

Lilacs

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3
SUMMER 1996



Syringa vulgaris 'Nadezhda'

QUARTERLY JOURNAL

of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

Convention Proceedings

A Publication of
THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY

Copyright 1996 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	\$ 20.00
Sustaining	30.00
Institution/Commercial	35.00
Life	160.00

• *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.

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Owen M. Rogers, Editor, 131 Main Street, Durham, NH 03824

LILACS 1996

PUBLISHED JULY 1996

Cover Story

Front Cover

Syringa vulgaris 'Nadezhda' a Kolesnikov introduction listed Double III-IV. It is one of the latest lilacs selected for distribution (see the Plant Distribution writeup later in this issue.)

Back Cover

Syringa vulgaris 'Blue Delft' introduced by Father Fiala in 1986. It is listed as a Single III. The picture is from Colin Chapman and records the first time that the plant has bloomed in England.

Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for material to go into the next issue of **Lilacs** which will come out in October is **September 8, 1996**.

Your editor would especially like to print letters from members about how their lilacs performed this summer. What problems did you face? How many of them did you solve?

Annual Meeting Journal
1996 ILS Meeting, Poughkeepsie & Hyde Park, New York
by Bradley Bittorf – Novelty, Ohio, U.S.A.

“We all beat with one heart; we all smelled with one nose.”

*— Orville Steward, about the founding of the
International Lilac Society at its 25th meeting, 1996.*

Dateline: Westchester County Airport. 10:30 a.m., May 19th. The afterglow of the 1996 ILS convention is fresh in my mind. The hospitality room seems to have closed just a few hours ago – wait, it *did* just close a few hours ago . . . hmmm.

For those members who say there are no good U.S. roads to challenge a sports car with a stick shift, might I suggest driving NY State 35 while behind schedule? Luckily, my flight was delayed, and ‘Sovetskaya Arkitka’ and I made it! (Perhaps the prayers for a safe return journey helped.)

The themes of this 25th annual ILS meeting were “reflection” and “renewal,” I think. The convention opened on a foggy day in the Hudson River Valley. Oops, I think there’s a New York State Law which says you must say “Scenic” before “Hudson River” – pardon me!

This was my first trip to the Scenic Hudson Valley. No matter what you read about a place it is never quite the same as being there. I was surprised how much of suburbia had reached the Poughkeepsie area. Still, it has more than its share of grand mansions and stately manors.

Arriving at the hotel for the ILS meeting is always Reunion Central. Friends separated by a year or more rejoin with great smiles, hugs, and stories. The experience is one I will always anticipate happily. Orville Steward said it may have been lilacs which brought us together, but it is friendship which keeps us together.

But on to business. The Best Western conference center was located a long walk away from the residence end of the structure. Let the Board Meeting begin! You can read about those results elsewhere.

Friday we awoke to a promising day and gathered for Win Aldrich’s “History of the Hudson Valley”. In fact it was but an overview of the many events which formed the area history. We were impressed with the number of moneyed individuals in a relatively small area, and the impact of the Hudson’s residents and visitors on everything from architecture to land use to park design.

We traveled to the Vanderbilt Mansion – an impressive building on a wonderful site. Not everyone understood the color schemes throughout the house, but we did marvel at the many stately trees which cover the

grounds and make a unique impression. Our group picture opportunity was well received as our photographer needed an assistant to hold the many cameras submitted to him!

The flexibility of the ILS was demonstrated during our annual meeting as we suspended the meeting to have lunch. The meeting resumed later on the bus, using the public address system. Our lunch afforded another (yes, scenic) view of the Hudson from Dinsmore Clubhouse. Those present also received a U.S. Postal Service envelope stamped with a "25th Annual Convention/International Lilac Society" cancellation!

Battenfelt's anemone greenhouse was our next stop – every color except yellow, and delightful. They apologized that the quality was less because it was nearly the end of their season – it must be grand at peak. Leaving Battenfelt's was a lesson in assertive bus driving as those in the rear of the bus shouted ineffective but apparently unnecessary (?) warnings as we backed onto the highway. ("Car! VAN! *TRUCK*!!!")

The whole bus traveled to see Emerson Hyde's lilacs. Considering the frosty weather in the region this season, they were blooming nicely. It seems it is not an ILS trip until we set our eyes upon a flowering lilac bush! It's a good thing deer do not feast on *Syringa* as they do taxus, or we would have been lucky to find even a leafy branch! Garlic mustard was growing everywhere, and someone commented it thrives best where deer disrupt other flora.

On to the FDR site, where we either learned, or were reminded of, a great deal of history. Mr. Roosevelt seemed to carry both a good humor and a cleverness in dealing with allies and enemies. Several of us erred in our decision-making when trying our hand at a commander-in-chief computer simulation of World War II events. Fortunately (though the programming may be biased), FDR got this one right. Those who ventured downstairs and made it past the gift shop saw an Eleanor Roosevelt display wing, too. Given her reputation as a business-minded woman, I was surprised to see the graceful pattern of fine china she had selected for the White House.

From here, the group returned to the hotel, reemerged in fine garments, and was bussed to the Bellefield Mansion. We had purple tablecloths, lilac-colored linen napkins, and bouquets of *Syringa vulgaris* on the tables. What really made this President's Dinner special, however, was the program. Four original members, Robert Clark, William Utley, Orville Steward, and Ellen Steward shared their recollections and reminiscences of the first, and other early meetings. (Walter Oakes sent his regrets at not being able to attend.) Pauline Fiala also contributed her memories of all but the first two meetings.

Remembered too were members of the ILS who no longer dine with us. Their experience and contributions are irreplaceable, and never to be forgotten. We are glad for the chance to learn something more of those who are but names in books for some of us.

Hearing the history of the ILS told so personally was a unique event which will stand out vividly in the memory of those present. It was especially moving for newer ILS members who are now better able to put the historical events in context. We only regret that the plans to capture this on tape didn't succeed. Perhaps we can record something similar in the future. Discussions at table underscored the importance of this moment.

The meal was capped by a most impressive dessert tray with all manner of cheesecake, pie, cake, and torte. There were seconds (dare I say thirds and fourths, too?) available once all had been served. And David Gressley somehow became "Strawberry steward", taking care to ensure all who desired received portions of the remaining fruit from a giant glass bowl. (I guess you just can't get good help these days [ha!]).

Back to the hospitality room for pictures and literature of the 1997 meeting at Mackinac (pronounced Mack-i-naw) Island. And libations and more friendship.

