

Lilacs

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of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

Convention Information
Membership Issue

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**Mail membership dues to Asst. Treasurer William F. Tschumi*

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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LILACS 2002

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Cover Story

Front Cover

'Mrs. W. E. Marshall'. A deep purple cultivar that was judged the "most popular" lilac at one of the Royal Botanical Gardens conventions

Photo credit Mary C. Lizotte

Back Cover

'Fountain' (*Syringa* × *swegiflexa*) An interspecific hybrid in the late blooming group. It was in full bloom at the Rochester Convention when the *S. vulgaris* cultivars had gone by. Introduced before 1953.

Photo credit Owen Rogers

Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for the spring issue of the **Journal** is **March 8, 2002**. We will have to adapt the date slightly to get the first convention reports in by publication time.

Quarterly Reminder

Winter is the time for catalogs and evaluation of the 2001 garden year, ideally from a detailed journal. No journal? Start one for 2002.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In this turbulent time that has made us conscious of our surroundings, let us be thankful for our friendship to each other. All of the members of ILS bring something different to our Society, but we have the common goal of promoting the lilac. Let us not be deterred by recent events, as we prepare to gather for the 31st Annual Convention.

Plans for this event were well under way prior to September 11. The Southern California Lilac Council and Descanso Gardens along with long-time member Rudy Schaefer are working diligently to provide a unique Lilac experience, as the ILS makes its premier visit to California. Seriously consider joining us April 3-5, 2002 and find out what Rudy and his volunteers have up their collective sleeve.

What have your lilacs been doing? Here in the northeast autumn has been long, warm, dry, and snow-free through December 8th. Therefore we're enjoying spring blooming forsythia, viburnum, cherries, and lilacs. Florets are in limited number, mostly on *Syringa microphylla*, but enough to catch the fragrant aroma. However, I have noted that the bud scales have dropped and buds are expanding in *S. chinensis* forms. This is due to our summer long drought and extended mild temperatures. Surely we will experience some dead branch tips next spring. "The weather: Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it." That's what challenges all those who garden, obviously some more than others. In the end nature always wins.

The Holiday Season tends to pass quicker each year, with all the parties, dinners, and other social gatherings. I hope you all spent quality time with family and friends during this joyful season. Marcia and I want to sincerely wish every member a happy and holy Holiday Greeting.

Bob
God Bless America

Editor's Notes

Corrections (three of them)

In the fall issue of **Lilacs** we gave an incorrect phone number for Syringa Plus in the retail Lilac source list.

The whole entry should read:

Syringa Plus:P.O. Box 363, West Boxford, MA 01885-0363 (978) 352-3301. Wholesale nursery with retail trade of superior taxa on their own roots shipped bare root or in two and five gallon pots. Larger B&B plants available. Visitors welcome by appointment. Growing list available.

Also in the same issue, in the memoriam to William Utley two cultivars ('Clyde Lucy' and 'Sensation') appeared with double quotation marks and 'Lucie Baltet' with no quotation marks at all. Bill would have been most upset at these mistakes which were not his fault. If you would go back to that issue and make a correction your Editor would be most appreciative.

The last correction is that the Editors of HortScience mis-paginated the two cultivar registration pages in their latest issue. The correct pagination ought to read HortScience 36(5) August 2001.

Did you notice that the fall issue of **Lilacs** was a month late? We got caught up on the September postal confusion and things went astray. We were able to reconstruct the issue and you have it by now. Let us hope it never happens again.

Due to the hard work of our Treasurer, Jim Hastings, we can announce a new payment method for your convenience through the Key Bank. We can now accept credit cards for your current dues and contributions. All you need to do is complete the membership renewal notice and we will charge your credit card accordingly.. If you should choose "for current dues" your credit card will be charged only **once** for the amount stated. If you should choose "for future dues" your credit card will be charged the amount stated **each year** until you tell us otherwise. Let us make it easier for you to remain a member in good standing; pay your dues by credit card.

Every once in a while someone tells us of receiving an issue with the paper mailing sheet torn or otherwise messed up. If this happens to you, a note to your Editor will get you a new copy post haste.

We have a new printing firm address. If you have a need to contact them, you can do it at Erie Park Press, 10 Sodus Street, Clyde, N.Y. 14433; phone toll free 1-888-697-3326; Fax (315) 923-1509.

A soft cover copy of Father Fiala's book will be published by Timber Press in January or February, 2002. It will be an exact copy of the first printing together with all the typographical errors and misprints present in the original. In spite of these problems, Father Fiala's book is still the best - and in some ways the only - substantial reference book on lilacs available.

With a little arm twisting we have convinced Frank Moro to handle orders for us and do all the work of shipping them to ILS members. Thank you, Frank, for offering this "above and beyond" service to ILS.

Editor's Note:

'We had a short blurb on growing lilacs from seed in the Fall 2001 issue. The following is a response from Wayne and Millie Hughes based on their experience.

A note on what one might expect if the "Seasonal Opportunities" suggestions given in the fall 2001 **Quarterly Journal** are followed.

The Lilac Farm began in the spring of 1988, not so much as a business but more as a place where people could come and just walk around. Originally we grew only the common lilac from open pollinated seed. When lilacs are started this way, you can never predict just how the plants will turn out, similar to kids there are never two exactly alike; and just like kids some turn out to be super performers, like your kids, and some turn out not so great, like the neighbors' kids. The variations are truly amazing. For example, if you plant 500 seeds, there will probably be 5 or 6 white ones, 5 or 6 double ones, there will be short ones, tall ones, red ones, and blue ones but they will all be lilacs. A word of caution here, if you plant 500 seeds you may very well end up with 400 lilacs, and unlike flowers or vegetables you can't just give them away; they keep getting bigger and prettier every year. Finally, you may end up having to buy a farm. I know from experience that more than a hundred lilacs won't fit on a city lot.

