

# Lilacs

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## **QUARTERLY JOURNAL**

of the International Lilac Society

IN  
THIS  
ISSUE:

### Membership List

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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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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By **Robert Hoepfl**

I hope that everyone had a happy holiday season, and that for every ILS member and their family it was a time of joy. Having family and friends together is a good reminder to us of the basic connections we have with one another. Sometimes we grow so independent that we are unable to connect to each other.

I urge you to read the articles regarding our thirty-second Annual Convention in Cap-à-l'Aigle, Quebec, Canada. These enthused members promise to entertain us in a most unique location and, with an unforgettable experience. So mark your calendar and plan on joining us in June.

Regarding the Highland Park Lilac collection: The Monroe County Legislature over-rode the Executives' budget, and increased taxes 2.5%. Rumor has it that two positions will be restored in the Horticultural Division. I don't expect any action to take place before April.

Wishing Reva, Ellen, Peter, and all ILS members a speedy recovery from surgeries and other illnesses.

## In Memoriam

### *Marty Martin*

Winfried (Marty) Martin, who oversaw the maintenance and upgrading of the Holden Arboretum where he was superintendent for fifteen years, died September 20<sup>th</sup> at his home in Chardon, Ohio. He was 79.

Born Winfried Karl Martin in Wolfmannshusen, Germany, he was drafted into the army at 19. He was wounded and in the hospital when, in 1941, he married Liselotte Arnold. Martin was captured in 1945 and held in a prisoner-of-war camp in Marseille, France, for four months. After the war, Marty was appointed a district forester but wanted to leave Germany. A distant relative in Cleveland sponsored his emigration to the USA in 1953. In the late 1960's he was hired as a foreman at the Holden Arboretum. He was promoted to assistant Superintendent in 1970 and Superintendent in 1974.

After his retirement, Marty devoted himself to his property, where he cultivated woody plants, including more than two hundred rhododendrons.

He was active in organizations, including the International Lilac Society where he was awarded an Award of Merit in 1980 and the Honor and Achievement Award (the Society's highest award) in 1989. He also served in the American and Canadian Rhododendron Societies, American Rock Garden, Northeast Heather, the Sierra Club, and the International Association of Superintendents of Botanical Gardens.

In addition to his wife, Lisa, Marty's survivors include a daughter, Dr. Sonya Martin Schwaegerle of Portsmouth N.H., four grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

## Cover Story

**Front Cover:** Lilacs at Cap-à-l'Aigle. St. Lawrence River is in the background. Photo credit Peter Ely. **Back Cover:** 'Nikolai Mikhailov' and 'Pamyat o Kolesnikove'. Photo credit Tatiana Polyakova. See Colin Chapman's articles. **Inside Back Cover:** Top: Nikolai Mikhailov with his new cultivar 'Nina'. Bottom: Tatiana Polyakova at the Moscow Show 2002. Photo for both credit Tatiana Polyakova.

## Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for the spring issue is March 8<sup>th</sup>. This is the last issue before the convention, so don't be late if you are submitting anything for publication.

## Quarterly Reminder

Don't forget, dues for all members are due. Bill Tschumi is waiting to hear from you. His address is on the back mailing sheet.

## 2003 Convention Information

**E**ven if it is winter and all the nature seem to be sleeping under a few feet of snow, the Cap-à-l'Aigle - Village des lilas Committee is not sleeping, but working hard to make sure that the next International Lilac Society Convention will be a great success. The people of Charlevoix have long been renowned for their tradition of hospitality, which can be an attraction in itself and it won't be different this time. You will certainly appreciate the warm and friendly welcome you will receive throughout the region.

### How to get to Cap-à-l'Aigle

Most major Canadian and American airline companies fly into the Aéroport de Québec in Quebec City. You can then rent a car (Hertz (800) 263-0678 or Budget (418) 665-3333) or take the bus (Intercar) from Quebec City (418) 525-3000 (about \$60 back and forth) to La Malbaie which is five minutes to Cap-à-l'Aigle village. From La Malbaie to Cap-à-l'Aigle, you can take a taxi (Taxi Jacques Thibeault (418) 665-2507).

Driving directions from Quebec City: Take autoroute 440 East toward Ste-Anne de Beaupré (30 minutes), continue on route 138 East until you arrive in Cap-à-l'Aigle (60 minutes).

## 2003 Convention Information

Driving directions from New Hampshire: Take I-91 towards Canada. At the US-Canada boarder, I 91 becomes Highway 55 Nord (North) towards Drummondville. In Drummondville, follow the signs for Highway 20 Est (East) towards Quebec City. On your way into the Quebec City cross Pont Pierre-Laporte bridge (Highway 73 Nord (North)). Stay on Highway 73 until there is an indication for Highway 40 Est (East) towards Ste-Anne de Beaupré. Continue on Highway 138 Est (East) and follow the signs for La Malbaie/Pointe-au-Pic/Cap-à-l'Aigle.

