Chairperson of both the Elections Committee and the Awards Committee. Long term supporter of ILS.

### **\*Charles Holetich**

Executive Vice-President for Canada. Curator of the Katie Osborne lilac planting at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Canada. Past President of ILS, long term supporter of ILS.

### **Frank Moro**

Owner Select Plus Nursery in Mascouche, Quebec, Canada, selling lilacs across Canada and into Europe. Chairman of the newly reconstituted Plant Propagation and Distribution Committee. Newly appointed Vice President for Eastern Canada (See additional information on distribution in this issue).

### **Mary Anne Rennebohm**

Vice-President of Heard Gardens LTD since 1991. Presently responsible for many aspects of the nursery's marketing, production and shipping. In addition, responsible for the farm's landscape and construction services as well as its retail garden center. Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State University.

### **\*Owen M. Rogers**

A Massachusetts native who has been at the University of New Hampshire for the past 34 years where he is now Professor of Plant Biology. Has served the Society in several positions including President from 1978-1984 and now as Editor of the quarterly bulletin, "Lilacs."

### **Wanda Whitaker**

Together with William Utley responsible for the lilac collection at Grape Hill Gardens in Clyde, New York. A lilac enthusiast of long standing.



# Lilac Plant Distribution Report

*by the Propagation and Distribution Committee*

*Frank Moro, Chairman*

**O**NE of the major tasks of any plant society is to procure knowledge on individual plants and to disseminate it to members. The Propagation and Distribution Committee was formed during the June 1994 Convention to be able to offer lilacs that are not readily available on the market. The committee discussed selections of desired cultivars, the procedures of its handling and shipping, the cost and means to make the project the most effective. Opinions of ILS members are welcome, including suggestions for consideration of cultivars to be propagated in the future.

Select Plus Nursery in Canada was chosen as the propagating company since it has experience with continental and oversea shipping and already has a vast collection of lilacs in production.

We will write on each cultivar a short descriptive article outlining the main features of the cultivar offered as well as a color photograph in the publication.

All orders should be sent to and made payable to Select Plus Nursery, 1510 Pine, Mascouche, J7L 2M4, Quebec, Canada. Checks or money orders are accepted.

Plants sold are in 4" pots and are min. 4" in height and will be well rooted in their pots. Members may combine winter and spring quarterly orders on the same shipment thus saving freight. For any add-on orders please make adjustments for the multiple freight charges if they are applicable.


Please place orders early to reserve plants as they are limited in quantities. There is a maximum quantity of 3 plants per member's mailing address. Winter 94 and Spring 95 orders will be delivered as of July 1st, 1995. Summer '95 and Winter '95 plants will be shipped in May of 1996.

The first lilac we are introducing is *Syringa vulgaris* 'Silver King'. It is a class 3 single. Lavendar buds open giving birth to rare and beautiful whitish-blue lilac petals with silvery blue reverse sides. It is a heavy bloomer and was introduced by Lemke in 1953.

The ILS member price is \$8.00 Canadian funds per plant. Non member price is \$10.00 per plant. Included in this issue is an order sheet for this offer. Please use the appropriate rates for shipping.

## Lilac Distribution Committee Spring Plans

The members of the Lilac Distribution Committee are pleased to present *Syringa x hyacinthiflora* 'Sweetheart' as the second new cultivar to be made available to the members of the ILS. As all the hyacinthifloras,

*need* 



'Sweetheart' is an early bloomer that is quite fragrant. It was introduced by Clarke in 1953 and is a D-6 classification. Hyacinthifloras also have a tendency to sucker less than the vulgaris family and take on reddish bronze coloration in the autumn. The panicles are heart shaped and the color is quite unique as it changes from a deep pink to a soft pink as the florets open. It is truly an outstanding lilac that has been overlooked for far too long.