The Lilac Farm
Wayne and Millie Hughes
25290 Highway 19
Cambridge Springs, Pa. 16403
(814)-398-2111 Lilactime@aol.com

Father Fiala Book

by Frank Moro

Great new edition for those who missed out on the first edition of the book from the late Father John Fiala; *Lilacs: The Genus Syringa*. Timberpress is reprinting the book in a soft cover version identical to the first. It will contain all the same great photos and information. At last lilac lovers will be able to have a book that has been much missed on the market. It will retail for \$34.95 USD and should be out by late January or early February. There are only 2000 being printed so be sure to get a copy quickly. For those interested Select Plus Nursery will have the book available through it's website or catalogue.

Choice California Lilac Site Promises Special Events for International Convention

The 31st annual International Lilac Convention, April 3-5, 2002, will be at one of California's most extensive and impressive lilac gardens.

Convention planners at Descanso Gardens have promised programs ranging from educational talks about the lilacs we all love, to the half-century history of this 160-acre garden and botanical education center 15 miles north of downtown Los Angeles.

Members will have an opportunity to explore other areas of Descanso, including the International Rosarium, the Oak and Camillia Forest, the Japanese Garden and Teahouse, and the area devoted to native Southwestern plants. A morning visit to the nearby Huntington Gardens also is on the agenda.

The focal point, however, will be the Descanso Lilac Garden, which includes more than 500 lilac plants in all seven recognized shades from white to purple, a variegated variety named 'Sensation', and cultivars developed at Descanso Gardens.

The garden is tended year-round by volunteers, including Joyce Kjarsgaard, chairperson of the co-sponsoring Southern California Lilac Council.

THE INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY

Founded in 1971

Robert Hoepfl, President

WELCOMES YOU TO THE 31ST ANNUAL CONVENTION

April 3-5, 2002

TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF LILACS AT DESCANSO GARDENS

CO-SPONSORED BY SCLC AND DESCANSO GARDENS

Dr. Louis Erickson, retired, UCR, Honorary Chairman

Joyce Kjarsgaard, Descanso volunteer, Chairperson

Rudy Schaffer, Volunteer Lilac curator, Descanso Gardens

Richard Schulhof, Executive Director, Descanso Gardens

LODGING: BEST WESTERN GOLDEN KEY LODGE
123 WEST COLORADO BLVD.
GLENDALE, CA 91204
(818) 247-0111

REGISTRATION: Wednesday, April 3, 2002, 4-8 PM Hospitality Room

DIRECTORS MEETING: April 3, 2002, 2 PM, Hospitality Room

SOCIAL GATHERING: April 3, 2002 Hospitality Room

DIRECTORS MEETING: April 4, 2002 Hospitality Room

PROGRAM FOR THURSDAY APRIL 4, 2002

- 7:00 AM Breakfast at the lodge
8:00 AM Transportation to Descanso Gardens
9:00 AM Visit Descanso Gardens Lilac Collection
10:45 AM ILS Annual Meeting, Van De Kamp Hall
Noon Lunch Classrooms A and B
1:15 PM Official opening of Convention, Van De Kamp Hall
Welcome: Richard Schulhof
SPEAKERS:
Robert Boddy and Jim Connors
"Descanso Lilac Beginning plus 50 Years"
Reva Ballreich and other Lilac Growers
"Lilacs in the Golden State"
Dr. Giles Waines
"Hybridizing Low Growing Lilacs"

- 3:30 PM Transportation to Lodge
5:45 PM Transportation to Descanso Gardens
6:45 PM President's Dinner in Van De Kamp Hall
9:30 PM Return to Lodge
10:00 PM Social Gathering Hospitality Room

PROGRAM FOR FRIDAY APRIL 5, 2002

- 7:00 AM Breakfast at the lodge
8:00 AM Transportation to Huntington Garden & Library
8:30 AM Guided Tours of Huntington
11:15 AM Transportation to Descanso Gardens
Noon Lunch Van De Kamp Hall
1:15 PM Lilac Auction in Rosarium
3:30 PM Transportation to Lodge
5:15 PM Transportation to LaCanada Country Club
6:00 PM No Host Cocktail Bar
7:00 PM Dinner
8:30 PM Awards Presentation, Sally Schenker, Chair
10:30 PM Transportation to lodge
11:00 PM Social Gathering, Hospitality Room