Saturday began with a promising weather forecast and more good presentations. Barbara Ann "Charlie" Murphy from (say it with me, now:) "Scenic Hudson" (yes, that's the name of the organization) talked to us about preservation of the scenic Hudson Valley. The promising weather did not last long as we listened to rain pounding on the roof during her presentation – as least we were inside then! Charlie told us she was worried that an afternoon rally Scenic Hudson planned in opposition to a gneiss mine in the area would be soggy, but apparently all worked out fine.

We were next honored to have Colin Chapman share the exciting lilac work and activities which are occurring in Europe. Colin provided many alluring slides to illustrate. (Colin is among the few people I know who can effectively focus attention on an out-of-focus part of a slide and still draw "oohs" and "ahs" from the audience – but to be fair it was really 'Congo' which captured our attention.)

Colin shared his grafting techniques. He has devised a way to support a scion on privet until the plant can also develop its own roots, at which time the graft becomes superfluous. We North Americans were reminded of the original and new connections lilacs have throughout Europe. Lilacs are making a resurgence in popularity throughout Europe. Opportunities for the ILS are ripe [Opportunities for lilacs are not exclusive to North America! In fact, it's funny to think that way since lilacs are immigrants to America. – bjb]

Now we were on the way to Carey Arboretum facilities. First, the greenhouse, where almost everyone was enamored with one plant or another (especially popular were plants whose leaves retracted when touched, and the scented geraniums). Sabra Gilbert did well to turn us around toward the bus.

Carey Arboretum lilacs were next on our agenda. Laden with moisture from morning rain as they were, their scent did not waft freely. Yet, there was heavy trusses with the many white, violet, blue, lilac, pink, magenta,

and purple florets in which we all delight! Somehow, despite the ILS members heading in every direction at the outset, we all found ourselves collected and at the Dutchess County Farm & Home Center. After lunch, we set up for the auction.

Those of you who have not had the opportunity to take in an ILS Lilac Auction should know that the auction is many things. It is a serious opportunity to acquire hard-to-find cultivars, and a panoply of lilac appurtenances. It is a fund-raiser for ILS. It is an opportunity for the ILS to educate people about lilacs, and to plant seeds of interest in those who attend. But it is also entertainment!

This year was no exception, as people were persuaded to bid and the result was sometimes a grove of new acquisitions on the table before them. Orville Steward would sometimes accidentally bid against Ellen Steward (or was it the other way around?). But my favorite moment was when John Carvill, while promoting a lilac up for auction, passed it beneath Orville's nose and implored, "Smell the color!"

The group and its greenery got back on the bus, where apples and more cookies were distributed (many had been eaten on the bus Friday after lunch). We returned to the Best Western for the Awards Dinner.

The Awards Dinner allowed many more people to visit with one another, and had several special highlights. Bill Utley recounted a time when Eleanor Roosevelt had filled in for Lana Turner in a performance "a few years back" and asked "if she'd do" — a wonderful story to highlight our visit to the Roosevelt's home area.

A special 25th Anniversary cake was produced for this occasion. You can see it below, and Konrad Kirchner distributed European candies to all present. We were very happy he could join us from Germany. Of course, there were the awards, too — these are detailed elsewhere in this issue. Many of us signed the Fiala book destined for the Descanso Gardens library, too.

The last night's hospitality suite included a showing of Mackinac Island video tape from last year's Lilac Festival. The 1997 meeting there will be rich in history, and unique in the way lilacs comprise the local identity. I hope to see you in the ILS Central Region June 13-15, 1997!



Photo by Brad Bittorf

A Brief History of the International Lilac Society

By Robert B. Clark, Historian to the Society

On a mild and sunny Saturday of mid-May 1971, fifteen lilac lovers gathered at the Bayard Cutting Arboretum, Great River, New York. Their mission was to see if a viable organization devoted to lilacs could be formed. After much discussion the group, hailing from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Nebraska, agreed that, indeed, a society devoted to lilacs was needed. Three objectives were proposed: (1) to study lilacs (*Syringa*) in all its aspects (horticultural, botanical, cultural, etc.), (2) to communicate the lilac's virtues in the various communities (horticultural, scientific, commercial and the public at large), and (3) to encourage the planting of lilacs in home grounds, public parks, and arboretums, wherever climate and growing conditions permit.

Lilacs Considered:

The lilac which the Society founders were concerned with is the common lilac of the Balkan peninsula, *Syringa vulgaris* of Linnaeus. Under cultivation it is familiarly known as the French hybrid lilac following its development by the Lemoines during the past century. But the common lilac is merely a member of five divisions of the genus *Syringa* with some eighteen species currently recognized botanically. Horticulturally, lilacs are grouped according to blooming season as (1) early hybrids (*S. ×hyacinthiflora* cultivars), (2) early mid-season (*S. vulgaris* cultivars), (3) late mid-season (little-leaved lilacs), (4) late lilacs (*S. villosa* group) and tree lilacs (*S. reticulata*). The full season, depending upon local weather conditions, extends from late April or early May to late June or early July.

Scientific Aspect:

Lilac study depends upon experience and experiment. For many centuries man has known the lilac. Even to this day, however, our knowledge of lilacs is quite meager. Painstaking investigation is much needed. The very latest study recently published in *Novon* 5:329-333, 1995, is a paper by Peter S. Green and M.C. Chang entitled "**Some Taxonomic Changes in *Syringa* (Oleaceae)**" which includes a revision of the Series *Pubescentes*.

In a nutshell *S.S. Julianae*, *microphylla*, *patula* and *potaninii* have been reduced in status to subspecies of *S. pubescens*, while cv. 'Palabin' becomes a cultivar of *S. Meyer*. Similarly *S. reflexa* becomes a subspecies of *S. Komarowii*. Other status changes affect *S. oblata*, subspecies *dilatata*, and *S. reticulata* subspecies *amurensis* and *pekinensis*. The total number of botanical species is eighteen, with six subspecies plus six interspecific hybrids. As *Syringa* becomes better known these numbers inevitably change.

In the past two and one-half decades the techniques of propagation has changed from grafting and cuttings to micropropagation. This method cuts down the reproduction time as well as increasing production quantity,

thus making the nursery plants more affordable. Biological fingerprinting, a technique for certainty of identification, is now available, although expensive. It replaces expert opinion for assumed identification of lilacs.

Also, recently, a mycoplasma disease was detected by Dr. Craig Hibben affecting, particularly, the late lilacs.