Plants to ILS members will be \$8.00 Canadian funds plus shipping and to non-members for \$10.00 per plant. Please read the lilac distribution article for further details. All European orders will be taken and shipped only in the fall of 1995 or spring of 1996 depending on the demands, as for plants must be dormant when expedited. All European orders will be sent bareroot to Colin Chapman in Europe for re-shipping to each customer. This is to reduce freight and duty costs to you.

*Frank Moro, Select Plus Nurseries*

## EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER (November 1994)

### **Crisis Resolved.**

The application to locate a storage depot for waste commercial catering oil on our boundary fulfilled all local planning regulations. It was the power of the letters of objection about the insensitivity of placing this kind of activity next to the lilac collection which led the planning authority to realize that wider national and international interests were involved. Following a visit here by the planning officer, the applicants were instructed to re-apply at an alternative location on our neighboring farm, or to withdraw the application. We understand that the application has been withdrawn.

The struggle has been hard, depressing and expensive but it is gratifying to realize that, even in these difficult economic times, a gentle pursuit like lilac growing can matter to so many people. We never opposed the commercial enterprise but we fought like tigers to get its proposed location changed. We are profoundly grateful for all the help we received, in particular the stern and authoritative objections from prominent members of ILS. There was support too from members of our own National Council for the Preservation of Plants and Gardens and the Royal Horticultural Society. In the end, the letters that came in ranged from Scotland to the Isle of Wight and from California to Denmark. Our thanks to you all. Normal hospitality to itinerant *Syringophiles* can now be resumed.

### **Chelsea Pensioners.**

I received a phone call from the Supervisor of the Gardens at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, which, apart from being the venue of the Chelsea Flower Show, is the famous retirement home for those grand old soldiers



*Shelagh Chapman tending the ILS stall at the County Agricultural College Show, Otley, Suffolk, 1993. (Photo by Colin Chapman)*

the Chelsea Pensioners. Apparently, a copy of the RHS Journal containing my article "The Lilac Revolution" had been read and the Pensioners had asked for some of the new lilacs to be obtained for the Hospital grounds. It so happened that my sister's father-in-law was a Pensioner, and he died in the Royal Hospital two years ago. I will propagate the plants this winter and donate them on the behalf of ILS next year and make sure that pictures of the event are available for the Journal.

## **Word from Eastern Europe.**

I received a letter from Dr. Schmidt Gabor at the University of Horticulture and Food Industry in Hungary. Dr. Gabor has been busy organizing the Centenary celebrations of the Buda Arboretum and I know that these included a meeting of the International Plant Propagators Society – an august group into whose membership this humble writer has just been elected. Dr. Gabor has promised to send some items for the Journal and he gave me a preview of one of them which was a page (in Hungarian) of a bud-identification key of lilacs most commonly planted in Hungary.

I have also received a letter from Dr. Mitko Krystev at the Main Botanic Garden in Moscow. Dr. Krystev is also involved in celebrations; the 50th anniversary of Main Botanic Garden RAS which include a new exposition of lilacs where they plan to represent about 500 varieties. Dr. Krystev writes:

"We had to solve a lot of financial and other problems but

now everything is more or less OK with us and we are eager to make contributions to "Lilacs Quarterly Journal."

I will, of course, follow up both letters and keep everyone informed of these and other developments on our patch in Europe.

## Plant Search.

We are trying to locate *Syringa x chinensis* 'Duplex' which was named by Lemoine in 1897. Does anyone know of the existence of a double form of *S x chinensis*? If it is still out there it is likely to be in old, and probably unlabeled, planting of a collection of lilacs and should not be difficult to recognize. If anyone sees a likely specimen, please let me know.

Colin Chapman, Executive Vice President - Europe

Norman's Farm

Wyverstone

Stowmarket

Suffolk IP14 4SF

England

## Lilacs For Every Garden

Such a magnificent flower, flourishing us with color for a period of two weeks and so much behind it. Known for their fragrance, color, memories and history this mystical flower has come a long way from the humble hybridizer to the modern day production nursery.