Lilacs for Auction or Sale at the Convention

SI	'Agnes Smith' JOSIFLEXA	Rogers	F.M.
SII-VI	'Albert F. Holden'	Fiala	R.B.
SI	'Albida'	Lemoine	F.M.
SIII-IV	'Aleksei Mares'ev'	Kolesnikov	M.P.
DIV	'Alice Chieppo'	Fiala	M.P.
SVII	'Alice Franklin'	Barns F.L. & A.G.	R.B.
SVII	'Alvan R. Grant'	Fenicchia	R.B.
DIII	'Ami Schott'	Lemoine	R.B.
SI	'Angel White'	Lammerts	Cooke's
SIV	'Anna Nickles'	Stone	R.B.
DVII	'Arthur William Paul'	Lemoine	R.B.
DVI	'Atheline Wilbur'	Fiala	M.P.
SV	'Aurea' EMODI	??	F.M.
SI	'Avalanche'	Fiala	R.B.
SVI	'Beacon' PRESTONIAE	Morden Research Station	F.M.
SIV	'Beth'	Peterson	M.P.
SIII	'Blanche Sweet'	Fiala	R.B.
SIII	'Blue Delight'	Castle	R.B.
SIII	'Blue Delft'	Fiala	R.B.
SIII	'Blue Giant'	Fiala	M.P.
SIII	'Blue Ice'	Oakes	R.B.
SVI	'Bright Centennial'	Robertson	M.P.
SV	'California Rose'	Sobeck	Cooke's
SIV	'Calphurnia' PRESTONIAE	Preston	F.M.
SI	'Carley'	Havemeyer	R.B.
SIII-IV	'Carolyn Howland'	Berdeen	R.B.
DV	'Catawba Pink'	Utlery	R.B.
SIII	'Celestial Blue'	Klager	R.B.
SII-III	'Charles Lindbergh'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SIII	'Cheyenne'	Hildreth	R.B.
SVI	'Chris'	Wister	M.P.
SVI	'Clyde Heard'	Heard	M.P.
SV	'Clyde Lucie'	Heard	R.B.
DV	'Cora Lyden'	Lyden	M.P.
DIII	'Duc de Massa'	Lemoine	R.B.
DIV	'Duplex'	Lemoine	R.B.
SIII	'Dwight D. Eisenhower'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SVII	'Dzhavakharal Neru'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
DIII	'Emile Gentil'	Lemoine	R.B.
SIV	'Excel'	Skinner	R.B.
DIII	'Fale Baltyku'	Karpow-Lipski	R.B.
SV	'Ferna Alexander'	Alexander	F.M.
SII-VII	'Flower City'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SIV	'Forrest Kessler Smith'	Sobeck	Cooke's
SV	'Fountain' SWEGIFLEXA	Preston	F.M.
SVI	'Frederick Douglass'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SI	'Frederick Law Olmsted'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SIII-IV	'Gastello'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
DI	'Glacier'	Fiala	R.B.
SIII	'Golubaya'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
SV	'Grace Orthwaite'	Brand	R.B.
SI	'Holger' JOSIKAEA	Tolppola	F.M.
DII	'Hosanna'	Fiala	R.B.
SVII	'Hulda'	Klager	R.B.
SI	'Independence'	Fenicchia	M.P.
SIII	'Irene'	Berdeen	R.B.
DIV-V	'I.V. Michurin'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
SI	'Ivory Silk' RETICULATA	Pokluda	R.B.
SVI	'James Stuart'	Havemeyer	R.B.
DV	'Jean Mace'	Lemoine	R.B.
DIV-V	'Kapriz'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
DIV	'Komsomolka'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
SII	'Kosmos'	Shtan'ko & Mikhailov	R.B.
SII	'Kum Bum' TOMETELLA	??	R.B.
SVI	'Lake Bled'	Lumley	M.P.

SVII	'Lavender Lady'	Lammerts	Cooke's
SIV	'Letha E. House'	Fiala	R.B.
SV-V	'Lewis Maddock'	Rankin	R.B.
SVII	'Lilac Sunday' CHINENSIS	J. H. Alexander III	R.B.
DV	'Lourene Wishart'	Fiala	R.B.
SVII/II	'Margaret Fenicchia'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SVII	'Margaret Rice Gould'	Brand	R.B.
SV	'Marie Frances'	Fiala	R.B.
SIV-VI	'Marshal Zhukov'	Kolesnikov	M.P.
SII-III	'Martha Stewart'	Fenicchia	F.M.
SV	'Mary C. Bingham'	Alexander	F.M.
SVI	'Massena'	Lemoine	R.B.
DVI-IV	'Max Peterson'	Berdeen	R.B.
DI	'McMaster Centennial'	Brown	R.B.
SVII	'Midnight'	Fiala	R.B.
SII	'Minchanka'	Smol'skii & Bibikova	R.B.
SVII	'Minuet'	Cumming	R.B.
DI	'Mme. Casimir Perier'	Lemoine	R.B.
DI	'Monique Lemoine'	Lemoine	R.B.
DIII-IV	'Nadezhda'	Kolesnikov	J.B.
SV	'Necker'	Lemoine	J.B.
SIV	'Norah'	Preston	R.B.
DIV-V	'Olimpiada Kolesnikova'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
??	'Onarga' VILLOSA	??	F.M.
SV	'Palibin' MEYER	??	R.B.
DIV	'Pamyat S. M. Kolesnikov'	Kolesnikov	J.B.
SIII	'Pat Pesta'	Fiala	R.B.
SIV/VII	'Pioneer'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
SVII	'Pocahontas'	Skinner	R.B.
SIV	'Pom Pom'	Robinson	R.B.
DIII-IV	'P.P. Konchalovskii'	Kolesnikov	R.B.
SVII	'Prairie Petite'	Viehmeier	M.P.
DI	'Princess Clementine'	Mathieu	R.B.
SVII	'Priscilla'	Havemeyer	R.B.
DI	'Prof. E.H. Wilson'	Havemeyer	R.B.
SIV	'Professor R.B. Clarke'	Fiala	R.B.
DV	'Reva Ballreich'	Peterson	R.B.
SV	'Rosea' YUNNANENSIS	Hillier	F.M.
DII	'Russkaya Pesnya'	Vekhov	R.B.
SI	'Sacrament'	Fiala	R.B.
SVII	'Sarah Sands'	Havemeyer	R.B.
SV-VII	'Saugeana' CHINENSIS		R.B.
SV	'Scotia'	Scott	R.B.
SII	'Sesquicentennial'	Fenicchia	R.B.
SIII	'Silver King'	Lemke	J.B.
SI	'Snowstorm'	Moro	F.M.
SI	'Sonia Colfax'	Havemeyer	R.B.
SIV	'Spring Parade'	Fiala	J.B.
SI	'Starlight'	Fiala	R.B.
SV	'Sylvan Beauty'	Sobeck	Cooke's
DIV	'Taras Bul'ba'	Rubtzov, etc.	J.B.
DIV	'Thunberg'	Lemoine	M.P.
SVII	'Triste Barbaro'	??	R.B.
SI	'Una White'	??	R.B.
SII	'Vesper Song'	Fiala	R.B.
DIV	'Victor Lemoine'	Lemoine	J.B.
SII	'Violet Glory'	Castle	M.P.
SIII	'Wedgwood Blue'	Fiala	J.B.
DVI	'Winner's Circle'	Fiala	R.B.
SV	'Wolfii'	C.K. Schneider	F.M.
SIII	'Wonderblue'	Fiala	J.B.
SIII	'Woodland Blue'	Hancock	J.B.
SVII	'Yankee Doodle'	Fiala	R.B.
SVII-IV	'Znamya Lenina'	Kolesnikov	J.B.