Communication:

The lilac story is an ongoing process for lilac lovers. Communication is, therefore, a second objective of the Society, which includes verbal and letter writing by individual members to formal publication of authentic information in newspapers and gardening magazines. To fulfill this objective the Society, from its inception, has published newsletters and bulletins, as well as supported other publication ventures, to extend the literature of lilacs both popular and scientific. The quarterly journal **Lilacs** is in its twenty-fifth volume. The Society also assisted financially in the publication of Dr. Rogers' Tentative International Register of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*, 1976, and the Upton Scrapbooks in two volumes. 1980 and 1986.

During the past twenty-five years Society members have contributed articles about lilacs in magazines as well as being themselves the subject of newspaper articles. Eliot Tozer, especially, deserves recognition for promoting lilacs in the pages of *Yankee Magazine* among other horticultural and regional publications.

Lilac Collections:

One stimulant in the founding of this Society was the death of Dr. John Rankin of Elyria, Ohio, and the demise of his remarkable lilac and rose garden. Lilac gardens are valuable community as well as family assets. Their growth and preservation are important to horticulture and culture generally. Twenty-five years ago, in North America, there were about twenty-five noteworthy lilac collections. Since 1972, another ten lilac collections have been established. Whether or not the Society can claim credit for this increase in number of new lilac collections is inconsequential. The fact is, that without substantial or institutional support, attrition proceeds. Today, five or six collections are tottering following the death of their founder. Strong support by local and regional civic groups can save some of these lilac collections.

Lilac Celebrities:

Plantpersons, be they explorers, botanists, horticulturists or breeders, who have made noteworthy contributions to our knowledge of lilacs, I hereby nominate to the Lilac Hall of Fame (see list). Other lilac workers have made notable contributions and their work has been recognized in the pages of **Lilacs** Quarterly Journal. The lilac is a fascinating plant worthy of the gardener's attention.

Table I. Clark's Proposed Lilac Hall of Fame

- Busheq [Osier Ghisdin] Count de,**
introduced common lilac to Vienna, 1563.
- Linnaeus [Karl von Linnè],** Swedish naturalist,
delimited the genus *Syringa*, 1753.
- Lemoine [Pierre Louis] Victor,** French hybridizer,
developed the double flowering Lilac, 1875.
- Sargent, Charles Sprague,** American botanist,
sponsored dendrologic explorations to eastern Asia.
- Dunbar, John,** American horticulturist,
raised seedlings of French hybrid lilacs.
- Lemoine, Emile,** son of Victor,
furthered development of the French hybrid lilacs.
- Klager, Hulda Thiel,** American amateur,
hybridized French hybrid lilacs.
- McKelvey, Susan Delano,** American amateur,
published a lilac monograph, 1928.
- Havemeyer, Theodore A.,** American amateur,
raised French hybrid single-flowered lilacs
- Rehder, Alfred,** American taxonomist,
published *Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs*, 1927, 1940.
- Wilson, Ernest Henry,** British plant explorer,
introduced eastern Asiatic plants to the West.
- Schneider, Camillo K.,** Taxonomist,
described several late lilacs.
- Wister, John Caspar,** American horticulturist,
compiled check lists of lilac cultivars.
- Clarke, Walter Bosworth,** American breeder,
bred early hybrid lilacs for California.
- Preston, Isabella,** Canadian breeder,
bred late lilacs.
- Maarse, Dirk Eveleens,** Dutch nurseryman,
forced French hybrid lilacs for florist trade.
- Skinner, Frank,** Canadian breeder,
bred early hybrid lilacs for Great Plains.
- Rankin, John,** American amateur,
grew French hybrid seedlings.
- Kolesnikov, Leonid Alekseevitch,** Russian breeder,
bred French hybrid lilacs.
- Kaspow-Lipski, Mikolaj,** Polish hybridizer,
bred French hybrid lilacs.
- Bugala, Wladyslaw,** Polish hybridizer,
bred late lilacs
- Fenicchia, Richard A.,** American plantsman,
bred the Rochester group of lilacs.
- Fiala, Fr. John L.,** American hybridizer,
bred lilacs of all categories
- Egolf, Donald, R.,** American hybridizer,
bred early hybrid lilacs.

Editor's Note

The following short note from Bob Clark arrived just before this issue went to press, so we've tucked it in after Bob's longer article.

Spring 1996 at Birchwood

Like the Scotsman and his summer which occurred on a Wednesday, winter became summer one day at the end of May this springtime in central New Hampshire. At dawn one morning it was 32°F, the next day it was in the 80s. No developing lilac buds were injured. The blooming season was delayed into the second week of June for the Frency hybrids. Outstanding this year were 'Anabel', 'Dr. Chadwick', 'Ogni Donbassi', and 'Firmament'. Companion plants with good bloom were *Rhododendron carolinianum*, *Sorbus alnifolia*, and *Styrax Obassi*. Earlier were *Magnolia kobus*, *Forsythia ovata* and *Abeliophyllum disticham*. Each springtime is different climatically and phenologically. — R.B.C.

Letter

May 16, 1996

To the Officers and Board of Directors of ILS:

At the close of the Annual Meeting of 1985 I did voluntarily accept the position of Treasurer for the Society (from the hands of a faithful but tearful person).

Today, having served in this capacity for eleven years, I do hereby wish to voluntarily resign this position. My reasoning I consider personally justifiable in that I'm presently in my nineteenth year of retirement, and while I'm still able to do a fair share of travelling, I wish to pursue that effort.

The financial status of ILS is, in my opinion, one of solvency with a reasonable proportion of total assets being committed to SPECIAL ACCOUNTS (restricted use), with a workable program in place which should continue to enhance that goal with perhaps one or two adjustments.

The books etc. are in (balance) as of the audit of this date, with up to date book entries in place and ready to be passed into the hands of a newly appointed candidate within the ensuing 30-days (June 16, 1996).

Sincerely,
Walter E. Eickhorst

Treasurer

Treasurer's Report - International Lilac Society, Inc.