Turn back your clocks to when you were a child. Remember the spring fragrances gently reviving our senses that there is life after a long cold winter. Picture playing at your grandparent's home in May and remember the towering lilac bushes that never forgot to garnish us with flowers, so you break off a few trusses and bring them in to grandma as a sign of love.

I'm sure we all have some recollection of lilacs in our past, but where have they gone today? We all have the same excuses; life in suburbia has shrunk our properties down in size, our gardens are too sophisticated for the simple lilac and not to mention they take too much care and space. Well think again for there are lilacs to cover every need from dwarf to tree, to green leaf to variegated leaf. There are even certain species whose leaves take on beautiful fall color.

Take a trip on a rural route in late May as I did one weekend and you'll be surprised to see how many farm homes have lilacs planted by the home. In my case over 90% had lilacs and there were an amazing amount of flowers on them. Again in June at the ILS convention in Portsmouth, New

Hampshire, at the Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion there were lilacs standing that dated back over 100 years. Even these plants had shown signs of many flowers during bloom time just a couple of weeks prior.

Just think of what great memories we could be denying our children. The chance to break off a few trusses and rush in the house with them to show their love for us. Just a great gesture, and such a small price to pay for it. With the kind of fast paced life we lead today, I think it is important to show our children it is not necessary to always spend money on certain things like family environment.

Lilacs are an old plant to us but it is a species that has not been properly marketed or its cultivars exploited. There are beautiful lilacs that exist that have never made it to the market. This is where growers must educate not only the general public by having them request more than lilacs by color like blue or white, but growers, buyers at the garden center level and even the salesperson who assists you to purchase that family treasure-to-be for the next 100 years. We may not be able to plant olive trees in our climate so our grandchildren may pick olives but we certainly can plant a lilac.

Not many of us realize the tremendous amount of planning it takes to produce a nursery grown lilac. It's a lot more than an 8-5 job or getting tans worked on. Imagine the pressure you go through on a yearly basis at work and compact them into a 3-month period.

It all starts in early April when the winter protection of the plants is removed and the pots are raised up into the spring sunlight. Pick lists and shipping commences for the next 5-6 weeks for wholesale and retail postal orders. Weeks usually consist of 80-100 work hours during this time for key employees. By mid to end of May upgrading of pots from the rooted cutting into a 4" pot, 4" pot into a 1 gallon pot, 1 gallon pot into a 3 gallon pot takes place. Let's not overlook the weeding and slow release fertilizer which also takes place during this time as well. All these tasks must be accomplished by mid June.

The next phase is preparing the propagation greenhouses. Verification of the mist systems and timers is an annual event. Next the propagation trays and medium is prepared and all is ready for softwood cuttings to begin. Propagating lilacs successfully takes razor sharp timing and lots of attention when you are involving so many softwood cuttings whose leaves in most cases resemble one another. Special care must be taken by everyone. By the end of June all is done and the spring rush is completed.

Let's get the lilac to come out of our past and make its way into our present once again as our forefathers did. With 7 color classifications and over 1600 cultivars in existence, I'm sure everyone can find that special plant. So next year on Mother's Day buy a lilac that will last a few generations.

*Frank Moro*  
Select Plus Nurseries

# Bickelhaupt Arboretum

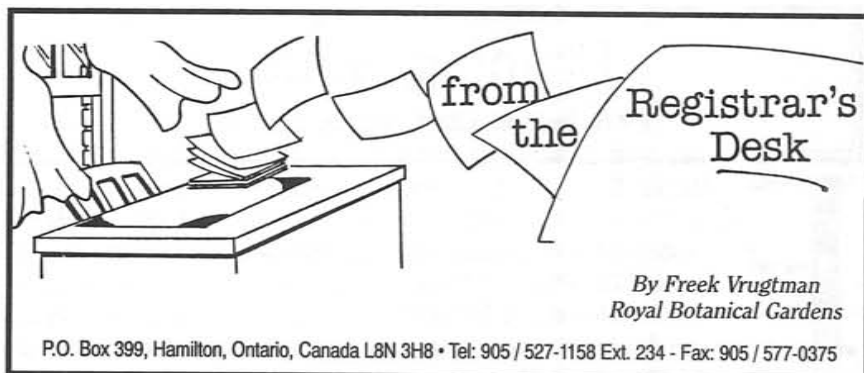
*NOTE: This is a tease for the annual convention at the Bickelhaupt's. You'll see these and many more.*