Lilacs that will be in the auction April 2002. Donors of lilacs listed in column 4 are R.B.- Reva Ballreich; M.P. - Max Peterson; F.M. Frank Moro; and J.B. is Julie Boyer. Cooke's is L.E. Cooke Co.

Lilacs and Climate Changes

—Frank Moro

Executive VP ILS Canada

The climate is a very important factor for ensuring that our lilacs thrive. In the past few years we have all seen the climate change radically in some places. There is really no fall or spring any more in Montreal. It goes from winter to summer with one huge change in the flow of the jet stream.

As falls are becoming milder and longer set in with extra rain, I have had many red alert emails about lilacs flowering in the fall and what should they do. There is not much to do except enjoy the flowers. As soon as the weather cools again I suggest cutting off any leaf buds that have opened in order to force the plant into dormancy. This has been a proven method that I have adapted in our nursery when shipping plants to southern hemisphere countries in the fall. I have also noticed in the past few years lilacs, especially the *vulgaris*, hold their leaves much longer than normal. This is even more true with container production. There are very little signs of yellowing until early November. The cooling period in the fall seems to be brief enough to fool some lilacs into believing that they have passed a dormancy and since the leaves are still on and thus fall flowers. The container production begins to show signs of fall once we get a good frost and the leaves begin to curl lightly. This is followed by yellowing a few days later. Winters have become more of a challenge also with more extreme heavy snows and freezing rains at the beginning and throughout the season. This results in more branches breaking early in the winter and branches splitting away from the main trunks as the snow melts in the spring due to the weight of the ice beneath the upper layers of snow load.

A good pruning program can help this when rejuvenating your plants. It is best to prune major trunks to the ground as lilacs have a physiology of reshooting from the ground. Branches that are cut to 12-15 inches from the soil are not as strong due to the angle that they come out in, and they will have a tendency to be weaker because of the amount of growth they put out the first year.

Late winter/spring storms hit much of the northeast in spring 2001 with examples of Boston receiving 4 to 7 inches of rain in 24 hours in mid March to Montreal receiving three feet of heavy snow when the temperatures should be preparing for melting. Maple sugar productions were also down in 2001 because of temperatures not being ideal for sap flow. Colin Chapman from Great Britain has mentioned how he was under water for months, thus rotting out many root systems on his younger lilacs. Then, when spring comes along, we have many fluctuations in temperatures. This permits lilacs to flower earlier, succumb to late frosts, and lets pseudomonas into the lilacs. If this happens to your lilacs, it is important when frost sets in to cut out the damaged sections immediately to help the lilacs recover from the damage.

Summer has its own problems when the temperatures can go up beyond hot, and rain becomes scarce. 2001 again set some new records for many. In our mother plant field some plants not drowned in the extremely slow melt and flooding in the spring were tested with the 36 days of no rain with 20 being over 90 degrees. Our sandy field that I thought safe in the spring showed me different, and again deceived me in the summer when I saw some prestons just burn up with the drought. Other than leaves getting soft and dull in the summer when there is not enough water, brown spotting can also be a sign of lack of water as well as browning around the margin of prestons. I usually see *chinensis* show the first

signs by the brown spotting and then the prestons. This can happen in a container or in the ground. I believe it is linked to dehydration due to wind and sun. The plants just seem to not be able to supply the water up to the leaves fast enough.

There also seems to be another new disease surfacing in the lilac world. Leaves begin to yellow on different parts of the plant in the summer. Some work is being done on this. I believe weakened plants due to hot dry summers or late frosts may make plants more susceptible to it. Young plants in container production have not showed these signs; more have plants that get good summer irrigation or a good dose of spring fertilizer.

All this is leading up to maybe we will begin to grow lilacs in more northern areas one day, and coconuts in Montreal! In bad climatic shifting years it ends up being one let-down after the other with our NEW CLIMATE. The 2001 calendar proved to be one that we all shall remember.

Lilacs, Lilacs and More Lilacs

By Frank Moro

Regional VP Eastern Canada and Executive VP Canada

Winter is fast closing in and as others are closing their businesses down for the winter and some moving to warmer regions this one person continues to breathe lilacs daily 365 days a year. Our last orders went out to Japan and Australia on November 24 and we quickly switched mode to other work.

Rob Reiter, a manager I had when working in a garden center many years ago, always said that it took two calendar years to acquire one year of knowledge at the nursery. We all seem to put up our shoes in the winter. Well, it may have been the case for us in the past but the future is continuously moulding itself differently. After November, I now find myself busier than ever grafting some 5000-6000 lilacs during the winter, publishing six different catalogs, visiting wholesale customers, programming both ILS and Select Plus Nursery websites, getting ready to do winter conferences and preparing for home shows in March.