May 1996

Bank Statement (Acct. #009134371) Balance 3/31/96	
HARRIS BANK NAPERVILLE, Naperville, IL	\$ 8,066.38
Outstanding Checks:	
#1251 \$18.10 #1253 \$306.18	
#1252 \$69.25 #1254 \$112.71	- 506.24
Adjusted Checking Account Balance 3/31/96	7,560.14
EDWARD JONES (Acct. #212-03072-1-6)= CD	38,000.00
Total funds available 4/1/96	\$45,560.14
Funds being held in SPECIAL ACCOUNTS 4/1/96	31,149.66
TOTAL FUNDS available in GENERAL ACCOUNT 4/1/96	\$14,410.48

Funds being held in SPECIAL ACCOUNTS - 4/1/96	
LIFE MEMBERS/ENDOWMENT FUND - brought fwd. 4/1/95	\$ 12,903.22
L.M. 4/1/95 = 72 + 10 = 82 3/31/96 + \$1,500.00	
Timber Press (Lilac Royalties) 5/15/95	709.26
Miscellaneous Contributions 3/31/96	195.00
Credit 4/1/96 +\$2,404.26	2,404.26
	<u>\$15,307.48</u>

Plant Propagation Fund (Laurene Wishart)	
4/1/95 = \$711.00 + int. \$39.10	750.10
Education & Research 4/1/95 = \$3,774.25 + int. \$207.58	3,981.83
John Wister Memorial Fund (?) 4/1/95 = \$534.35 + int. \$29.39	563.74
PUBLICATIONS (other than Journal) 4/1/95 = \$317.94 + int. \$26.86	488.44
C.C. Clark Memorial Fund	
(Interest deferred to Color Photo Separation Fund)	5,000.00
Arch McKean (Contribution) (same as above)	5,000.00

Colored Photo (JOURNAL) Separation Fund	
Brought Forward 4/1/95	\$213.67
Interest Credit 3/31/96	550.00
Funds Available 4/31/96	<u>\$763.67</u>

Debits 3/1/95 thru 3/31/96	
Vol. 24 No. 2	\$181.30
Vol. 24 No. 3	176.40
Vol. 24 No. 4	176.40
Vol. 25 No. 1	171.50
	<u>\$705.60</u>

	705.60	
Balance in fund 3/31/96	\$ 58.07	58.07
Total Funds being held in SPECIAL ACCOUNTS 3/31/96		\$31,149.66
Total Funds in GENERAL ACCOUNT 3/31/96		14,410.48
TOTAL FUNDS available 3/31/96		\$45,560.14

Editor's Report

by Dr. Owen M. Rogers

There have been four issues (Vol. 24, Nos. 3 and 4; Vol. 25, Nos. 1 and 2) of *Lilacs* published since the last report to the Board. They have been about 28 pages long and have included three advertisements at rates that allow full recovery of page costs.

The bulletin *Lilacs: Plants of History – Plants for Tomorrow* has been printed and distributed to members. One of the prime uses of the bulletin will be to help the Regional Vice Presidents recruit new members. Mr. John Carvill will be responsible for getting copies to the regions.

As Editor I owe thanks to many people who have submitted articles and pictures for use in *Lilacs*. The Journal is only as good as members make it. The column on "Tips for Beginners" has been well received, although the "Swap Column" could use some more contributions.

The new deadline dates (three weeks before publication date) have done much to ensure the prompt delivery of copies to members. Each issue will include the deadline date for the next issue, but members should feel free to send letters, notes, articles or other publishable material at any time. Remember, if you write to me, you can expect to see at least an adaptation in print.

Requests for Board Action:

Establish a full distribution plan for *Lilacs: Plants of History – Plants for Tomorrow* including who should receive free copies and who should pay the suggested \$2.00 cost at a straight sale price.

New England Regional News

by Peter S. Ely, Regional Vice President

The large New England region has many members. I have been considering ways to communicate information and news within our region. It is planned to have a NEWSLETTER. Any ideas for a name or logo? Please send any "lilac news", membership news, questions or problems with lilacs, etc. for inclusion in the newsletter. Should you like to give a talk or slide presentation to a local group let me know. Hoping to hear from you. Contact:

Peter S. Ely, Regional Vice President
57 Squantuck Road
Seymour, CT 06483
1-203-888-2628

Eastern Canada Report

By Frank Moro, Regional Vice President

During the period from June 1995 to April 1996, I have created lots of activity in the province of Quebec and Eastern Ontario.

With three local schools I have had guided visits to the nursery to introduce some 1200 students to lilacs. Tours of the greenhouse and container fields were mixed with a sugaring off lunch. Children had a chance to see lilacs in different stages of production and even pot their own rooted cutting in a 4" pot and take them home.

Lilacs were also donated to these schools along with their parish church which is situated beside the schools.

Lilac conferences were given at two horticultural shows in the fall of 1995. These were wholesale shows and the reaction has been phenomenal. Many cities have now contacted me to supply photos of new cultivars that were never heard of before.

Select Nursery has also donated to the Highland Botanic Park and R.B.G. (Royal Botanical Gardens) some cultivars which were requested. The cities of Morrisburg and Cornwall, Ontario as well as Quebec City have lilac park projects on route and we are working on plans to decide varieties to be planted.

South Central Regional Report

By LD Allison

We have had the driest fall and winter in Oklahoma for the last fifty years.

I have been writing personal letters to the regional members because we have so few.

The project in Claremore that the Lilac Society and Reva have been helping with is slow but still on track. We plan to plant forty-five into prepared beds in Will Rogers Park in a couple of weeks. It appears we lost two plants this winter from the lilacs we received from Max Peterson.

I'll miss seeing all my friends at the conference. Have a good time.

Membership Committee Report

by Dave Gressley, Membership Secretary

As of 15 May 1996, the International Lilac Society increased to 452 memberships; representing an increase of approximately 25 memberships since the publication of *Country Woman's* magazine article featuring Reva Ballreich's lilac collection. Greater interest has stirred with International Lilac Society with two articles in North America listing ILS in *Garden Design* magazine and *Home Garden* magazine this growing season.

The 452 memberships in International Lilac Society derive from 369 single, family, sustaining, commercial and institutional memberships, 67 lifetime memberships, 11 complimentary memberships and 5 honorary memberships.

Geographically, International Lilac Society is represented with 374 memberships in the United States, 42 memberships in Canada, 28 memberships in Europe, and 7 memberships in Asia.

Report From The Plains District

by Max Peterson

Greetings from the Plains District. It has been a long, dry winter and it seems that much damage has occurred to shrubbery in our area. The *Vulgaris* and *Hyacinthifloras* weathered the winter very well, however, the late blooming appear to have suffered some damage. Low humidity and no snow was the culprit.

The Omaha Botanical Garden is proceeding very slowly. Water mains and driveways are being installed. Hoyt Lampert, who is on the committee, has about 200 plus lilacs ready to be planted into the area when the time is right. Also, the national headquarters of the National Arbor Day Foundation, headquartered at the Arbor Lodge in Nebraska City, Nebraska has now expanded their landscaping and we have received a request for lilacs to start a new collection there. Being a national organization with connections all over the United States, this will be an excellent place for lilac recognition. Most of the lilacs will probably come from my collection, but we will be calling on other collections to help us out with some of the newer varieties.