## **Syringa (Lilac) Collection 1994**

The Arboretum Lilac Collection was started in 1975, located directly north of the Education Center, in a 70 by 400 foot garden. The plants are pruned to eight feet in height where their bloom can be most appreciated. In 1983, the then collection of 48 species and cultivars was honored with the International Lilac Society President's Award for "A Select Collection of Outstanding Lilacs for Public Education and Viewing." Blooming time circa May 10 to June 10 annually.

(Symbols: Flowers: S - Single; D - Double; Flower colors: I - White; II - Violet; III - Bluish; IV - Lilac; V - Pinkish; VI - Magenta; VII - Purple; VIII - Yellow. Blooming time of season: E - Early; M - Middle; L - Late.)

<i>Syringa x chinensis</i> (Rothomagensis) (S,IV, M)	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> (S,VI,M)
	'Alma' (S,II,E)
	'A.M. Brand' (S,VII,M)
<i>Syringa x hyacinthiflora</i> (D,III, E)	'Ami Schott' (D,III,M)
'Annabel' (D,V,E)	'Andenken an Ludwig Spaeth' (S,VII,M)
'Asessippi' (S,IV,E)	'Belle de Nancy' (D,V,M)
'Doctor Chadwick' (S,III,E)	'Charles Joly' (D,VII,M)
'Esther Staley' (S,VI,E)	'Charles X' (S,VI,L)
'Gertrude Leslie' (D,I,E)	'Clyde Heard' (S,VI,M)
'Maiden's Blush' (S,V,M)	'Congo' (S,VI,M)
'Mount Baker' (S,I,E)	'Decaisne' (S,III,M)
'Pocahontas' (S,VII,E)	'De Miribel' (S,II,M)
'Royal Purple' (D,VII,E)	'Edith Cavell' (D,I,M)
	'Edward J. Gardner' (D,V,M)
<i>Syringa x josiflexa</i> 'Guinevere' (S,VI,L)	'Firmament' (S,III,M)
'James Mac Farlane' (S,V,L)	'Krasavitsa Moskv' (D,I,M)
'Royalty' (S,VII,L)	'Lucie Baltet' (S,V,M)
	'Marie Finon' (S,I,M)
<i>Syringa meyeri</i> 'Palibin' (S,V,L)	'Miss Ellen Willmott' (D,I,M)
'Palibin' (on a standard) (S,V,L)	'Mme. Lemoine' (D,I,M)
	'Monge' (S,VII,M)
<i>Syringa patula</i> 'Miss Kim' (S,II,L)	'Mrs. Edward Harding' (D,VI,M)
<i>Syringa pekinensis</i> 'Water Tower' (S,I,L)	'Mrs. W. E. Marshall' (S,VII,M)
<i>Syringa x persica</i> (S,IV,M)	'Olivier de Serres' (D,III,M)
<i>Syringa x prestoniae</i> 'Coral' (S,V,L)	'Primrose' (D,VIII,M)
'Donald Wyman' (S,VII,L)	'Sensation' (S,VI,M)
<i>Syringa reticulata</i> (S,I,L)	'Vestale' (S,I,M)
'Ivory Silk' (S,I,L)	'Victor Lemoine' (D,IV,M)
<i>Syringa villosa</i> (S,V,L)	'Violetta' (D,II,M)



### *Syringa vulgaris* 'Lee Jewett Walker'

ONE of the lilac cultivars selected, named and registered by the late Kenneth Berdeen (1907-1987) was 'Lee Jewett Walker' (syn. 'Mrs. Lee Jewett Walker') which he described as "flowers double, coral-colored." The name was registered in 1978; unfortunately the application for registration was not accompanied by a photograph. Name and description of this lilac were published in 1979 in American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta Bulletin 13(4):110. Berdeen reported in 1978 that "a few friends have cuttings from this plant with No. 7-22 identification."