I also participated in the identification of the NYBG lilac collection this year which meant three trips to NY City during the spring shipping. This was a venture that I looked forward to all winter and it was a monumental task not so much on the field work but more so on the hours of research into photos, catalogs and reviewing maps and original planting lists of the gardens.

It was an incredible year for us with the move to our new farm. We finally had the space we needed to begin producing lilacs the way I have always wanted. We have moved our first lilacs into ten gallon containers with the idea to produce them eventually in 25 to 45 gallon pots. We also took a second booth at the Rochester Festival. This meant finding solutions to get lilacs from Montreal to Rochester. We managed it and had fresh lilacs coming into the booth every second day from the Select Plus Express.

We took on the Boston Flower Show in March, as well as the Washington D.C. show and we have been at the VAPH show in Burlington, Vermont for a few years. We recently received a call to join the crème de la crème shows in Philadelphia, PA. This is the biggest show in the world with some 350,000 people who go through it. We are currently supplying two mail order companies with their lilacs for their catalogs; and increasing business this year to over 2300 mail orders for the year was another milestone. This made a rethinking of spring shipping a must, to the point where we had two shifts. An afternoon shift would come in, and pull and

prepare orders for the following day for the boxers to finish off. It was a year for mental stress.

I am proud of our family business, and spend seven days a week working with lilacs either physically or on paper; whether planning future productions, updating the inventory, or planning budgets. It seems like the part time business we got into twelve years ago has now consumed us more than we ever thought possible. I greatly thank ILS and so many of the members for either helping me or giving me the moral support that growing lilacs could become not only a full time business and passion, but a way of life.

With all this in mind we have also been blessed with another Moro arrival scheduled for May 2002. This will make six children. Sara and I have built a successful business, what's next?

I hope that many will attend the ILS convention at Descanso Gardens.

If you would like a Select Plus retail 2002 catalogue, call us at 450-477-3797, visit our website at www.spi.8m.com or drop us a line at 1510 Pine, Mascouche, J7L 2M4 Quebec, Canada

Get ready for the 'PlantWatch Launch' March 2002

By Bruce Peart, Horticulturist, Royal Botanical Gardens

As lilac enthusiasts all over the world we observe and question the events in our gardens and the natural world around us. Did the lilacs appear earlier this year? Was the summer drier than usual? We discuss the timing and overall effect of the seasons on our surroundings. We watch when the plants around us first yield their blossoms and bear fruit. We compare these dates to the dates of past years. Some of us keep diaries and records of these events. If you are one of these individuals then you can title yourself as a Phenologist. Phenology is the study of seasonal timing of life cycle events.

Seasonal timing can help us predict the best times for planting, harvesting, treating for pests, avoiding pollen or planning our holidays. A National Plantwatch program hosted in Ontario at RBG will show us how phenology can lead to greater understanding of global warming and climate change. Climate cycles take place over long periods of time and plants integrate the effects of climate change. They are sensitive indicators of temperature, precipitation, daylight hours and humidity. By comparing historic records of bloom times to the results of our new observations we should be able to get a sense of climatic change and weather trends in Ontario. Many "Watch" programs have been introduced to the public in recent years. These include FrogWatch, WormWatch and IceWatch. These programs engage communities in the collection of observations which are then contributed as data for scientific assessment. This citizen scientist approach is effective in the collection of information from diverse geographical regions across Canada in a cost effective and timely manner. They also attach communities to their surrounding environment and give them the ability to detect ecosystem change.

This is where ILS members, families, schools and anyone reading this article can help the ILS and get involved with the PlantWatch program. There is a Canadian National list of fifteen plants on the site that we would like you to observe and record information on. Some of these are horticultural plants, and some could be found in your backyard. The one plant that is, of course, of most interest to us is *Syringa*

vulgaris. It is on the national list from coast to coast in North America. Any province, state or international contact can register their *Syringa vulgaris* (or any of the other fourteen plants from the list) on the site. Individuals reporting for this project can submit their results through the PlantWatch website, mail or fax. The information will then be transferred into the PlantWatch database and displayed through digital maps on the website. For more information and complete national plant list, refer to the PlantWatch site. This website will be up and running in March 2002: www.plantwatch.ca.

Through programs like this everyone can contribute to and participate in the science of climate change. By reflecting on the past, we can create a clearer picture of the future and how issues of climate change and global warming are affecting our gardens and the plants and animals in North America and/or the world. This is another approach to becoming involved. For more information to promote *Syringa vulgaris* please contact:

Bruce Peart, - Horticulturist, Special Projects, ILS Representative;

PlantWatch - Ontario contact,

Royal Botanical Gardens

P.O. Box 399, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3H8

Tel: (905) 527-1158 x 250 Fax:(905) 577-0375 Email: bpeart@rbg.ca

Lilac Festivals and Open House Events

In the past we tried to publish a list of Lilac Festivals and Open Houses where people could see and admire lilacs. We are starting earlier this year so that you can make plans to take advantage of several of these lilac collections.

Not everyone who answered last year's request for information repeated their notice again this year so the list is somewhat shorter but includes all of those people who really want you to come and see their lilacs.

If you see a gap in our lists, please send a note to your editor at Plant Biology Dept., 38 College Rd., Spaulding Hall, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824.

USA

Connecticut - Lilacs at the home of ILS member Olga Rudenko at 349 South Main St., Seymour, Ct. 203-888-5747. Call for bloom times and directions. Special collection of Russian lilac varieties.