The University of Nebraska's West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, Nebraska will introduce a new dwarf lilac to the public next year. Briggs Nursery of Olympia, Washington has the plant in tissue culture and will be the instrument of introduction. A very unusual plant, it is the result of Nuclear irradiated seed. The first generation plants showed no irregularities, however, the seed gathered from these plants were planted and in the second generation all kinds of irregularities appeared. Mostly dwarfs and compact type plants. 'Prairie Petite' is a selection of this second generation plants. Glenn Vihmeyer, now deceased, and Roger Uhling, now deceased, raised and nurtured the plants. A contemporary horticulturist,

Dr. Dale Lindgren now has the duty to introduce and release the plant to the public. 'Prairie Petite', a vulgaris, over time may grow three feet tall and three feet wide. It is slow growing and symmetrical with a natural dense mound shape. Its flowers are smaller and not as numerous as those found on more commonly known lilacs, but its dwarf habit is appealing for use in home and commercial landscapes. Dr. Lindgren expects that 'Prairie Petite' will serve as germplasm for other lilac breeding programs, as it appears the dwarfing tendency is carried from the plant to its progeny.

Say hello to everybody for us and we are planning on Mackinac Island next year.

1996 Central Region Report

by Bradley Bittorf

Summary

Central Region ILS members are excited about hosting the 1997 Convention and Annual Meeting, and have provided a variety of challenging and interesting questions through the year. Members are hoping their lilacs will handle the difficult winter.

Central Region members received a newsletter this January, and responded very supportively to it. Many included introductions or news from their home area. And questions!

Correspondence

Correspondence in the form of mail, phone calls, and e-mail was received from eleven Central Region members.

Barbara Doane, Curt Hanson (Crintonic Gardens), Walter Eickhorst, M. Conrad White, William Horman, Lauri Edwards (Boerner Botanical Gardens), Bonnie Barnes, Gloria Schreiber, Tim Leeper, Deb Barber, David Gressley (The Holden Arboretum).

All correspondence was answered. The goal was to answer promptly but some sat several weeks to a month before information was collected to enable a proper response.

Central Region members also showed a strong response to the membership renewal letter sent last fall. We are always pleased to have membership renewals. The Central Region currently boasts of some 74 individual and institutional members, up from last summer's census.

Members are reminded to send address change notification of the ILS district or national offices. We unfortunately lost touch with one life member who provided no forwarding address, despite our best attempts to trace her through telephone listings and the mail.

News and Questions

The highlights of some of our reports from members are now included. Many names are withheld since permission was not granted to disclose the

contents individually. However, I will connect responses and suggestions to inquiries.

Several ILS members are starting nurseries and wish to specialize in lilacs. One wishes to provide antique lilacs and is thus trying to find sources for, and information about, heirloom and antique lilacs. We are trying to provide a copy of the *Tentative Register* . . . and *Corrigenda* as starting points but we also seek older lilac references and articles such as those by McKelvey, Wister, and others.

Another member wishes to know those lilacs that may best endure as cut flowers. Some instructions for preservation of cut lilacs have been provided. Through some of our European friends we have been able to provide some names of cultivars which are used in the Belgian and Netherlands "forceries" for Christmas-time flowers. [It remains my hope to visit these in season or even have an ILS meeting there – bjb] But there certainly may be other varieties which are suited to the challenge which others can pass along.

Another correspondent enjoys dark purple lilacs which are resistant to powdery mildew. Of course we made our suggestions, but which varieties would you suggest?

Walter Eickhorst (how can Walter remain nameless!?) was kind enough to mention that the lilac display at the Morton Arboretum has experienced some difficulties which require some attention. He suggested there may be some good lilacs at Lombard where they are reportedly updating the collection. He will try to investigate further and let us know the progress there.

Another institutional member which may be making updates to its lilac collection is Boerner Botanical Gardens in Hales Corners (Milwaukee), Wisconsin. From Boerner came a delightful letter of introduction from a new staff member discussing Boerner's plans to improve the Trial Garden including their lilacs, both through increased maintenance and the possible addition of new varieties. I believe that we in the ILS can look forward to a strong association with Boerner if we extend offers of resources to them, just as we do to all our institutional members.

More news from institutional members is that The Holden Arboretum conducted significant pruning of some of the older lilac beds last season. Although the displays may be temporarily smaller, we can look forward to the renewed vigor of the affected displays in the coming seasons. Can you say, "aggressive rejuvenation"?

Yet another member of ILS is also a member of the Garden Writers Association of America and writes about gardening for a newspaper – lilacs are just one of the plants of interest for this member.

Along with a wonderful note of encouragement – on lilac stationery – I received an invitation to visit one member's garden. (In fact, I seem to have standing invitations to visit some half-dozen or more members! Lilac enthusiasts are a welcoming people indeed!)

Our region had exceptional cold and snow through the winter. Many places set snowfall records including northern Michigan and my own home of northeast Ohio, while parts of Wisconsin and Illinois set low temperature extreme records. Several members report that "disappearance" of their lilacs beneath mountains of snow. We hope the lilacs are reemerging now as the snow melts. However, many plants were bent or broken by the weight of the snow. Members are asking what measures they might take to assist their lilacs in the recovery from the vicissitudes of the winter.

A personal report is that the three-inch 'Nadezdha' twig acquired at the ILS 1994 New Hampshire plant auction is doing marvelously, having more than doubled in size and promise of its viability, despite its tiny start.

1997 Convention and Annual Meeting Much Anticipated

The 1997 ILS Convention and Annual Meeting at Mackinac Island has already generated much interest within the Central Region. Members are already contributing ideas and trying to make tentative vacation plans for this time. It is great to see the progress that has already been made regarding arrangements and events. It appears we will spend all the time on the island and have plenty of things to do and see. Speakers are already secured! Newcomers to the area will be impressed by the organization and work that already go into the Mackinac Island Lilac Festival. Some of us will be visiting this year's festival as a preview of next year, and so we can be effective hosts. We are happy to be hosting the 1997 meeting and look forward to seeing many of you there! Islanders promise a giant auction with perhaps 1000 walk-ins.

Incidentally, some of our ILS friends on Mackinac Island would like to know how to best grow container lilacs for outdoor porches and such. Which varieties and techniques would be best? David Gressley made the comment "Bonsai Lilacs" when told of this; indeed the bonsai approach may work well.

Plans for the Region

Another Central Region Newsletter will go out to members in mid or late summer. The next newsletter will discuss something of the ILS bylaws and also will cover news and perhaps lilac events.

Brad will attempt to visit a number of sites this season, and gauge needs and interest in the region. The region has also hatched an idea for the launch of ILS on the Internet computer network. More information about that is available in a separate proposal.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks for David Gressley for his patience in helping me during the transition of the office.