In contrast to Berdeen the late Fr. John L. Fiala, in his 1988 book "Lilacs – the genus *Syringa*," described 'Lee Jewett Walker' as being single, very pale pink (p.100), and the florets in the upper-right photograph on Plate 19 appear to be single. Others who are growing the 'Lee Jewett Walker' lilac have reported that the flowers on their plants are single also.

We must presume that Berdeen described his lilac correctly, and that cuttings distributed by him with the code name "No. 7-22" were the true double 'Lee Jewett Walker'. The single-flowered selection is not 'Lee Jewett Walker' and should not be grown and distributed under that name. If the single-flowered selection is considered to have lasting merit it should be given a cultivar name, and the name should be registered and published.

My sincere thanks to Walter Oakes for pinpointing the problem.



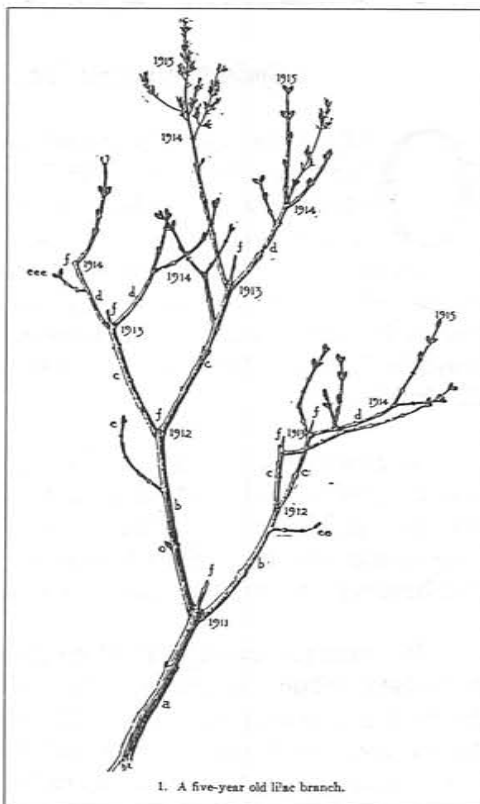
# Pruning Hints

by Robert B. Clark, Ocala, Florida

**P**RUNING is the art of removing some part, or parts, of a plant to improve it according to the gardener's intention. Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell wrote comprehensively on the subject in his "The Pruning Manual" early in this century (I used the 18th edition dated 1916). His principles are valid today. Among the dozen or so reasons he listed for pruning I will focus my

hints on his second one, namely, "to produce larger and better stems, leaves, flowers, or fruits."

But first it is necessary to look closely at the plant — in this instance the common lilac — to see how it branches. I reproduce Bailey's five-year-old branchlet taken during the winter of 1914-15. In the spring of 1911 and also of 1912 the twig bore one cluster of lilac flowers, but in 1913 three twigs bore lilac clusters (indicated by *f*) and also in 1914, the seed capsules persisting. In 1915 ten pairs of buds are shown; however, the prospect of bloom appears to be reduced to one, namely the topmost pair of the central branchlet which is receiving more light and nourishment and appears plumper than all the others. These latter buds are destined to develop as vegetative non-flowering twigs, which year after year will become submerged by overarching foliage.



1. A five-year old lilac branch.

What, then, is the meaning of all this: simply that the strongest twigs with the fattest pair of buds produce lilac blooms. The problem becomes how to maintain vigorous growth. Lilacs and other woody plants pass through several stages of development of which youth and maturity concern us here. The youthful stage is marked by rapid vegetative development: vigor-

ous shoots and robust foliage. This is the period when nitrogen is required. The transition to maturity, known as the carbohydrate phase, comes when the plant sets flower buds. Nitrogen is no longer needed in massive amounts. Phosphorus now becomes important to promote flower (and fruit) development. On the fertilizer sack make sure that the second set of numbers (phosphates) is larger than the first (nitrates).