Maine - Open House: Display garden with ca 100 species and cultivars (not all of bloom size). For information on dates and directions, contact Samuel J. Harper, 792 S. Waterboro Rd., Kennebunk Pond, Lyman, ME 04002, phone 207-499-2489.

Maine - Lilac Festival: Sponsored by the McLaughlin Foundation, 97 Main St., Paris, ME on the first Saturday in June. Contact the Foundation for details at P.O. Box 16, South Paris, ME 04281; 207-743-8820 or www.dma.net/garden.

Maine - May Flowers: Three-acre garden with 90 plus lilacs, a perennial garden, clematis and cabapples at the home of Howard and Carolyn Merrill, 82 Fort Ridge Rd., Alfred, ME 04002. Lilacs usually bloom the last of May to early June. Call 207-324-1771 for best bloom times and directions.

Massachusetts - Lumley Lilacs: Open to the Public: Art Lumley was a member of ILS for many years and amassed a large collection of lilacs. His son has rejuvenated the lilac planting and opens it to the public. The planting is open during lilac bloom, usually May 15th to June 15th, 8:30 a.m. to dusk. No dogs, please. For information contact James Lumley, 24 Harkness Rd., Amherst, MA 01002, or telephone 413-253-5082.

Massachusetts - Arnold Arboretum: Join the city of Boston in a celebration of the coming spring. One of the major lilac plantings in the eastern United States.

May 12, 2002, all day. On Lilac Sunday the Arboretum is open from dawn to dusk with lilac plants and refreshments available for purchase from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For further information contact the Arboretum at 126 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 or telephone 617-524-1718.

Michigan – Mackinac Island: The Chamber of Commerce on Mackinac Island (Len Trankina, Executive Director) hosts a 10-day Lilac Festival every year. Len writes "This year's Lilac Festival Brochures will be produced in early Spring and to obtain a copy, simply phone us toll free 1-800-4 LILACS or visit one of our web sites, "mackinacisland.org" or "mackinac.com" (they are linked together). We look forward to greeting you on Mackinac Island during our 53rd annual Lilac Festival, June 8th through the 17th, 2002. Your carriage will be waiting.

Minnesota – Minnesota Landscape Arboretum: 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chanhassen, MN 55317, 612-443-2460. The Arboretum has over 800 acres of plants and trees of all types and over 150 lilacs that will bloom in early May. Call the Arboretum for dates and directions.

New Hampshire – Lilacs at home of ILS member Sally Schenker in Freedom, NH. Call 603-539-6814 for bloom times and directions.

New Hampshire – Wentworth-Coolidge 2002 Lilac Festival: The Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion in Portsmouth, NH is the 18th century former residence of the Royal Governor Benning Wentworth. While living there between 1750-1767 he imported several lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*) which surrounded the mansion and still exists today. The year 2002 event will be held at the Mansion on May 26th in the afternoon and will include tours of the mansion as well as propagations of the original lilacs for sale. For further information about the event or ordering the Wentworth Lilacs call 603-436-6607.

New York – Pie in the Sky Lilac Garden: Bob and Sabra. 150 varieties, open to the public May 25 & 26, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 3 miles south of Edmeston, NY. Call 845-229-0603 for directions.

New York – Rochester Lilac Festival: Highland Park. One of the largest festivals in the eastern USA. This year's festival will be at Highland Park, Rochester - 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily Friday, May 17th through May 26th, 2002. It will include 1,200 lilac plantings, over 500 varieties. An artistic pansy bed, thousands of tulips, forsythia, dogwood, azalea, daffodils, etc. etc. all things SPRING in full bloom! Dogs are discouraged and skateboards/rollerblades forbidden. For further information, contact the Lilac Festival, 171 Reservoir Ave., Rochester NY 14620 - Nicole Mahoney - 716-256-4960. Email: lilacfestival@roch.com Web: www.roch.com/lilacfestival.

Vermont – Randolph Center – Hamesbest Gardens – Open Garden: Located on a hilltop in the middle of the Green Mountains the gardens include over 125 cultivars and species of lilacs, and many other unusual shrubs and trees. These range from a specimen row of late lilacs and viburnums planted in the 60s (how many of you realize that given time and the right conditions 'Miss Kim' at 15' is only slightly shorter than the Preston Hybrids?), to recent acquisitions sheltered in a cold frame. Most of the lilacs are planted in island beds with perennials and self-seeding annuals. We welcome visitors anytime during daylight hours, especially during late May and June when lilacs are in bloom. We are 1 mile from exit 4 on I-89. Go East (uphill) to Randolph Center, turn right on Main Street for 1 block, right on Water Street (just before the white church on left). We are #45, the second house (red brick) on the left. For further information contact Ruth Buchanan 802-457-3351, e-mail ruthinvnt@aol.com or Jean Kerle e-mail kerlee@denison.edu.

Vermont – Shelburne Museum: For further information contact Amy Farmer at US Route 7, Plaintiff.O.Box 10, Shelburne VT 05482 or 802-985-3346; FAX – 802-985-2331; or www.shelburnemuseum.org.

Washington – Annual Lilac Festival: sponsored by the Spokane Lilac Association. Its main event, the grand lilac parade is always scheduled for the third Saturday in May (in 2002 that will be May 18th) at 7:30 p.m. in downtown Spokane. For further information contact Brusan Wells at 3021 South Regal #105, Spokane WA 99223. The phone number is 509-535-4554; FAX 509-535-4664; e-mail at lilacfestival.org or www.lilacfestival.org.

Wisconsin – 6th Annual Leonard Lilac Festival: “We will be showing 62 plants of 53 cultivars at our home in early May. For actual date and directions, please contact us by e-mail at BJBJ13579@PRESSETER.COM or by phone at 715-386-6080”. Bryan and Janice Leonard.