Thanks to Bonnie Barnes for her ideas and assistance in planning the 1997 meeting. Thanks particularly to Tim Leeper, William Horman, and the Mackinac Island Chamber of Commerce for the work that is well underway in arranging the 1997 ILS meeting.

WANTED: Convention Memorabilia

The Board of Directors has asked that the International Lilac Society start to collect momentos and reminders of the past twenty-five conventions. We are suggesting that if anyone has photos of members, video tapes, slides, tape recordings or meetings, papers, information, etc. we would like to receive them and offer them for appropriate displays or presentation at future conventions. It is felt that this would be a project that not only would be interesting, but a documentation of the history of ILS, its members and its work. It will also show the fun times we have!

Photos with people in them, as well as people and lilacs together, should be most interesting – rather than just a single lilac. Pictures of lilac groves and of the meetings we have had, would be interesting as well. Whatever you feel would be a reminder of our history will be appreciated. Please mark and identify each item. Contact or send materials to:

Peter S. Ely, Chairperson, 57 Squantuck Road, Seymour, CT 06483
1-203-888-2628 – at your earliest convenience. Thank You.

Letter

May 3, 1996

Reva Ballreich
P.O. Box 1804
Idyllwild, CA 92549

Dear Reva,

Yes, spring has arrived after a long, long winter! The plants are out of dormancy and we are beginning to see the colors in the 'Anabel' buds. I am sure that you are looking forward to your lilacs showing their colors, especially after your weather problems last year.

As I had previously mentioned, our nursery will be experiencing a hectic spring not only because of the usual spring sales, but also because of a road taking part of the property. The groundbreaking for the new road is May 16th. Unfortunately, several hundred trees will be lost to this project, but we need to remain positive and move ahead with the business of selling and educating regarding plant material.

I regret that I will not be able to attend the board meeting and the convention. I find it disconcerting that I cannot give the board position the time that it deserves this spring, but I need to tend to business at the nursery.

As I have proceeded through this year, I have kept as my goal to continue to educate people about lilacs and to increase the awareness of the beauty of the lilac. The lilac has certainly received attention in national magazines this spring. At this time, I am aware of articles in *Midwest Living*, *Garden Design*,

Home Gardening, Martha Stewart Living, and Organic Flower Gardening. We are proud that some of the photography for the *Garden Design* and *Home Gardening* articles was done at our nursery. I also wrote an article for the *Iowa Horticulturist*. Enclosed are copies of these articles if you have not had an opportunity to read them. Already, I have had calls from two more national publications, *Family Circle* and *Midwest Living*, for articles next spring. I may be able to guide them your way for comments about ILS and lilacs.

The public has been seeking information on lilacs both over the phone and through classes. I have spoken to six groups this spring – a record!

I am anxious to get to the Reiman Gardens at Iowa State University to see how the lilacs made it through this tough winter. We tree-spaded some large shrubs into the gardens last fall. We are planning to add to our contribution this summer so that there will be an interesting fragrance garden complete with lilacs and companion plants.

This is an update on what is happening in my lilac world. I know that you are always incredibly busy in your lilac world and I always enjoy hearing your latest news. Thank you for offering your time to serve as President of ILS and I wish you all the best at convention. The agenda sounds wonderful and I will be thinking of all of you.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Rennebohm

Heard Gardens, Ltd.

5355 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, Iowa 50131

1-515-276-4533



*Vanderbilt Mansion,
Hudson River Side
1996 ILS Convention
May 17, 1996*

Research Proposed

Selection of Dwarf Lilacs with Low Winter Chill for Warmer Climates

Principal Investigator:

J.G. Waines, Director, Botanic Gardens and Professor of Genetics
University of California, Riverside, Botanic Gardens
Riverside, CA 92521-0124

Objectives:

- Identify desirable parents
- Hybridize among desirable parents
- Germinate seeds
- Test seedlings over several years for low winter chill requirement and vegetative and flower characters.
- Arrange for release of dwarf germplasm with low winter chill requirement

Procedures:

Dwarf lilacs are desirable for today's small-sized gardens. The work of Dr. L.C. Erickson over the past twenty years has identified several desirable lilac cultivars with low winter chill requirement that are well adapted to Southern California conditions. These cultivars have mostly light-colored flowers, although there is one good dark-colored line. They are medium-to-tall bushes in habit. Light \times dark colored flowers lines will be crossed and seedlings selected with dwarf growth habit that have good flower characteristics, and a range of flower colors and bloom time from early March to late April. Hybrid seed will be germinated and seedlings grown for several years in the nursery to observe and measure growth rate and later flower characteristics and bloom time.

Desirable selections will be vegetatively propagated for distribution to lilac enthusiasts.

Hybridization Procedures in Riverside Conditions:

This crossing experiment will determine the need for emasculation and bagging of flowers under Riverside conditions.

1. Remove stamens before they open and bag these flowers.
2. Remove stamens but leave flowers unbagged.

On emasculated flowers:

3. Cross pollinate and bag.
4. Cross pollinate and leave unbagged.

Costs:

Although this project will cost several thousand dollars spread over several years, we are looking for an initial donation of about \$1,000.00 towards the cost of the project. The Botanic Gardens will contribute a matching amount from unrestricted funds toward this project.

Subsequent Note:

The Board voted \$1,000.00 for support this research project.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the International Lilac Society is celebrating its Twenty-fifth Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, many dedicated people work and share their knowledge and experience unselfishly with lilac lovers all over the world for the continuation of lilacs; and

WHEREAS, Descanso Gardens strives to rejuvenate its historic lilac grove of Descanso hybrids and add new varieties; and

WHEREAS, the friends and volunteers have successfully proven, lilacs do indeed grow and flourish in Southern California.

WE, the members of the Descanso Gardens Guild sincerely extend our warmest wishes and congratulations to the International Lilac Society and wish much success in the next quarter century.

La Canada Flintridge, California

Sue Beatty

President and Chairman of the Board

Plant Distribution Committee Report

It was decided at the 1996 ILS convention in Poughkeepsie, New York, that a second lilac should be made available to members through the distribution. The second lilac will be one available on the market but will be released at an interesting price. It has also been decided through experience, with the U.S. Postal Service, to revise the shipping costs. The cost will be lowered to \$4.00 for the first two 4-inch pots and \$1.50 for any extra 4-inch pots. One gallon material will be charged at \$3.00 per plant. These are U.S. prices. All Canadian charges will not be changed.

The newest introduction from the distribution committee is *Syringa* 'Josée'TM.