For the next few years while the lilac is growing and blooming, all is well. But late or soon it arrives at the stage of Bailey's line drawing when the flower clusters are no longer large nor the leaves bright green – in effect excessively twiggy that I call blueberrying. We now come to actual pruning. I shall consider three cases:

1. Our lilac has not become overgrown. Its branches do not tower over our heads. Using Bailey's illustration we can cut back to shoot b (1914) just above the bud marked o, thus stimulating a vegetative bud into strong growth.
2. In this instance our lilac is tall with several canes from one to one and one-half inches thick and rough barked. It will take two or three years by removing two or three canes each year to restore the lilac to quality blooming. Cuts should be made such that stumps six or eight inches high remain. **DO NOT** cut back to ground level lest you destroy adventitious buds needed for rejuvenation.
3. In the case of old overgrown and neglected lilacs you might find it necessary to cut all canes back to six or eight inches. The stumps will soon bear vigorous shoots which in a few years will reward you with plentiful bloom.

## ***When to Prune***

The experienced gardener says when the knife or saw is sharp. I do not recommend it, although I agree about having sharp tools. I am not concerned about removing spent flowers, a procedure intended to forestall seed setting or to show a tidy gardener. Instead I am very much concerned that pruning be done at any time during the dormant season while the structure of the woody plant can be seen unhindered by obstructive foliage. Since flower buds of lilacs are formed during the previous growing season, there is a trade-off. You will be obliged to sacrifice inferior flowers for the prospect of superior blooms a year or two later.

## Letters

*Note: This letter was sent to Walter Oakes last spring. It is included here as an example of the widespread interest in lilacs and as an example of what Walter does for the Society.*

### Thanks

Dear Walter Oakes:

Thank you so much for the literature on lilacs and information for contact-to-identify resources for my biology and environmental science students. I appreciate your concern in listing the resources to share with students.

There is so much I learned from the pamphlets. I never realized there were so many varieties of lilacs to raise. May your spring planting be successful. Your kindness is what makes my job in the classroom an easier one.

Sincerely

Cathy Roger

Brentwood High School  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

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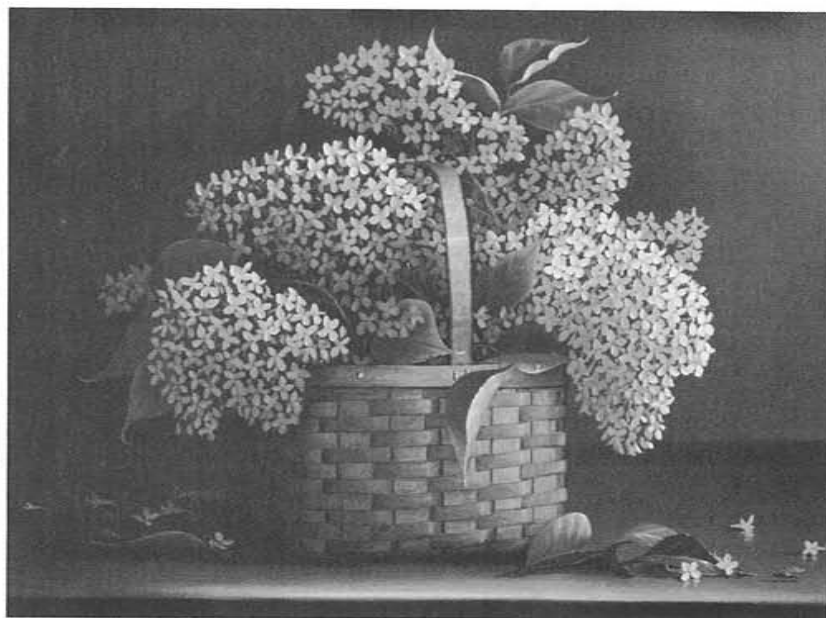
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