EUROPE Information supplied by Colin Chapman

Paris – Ecolle du Brueil, route de la Ferme, Bois de Vincennes 75012 Paris, France. Telephone: 01-43-28-28-94, FAX: 01-43-65-34-59, Person responsible: Rolland Genot. Open to the public from 0800 to 1630 weekdays, and 1000 to 1600 weekends and public holidays. Admission: adults 5F, children 2.50F. Species and ssp. 32, cultivars 146.

Brighton – Withdean Park, London Rd., Brighton, UK. Person responsible: Phillip Williamson, Environmental Services Dept., Brighton and Hove Council, PO. Box 780, Bartholemew House, Bartholemew Square, Brighton, Sussex BN1 1JP, UK. Open daily, admission free. Species and ssp. 36, Cultivars 164. TOURS: For 2002 we will give guided tours during the flowering season for interested groups on request. In 2002 we will also be providing advertised tours. For further information: Contact: Phil. Williamson 01273 292216; Alan Griffiths 01273 292060

Leeds – Golden Acre Park, Otley Road, Leeds. Person responsible: National Collections Coordinator, Leeds City Council, The Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds, Yorkshire LS1 3AD, UK. Telephone: 0113 2323069. Open daily admission free. Species and ssp. 10, Cultivars 95. Golden Acre Park is a public park of almost 42 hectares and has many features including a large lake well stocked with waterfowl and other birds; a trials and demonstration garden run in conjunction with *Which? Magazine*; sandstone and limestone rock garden, a large heather garden garden and much woodland.

Wyverstone – Norman’s Farm: Wyverstone, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4SF, UK Telephone: 01449 781081. Persons responsible: C and Mrs. S. M. Chapman. Open by telephone appointment during the flowering season. Admission: donation to ILS or NCCPG. Species and ssp. 25. Cultivars 480. A four-acre (two hectares) garden with several centenarian trees, younger trees selected for Autumn colour, and collections of daffodils, roses, buddlejias, and antique varieties of top fruit.

CANADA

Quebec – Select Plus Nursery: Small plants, large collection last weekend in May. For further information contact Frank Moro, Select Plus International Nursery, 1510 Pine St., Mascouche, Quebec, Canada J7L 2M4

Hamilton – Royal Botanical Gardens: The 2002 Festival will be held on May 19, 20 (Sunday & Monday) and May 26 (Sunday). One of the world’s largest collections of lilacs providing a stunning landscape and beautiful fragrances during the three-day celebration, featuring family activities and musical entertainment in the Dell. For further information contact Bruce Peart at RBG, Box 399, Hamilton, ON, Canada L8N 3H8 or www.rbg.ca <<http://www.rbg.ca>>

CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORT

By Peter S. Ely and Robert Hoepfl

The Convention calendar at this point is:

- 2002—Lacanda, Flintridge, Calif., Wed. Apr. 3, 2002, Sat. Apr. 6, 2002. Activities centered around Descanso Gardens which is near Los Angeles. Refer to recent Lilac journal for complete information.
- 2003—Cap-a-l'Aigle, Village des Lilas, Charlevoix, Quebec, Canada. Early June 2003. Activities centered around the village of Cap-a-l'Aigle and the charming surrounding area along the St. Lawrence River. This region has been designated a World Biosphere Reserve.
- 2004—Lincoln/Nebraska City area, Nebraska. Date will be May/June 2004. Activities may include the Nebraska Arboretum and local well known gardens.
- 2005—The Committee is open for suggestions. We are looking at the following possibilities: Hulga Klager Lilac Gardens, Woodland, Washington; or the Philadelphia, Penn. Area; or a mid-west USA site.

All members are welcome to submit suggestions for a Convention in their area. Please contact Peter Ely or Bob Hoepfl.

ILS REPORT ON THE Mackinac Island Visits

*Combined efforts by: Dave Gressley, ILS, The Holden Arboretum and
Bruce Peart, ILS, Royal Botanical Gardens*

June 13-17, 2001 and September 17-20, 2001

It has been a very fortunate and interesting year with the International Lilac Society and the Chamber of Commerce in Mackinac Island. It has been an international event with representatives from both USA and Canada traveling to the island to participate on two occasions this year. The participants were David Gressley from Holden Arboretum, Ohio, and Bruce Peart from Royal Botanical Gardens, Ontario. In June, during the Mackinac Island Lilac Festival both David and I presented four public symposiums on lilac history and culture. All of these sessions, entitled, "Lilacs. The Sweet Scent of Spring", were well attended and many of the public came away knowing a little more about the history and culture of the lilac and of course, of the International Lilac Society.

Even though we thought the sessions were well presented there was no comparison to the natural presentation of the lilac floral display of the Mackinac Island Lilac Collection. The old and 'new' lilacs were blooming with all of their glory. The timing for our June visit was exactly and correctly planned. The 'new' lilacs are defined as the donated lilacs from the International Lilac Society in 1997. These lilacs were now averaging about 1 2/3 metres (5 feet) in height and beginning to bloom. As David and I checked and looked at the volunteer work of the additions to the collection during that 1997 ILS conference year it appeared that the new lilacs would require some work. In 1997 the lilacs were small enough that they were planted at 1 1/3 metres (4-foot) centres. Since that time the lilacs have grown to their present height of 1 2/3 metres (5 feet). Encroachment and competition from each neighbouring lilac gave David and me reason to consider

the following remedy: To plan to re-locate half of the lilacs from their present location to other new positions. This could be done by removing and replanting every other plant and thinning out the existing plants. Moving the plants would give them space to grow and to show off their blooms each spring. This, in turn, would enhance the overall beauty of the Lilac Festival for many years to come. Plans and thoughts were put into motion in Sept. 2001 when David and I would return to Mackinac Island to move ahead with the relocation of the lilacs.