It is a dwarf cultivar much like *S. meyeri* 'Palibin'. It is an S-3 and flowers appear around June 10th. Florets continue to flower sporadically throughout the summer. In 1995 the last flowers appeared on October 22 at our nursery. It is a cross of *S. patula* × *S. microphylla* × *S. meyeri*. It was named in 1974 by G. Morel and has not even reached garden centers yet. Limit is two lilacs per person. These are available in 4-inch pots as of September 1996. The U.S. price is \$5.00 and the Canadian price is \$7.00 each.

The second feature is *Syringa vulgaris* 'Nadezhda'. 'Nadezhda' in English means "hope".

It is a Kolesnikov introduction of 19653 and is a D-3. It is one of the best blue shaded lilacs with very large panicles. Purple buds open to light blue double florets.

One gallon material is available in September 1996. It will be mailed at the same time as *Syringa* 'Josée'TM.

The U.S. price will be \$6.00 and the Canadian price will be \$8.50.

Limit will be three plants per customer. Plants will be from 12 to 15 inches in height.

Awards — May 1996

International Lilac Society
AWARD OF MERIT

is presented to

Emerson Hyde
for his lilac garden
which he makes available for public enjoyment.

International Lilac Society
AWARD OF MERIT

is presented to

Scenic Hudson, Inc.
for its maintenance of quality environment
in the Hudson Valley.

International Lilac Society
AWARD OF MERIT

is presented to

Stephanie D. Mallozzi
for her contribution to the success of the
Society's Twenty-fifth Anniversary in the Hudson Valley.

International Lilac Society
PRESIDENT'S AWARD

is presented to

Robert & Sabra Gilbert
Pie In The Sky

For their many services to the Society and
for being hosts of its Silver Anniversary in the Hudson Valley.

Awards — May 1996

International Lilac Society
PRESIDENT'S AWARD

is presented to

Colin Chapman

Norman Farm, Wyverstone, Suffolk, England
for his service to the Society by promoting the lilac
in Great Britain and in Europe.

International Lilac Society
**DISTINGUISHED RECOGNITION
AWARD**

is presented to

Winthrop Aldrich

For his enthusiastic sharing with the Society of his
penetrating studies in the history of the Hudson Valley.

International Lilac Society
ARCH McKEAN AWARD

is presented to

John Carvill

Executive Vice President

For his service to the Society,
and for promoting the lilac among the public.

International Lilac Society

DESK PEN

presented to

Founding Members of the International Lilac Society

Walter Oakes
Orville Steward

Robert Clark
William Utley

Pictures from the 1996 Convention



PHOTO CREDIT - BRAD BITTORF

Robert Hoepfl (l) and Reva Ballreich (r) at the President's Dinner.



PHOTO CREDIT - BRAD BITTORF

Colin Chapman receiving an award from Pauline Fiala (r) at the Awards Dinner.



PHOTO CREDIT
BRAD BITTORF

*William Utley
examines his
award.*



PHOTO CREDIT - BRAD BITTORF

Hosts Robert and Sabra Gilbert receiving their award from Pauline Fiala.



PHOTO CREDIT - BRAD BITTORF

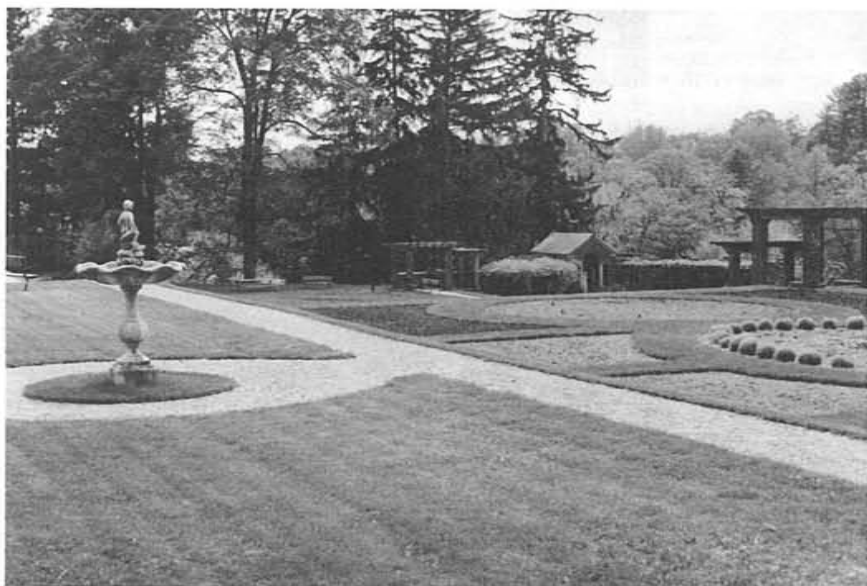
Konrad Kirchner of Germany with Peter Ely

1997 Convention

Now that the 1996 convention is over and reported in this issue, it is time to start planning for the 1997 Convention. It will be held on Mackinac Island in Michigan. There will be ILS members visiting the island's Lilac Festival this year so there will be much more information as the year progresses. As a teaser and an aid to help with your transportation plans, we have included the following note from Dr. Len Trankina, the Executive Director of the Mackinac Island Chamber of Commerce. If you need to reach him his address is P.O. Box 451, Mackinac Island, MI 49757.

In the way of international travel and looking ahead to 1997, I would suggest they contact United or Northwest, which both service Pellston, Michigan. That is our major airport within a 25 minute airport limo type service to Mackinaw City, where they would board the ferry to the island. We on the island have been encouraging more air service to Pellston from both these lines and they have been responding very well. Just recently we were given new direct flights from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Pellston and I expect there will be even more expansion between now and next year.

In any event, we are connected easiest from Detroit or Chicago if you are traveling internationally and I am sure a travel agent could best piece the trip together. I'm not sure if this will answer their questions and if not, please give me another call when you receive this and let's see what will be the best way to proceed.



Formal Gardens at Vanderbilt Mansion, 1996 ILS Meeting - May 17, 1996.

European Newsletter

by Colin Chapman

By the time you read this the convention will be over and you will have heard some of this so I'll keep it short of "News".

One very exciting development, however, must be mentioned. I have received from Peter Green at Kew an offprint of the article published in *Novon* (5, 1995), by Peter and Dr. Meichen Chang concerning taxonomic changes in the Genus *Syringa* L. Peter also sent me a courtesy

copy of an article on this matter written for publication in *Lilacs*. Some relabelling is going to be necessary in the collection I see!