Planning started in July with the booking of the rooms to be done in advance due to availability in the hotels. Through the kind and generous efforts of Len Trankina, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, these arrangements were done and the adventure began to take shape. David and I planned to travel to Mackinac Island for Sept. 17-20. Upon our arrival at the ferry dock, Star Line ferries had their turn to shuttle us across the water for 18 minutes to step back in time to the land known to the native islanders as the 'chosen island'. In June, 2001 we had the pleasure to ride on the upper deck of the Arnold Line ferry. It was a pleasure to travel to the final destination with someone else driving. Once on the island the only mode of transport is by bicycle, walking or horse and buggy. Due to the distance north that Mackinac Island is both David and I had just traveled for three hours to meet in Flint, Michigan and then four hours together that day by van to the ferry loading site. All of the arrangements made by Len Trankina were organized like clock work. The rooms are here, the meals are here and the work and lilacs are here.

With personal spades, cultivating fork and pruning tools in hand, ones David and I 'imported' to the island, we ventured to seek out and find another generous volunteer of the island. Tim Leeper, the island resident master of the lilacs, has been involved as a volunteer with the lilacs for many years. His dedication to the lilacs and the ILS is invaluable to the ILS, the island and to Tim himself. The final piece of preparation came with the generosity of Pat Grodecki, the proprietor of Ryba's Bicycle Rentals, who graciously gave use of two bicycles for transportation. One of the bikes had an attached two-wheeled cart for hauling implements, brush and lilacs.

Our first project started with a meeting with the town's mayor, Margaret Doud, who graciously supported our effort to create more space for the lilacs at Windham Park, a city-owned property.

As Tim knew the lay of the land he provided us with details of where and when to start on the relocation project. He also provided information on soil conditions. When he appeared with a pick in his hand (and a big smile on his face) to add to the required tools we were a little concerned. What have David and I got ourselves into? We soon discovered the soil conditions of the island for the lilacs. With only two or three inches of soil on top the rest of the planting locations had soil of round pebble/stones and soil combination, more stones than soil. But still with that smile on his face, Tim said that each location only required a good 6 or 7 swings of the pick and the rest was easy when digging the new holes for the relocated lilacs. As it turned out, Tim was correct in his assessment. With only a few swings of the pick, Tim was well on his way to starting the holes for the lilacs to come. He is truly dedicated to the project.

Despite the need for a pick, the massive old lilacs around Mackinac Island are at home in the rock-filled, well drained, sandy texture soil set atop the Great Turtle's limestone dome. The cooler temperatures of the straits add the final touch of longevity to these massively colorful and fragrant beings.

As the first planting day neared an end we started looking at the next day of activity. We made great progress in moving the lilacs in the first day of relocation. The second day was planned to be even better. New locations had to be discussed as lilacs were being planted on public and private lands. Additional planning and cross checking lilac labels to speed up the second day's activities concluded the rest of the first day.

During this time Len from the Chamber of Commerce had previously set up a TV filming crew from CBC, Sault St. Marie, Ontario for a tourist feature on the island. They filmed a segment on possible use of 'Moving Lilacs in the Fall' with the ILS representatives, David and Bruce. So marketing of the ILS again was going on international during this visit as well.

After our first evening meal, and a few samples from the local brewmaster at the Village Inn, we had a well-deserved sleep at the Harbor Place Apartments. Anyone visiting Mackinac Island will savour the pleasant atmosphere and the wonderful cuisine at the Village Inn where we enjoyed all our meals during our three days on the island.

Now generally the weather would not be mentioned, but in this case I need to. The second day of planting arrived with planting locations having been sorted out and the three planters, us, were ready to go for a full day to complete the work at hand. The weather forecast was overcast with chance of drizzle.

Every gardener has started a project, at least once, getting into it and it starts to rain. Why stop, right? It is only a drizzle! We were at that point where we wanted to stop but we had to keep going. The point of no return! The skies opened and the drizzle became a heavy continuous drenching but we kept digging and planting. While planting lilacs on the State Park Dock area, three staff members came out to assist in the most awful working weather conditions. Even the rain-resistant weather wear was not up to the rain that appeared that afternoon. Our spirits were lifted when Tom Coperhaver, Kendra Timbers and Brad VanHorne from the State Docks appeared to help us finish off the planting. They certainly felt sympathetic toward us working in the rain but they quickly became saturated themselves. Maybe the spirit of knowing that they too will have lilacs to enjoy next spring on their enhanced Main Street property prompted them to plant in the rain. Thanks to the gravelly soil texture, there was no mud to contend with during the entire soaking and the lilacs were well watered into their new homes.

Over the course of the two days of digging and planting lilacs we had relocated forty labeled lilacs. This, in turn, left forty other labeled lilacs now with more growing space that will suit them for many years to come. With more lilacs to be 'thinned out' this fall I am hopeful that Tim and some of his residential volunteers will be able to complete this project.

The exchange of lilac information, important data for plans, lilac names and labels, pruning techniques and possible insect concerns were discussed among us all at length during and after the planting was completed.

As members of the International Lilac Society, we are dedicated to promote, educate and broaden the public understanding and awareness of lilacs. I believe David and I did just that. It also should be noted that in doing so, it is always much easier to carry out this mandate when the group that you are presenting to is so eager to soak up the information. Our personal thanks go out to so many volunteers and lilac lovers on Mackinac Island. You have a very credible collection that is certainly worth visiting and saving. Keep up the great interest and work.

International Lilac Society

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