I have received from Kew three lilacs which I do not believe exist in collections in North America. All three plants are too small for propagating to be taken safely, but I should be able to transfer some scions next winter. The first two are single lilacs of Mikolaj Karpow-Lipsky and they were obtained from the Botanical Garden in Warsaw. Neither one has flowered to date. They are:

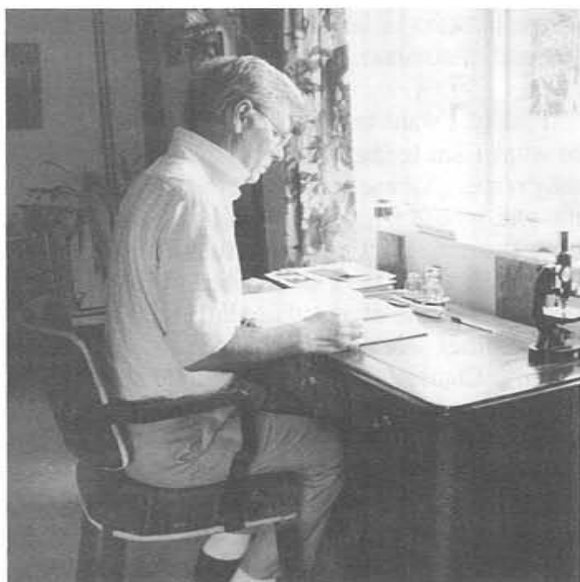
Syringa vulgaris 'Chmurka'

Syringa vulgaris 'Kardynal'

The third one is a mystery plant for which, apparently, there are no records. I have written to Peter Green to ask if he can throw any light on what is a very beautiful lilac with small semi-double florets of what I could only describe at the time as a powder-blue. (I did not have my RHS Color Chart when last it flowered).

It is called *Syringa vulgaris* forma *morel*. I will send in photographs and proper descriptions when each one flowers.

I must apologize to all European members whom I have neglected recently. We have had a vile winter by our normal standards and the worst of the weather coincided with essential building repairs to the house. My desk



The European Newsdesk

and pending correspondence were covered by dust sheets for a month and during our worst blizzard one wall of the house had been partially removed and we were protected only by a plastic sheet. I hope to catch up with most of the backlog of letters but there are so many that it is not likely before the end of summer.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to two people who have contributed most to what I am today. The first is Charles Holetich whose professionalism I fully respect, whose knowledge I admire, whose generosity has overwhelmed me and whose friendship I value above the price of rubies. It was chaos from the very start and we actually missed our first meeting although we were both at the very same place at the very same time. Whilst I sat on a seat on one side of a wall at Highland Park, Charles was parked in his car on the other side and we only met by accident within the collection. Later that day Charles kindly let me out of the car to take a look at Niagara Falls. It was not possible to park the car so he told me that when I had seen enough I was to follow the river and he would find me. To most people, including Charles, that would mean follow the river downstream to the sea. Unfortunately, I am a ferociously proud and patriotic citizen of an island folk who spread their language and maritime culture throughout the world and were natural explorers, so that instruction meant to me that I should follow the river up to its source. That we should have survived as friends was a miracle but it was evident from the start that we were destined to become the Laurel and Hardy of Lilacdom. May you long enjoy your retirement Charles, and I am delighted to see that you have defected to ILS – Europe. *Bienvenue!*

The other is a person on whom I am totally dependent for any authority in the world of lilacs that I might claim. Every query I have made to him has been met with such full and magisterial responses that even I can pretend to be an expert when backed up by such thorough and rigorous research. Ladies and gentlemen of North America I urge you to declare Freek Vrugtman and his filing cabinet to be National Treasures. Recently I entertained and informed a very distinguished Local History Society using as one of my two case studies the material which Freek supplied me on the background of Dr. A.H. Lemke and his lilac *S.v. 'Silver King'*. We are indeed fortunate to have such a respected and eminent International Registration Authority.

Address:
Norman's Farm
Wyverstone
Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 4SF
England

The Friends of Parks & Recreation

Bennington, Vermont

by John J. Dostal

Editor's Note: *New lilac plantings are springing up everywhere. This article is adapted from a newsletter sent out by Mr. Dostal. The last paragraph asks for price lists or other ideas. Please answer if you can assist Mr. Dostal.*

The friends of Parks & Recreation of Bennington, Vermont is embarking on a challenging enterprise to establish a substantial planting of lilacs as a Community Enhancement Project. This will extend over a period of several years.

The short range concept is to establish, this year, The Bennington Lilac Trail with strategic plantings within the Village which eventually will encompass a Lilac Land, Lilac Grove, and ultimately a modest Lilac Park.

Answering the question why such a project? The purpose is the enhancement of the Community with an additional Tourist Attraction since Bennington is a Historic Destination with the Bennington Battle Monument, a Regional Museum and Historic Covered Bridges which attract tourists during the colour of leaf season in the fall. Now we need something to attract them in the spring. The Lilac display at the Shelbourne Museum in Vermont each May is conclusive. Additionally, we also love lilacs or we wouldn't be doing this.

The first phase, starting this spring, intends to accomplish 100 plantings of lilacs at already designated locations. The selection process proposes to purchase the widest variety of cultivars, with as little duplication as possible but within the seven general color classifications and the three seasonal blooming cycles. A number of unique one of a kind flower or leaf color variations will also be solicited.

A substantial number of this year's purchases will be the selection of prime stock, of maximum size, in potted containers wherever available, in order to create a Community awareness as quickly as possible.

Selection and counseling for this ambitious enterprise is afforded through contacts within the International Lilac Society of which The Friends is a member, as well as information from the excellent publications the Society provides.

With this understanding of our ambitions we are extending an invitation to any company or organization who may be interested in providing us the variety of product which will bring this enterprise to fruition.

The Friends of Parks & Recreation of Bennington is a non profit function. No moneys are provided to them by the Town or Village of Bennington.

We invite your response by sending us your price lists or other data you may wish to offer to: The Friends of Parks & Recreation, P.O. Box 152, Bennington, VT 05201 or call (802) 442-2377. Though you may not be in a position to react to our immediate needs bear in mind this will be an ongoing project for several years.

Tips For Beginners

Question:

My lilac leafed out this spring but then some of the new shoots wilted and turned black. What happened?

Answer:

The situation you describe could be frost damage but that is not a common occurrence. The other possibility is bacterial blight which tends to appear when we have a cold, wet spring as we had in the northeast USA this spring. Frost damage tends to show up in layers e.g. all the branch tips, while bacterial blight will appear on individual branches.

In either case the plants should survive and the condition will not be repeated unless next spring repeats the same unusual weather. Some cultivars are more susceptible to bacterial blight e.g. 'Macrostachya' so if the situation occurs more than once or twice you might consider moving the plant to a less exposed location.

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Syringa vulgaris 'Blue Delft'