### Hotel Facilities

Most inns and Bed and Breakfasts of Charlevoix are perched on mountainside or overlook the blue and majestic St. Lawrence River. In most of the bed and breakfasts you will not find more than five rooms in the operator's home or an adjacent building and breakfast is served on site. These establishments will provide you a warm and cozy atmosphere, and all the comfort you could want at a competitive rate.

### The Charlevoix Region

In Quebec's Charlevoix County, the extraordinary landscape stretches out before you in a distinguished combination of mountain and forest. Situated along the great St. Lawrence River, the countryside's quiet charm presents an intimate portrait of rural existence where farming and agriculture are staples of daily life. Breathtaking scenery and an astounding variety of wildlife make every excursion unforgettable.

### If you Want to Stay a Bit Longer

If you can spend more time in the region it would be great because there is a lot more to discover in Charlevoix. You just have to inform us and we will do our best to make sure that you will be able to spend a great time with us. The region boasts a wide variety of unique attractions. Nature lovers will be spoiled by the very unique and majestic montage of mountains and sea, the infinite opportunities for outings along the shore or in the hinterland. Those of you with an eye for art will be inspired by masterpieces in the many art galleries, museums and studios. Sports enthusiasts won't feel left out either, with many golf courses, family recreation and tourist centres. There is also a wide range of hiking, riding and bicycling.

If you have any questions or if you want some more information about the next convention, don't hesitate to contact us:

Cap-à-l'Aigle - Village des lilas  
Caroline Dion  
Phone number: (418) 665-2127  
E-mail: [villagedeslilas@qc.aira.com](mailto:villagedeslilas@qc.aira.com)  
Website: [www.villagedeslilas.com](http://www.villagedeslilas.com)

## **Tentative Convention Schedule**

### **Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

*From noon to 10 pm:* Registration all day

*4:30 pm:* Cocktail offered by the Cap-à-l'Aigle – Village des lilas Committee

*6 pm:* Welcoming Dinner offered by the Cap-à-l'Aigle – Village des lilas Committee

*From 8 pm to 9:30 pm:* Board of Director's meeting after the welcoming dinner

### **Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

*9 am:* Conference by Mr. Roch Giguère about some of the most beautiful gardens of Charlevoix

*Noon:* Lunch at the Place l'Aiglon Room

*1:30 pm:* Conference by Bruce Pert from the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario about the Mackinac Island Project update

*3 – 5pm:* International Lilac Society lilac Auction

*6:30 pm:* President's Dinner at Lac-des-Pins – Annual meeting after the dinner.

### **Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

*9 am:* Conference about the project of the Garden of Cap-à-l'Aigle

*Noon:* Hot-dog Party

*1 pm:* Official inauguration and visit of the Garden

*3 pm:* Conference by Mr. Larry Hodgson, horticulturist, journalist, contributor to newspaper *Le Soleil*, TV shows and magazines about important gardens of Canada

*6:30 pm:* Awards Banquet (Gastronomic dinner)

### **Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

*9 am:* Sunday brunch provided by the Cap-à-l'Aigle Committee

*11 am:* Activities in the Garden

*Noon:* Departure

## **CONVENTION INFORMATION FOR 2003 by the ILS Convention Committee**

We will soon be preparing for a great treat in Cap-a-l'Aigle Village of Lilacs, Quebec in June 2003. Click onto their website—[villagedeslilas.com](http://villagedeslilas.com)—and you can view photos and descriptions of this little hamlet of unique beauty. The large Royal Eagle sits proudly at the entrance to the community welcoming each visitor.

This will be a convention with some changes from past conventions. It will be located in a northern Canadian site where the French language is mostly spoken, but the residents are friendly and do very well with the English language. All convention activities will be in English. Cap-a-l'Aigle will be holding their annual Lilac Festival for the public while we are there.



**CONVENTION INFORMATION FOR 2003**  
**by the ILS Convention Committee**

As I write this report in early December 2002, a resident reports that their Lilac village is under several feet of snow and the temperature is minus 26 degrees. But in June they promise bright sun, a "higher" temperature and the lilacs will burst forth in great splendor—Mother Nature willing. Temperatures can be a bit cooler - consider some warmer clothing!

We will be housed in several lodging facilities (B&B's and small Inns) each with their own charm and most will be within a short walking distance from each other and the convention activities. There will be a transportation service provided to pick each person up and get us to the functions on time.

Because of the uniqueness of this type of lodging it is VERY IMPORTANT for each registrant to SEND IN their HOTEL and CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORMS (found in this journal) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after receiving them in order to help secure the type of lodging desired. When Cap-a-l'Aigle receives your completed forms, they will send to you a more complete packet of information about the convention activities and how to make your stay a memorable one. This little village welcomes you to their awe inspiring blend of nature and culture.

A reminder regarding the CONVENTION SCHEDULE (included in this journal) —on THURS. JUNE 5 at 4:30pm a WELCOMING event and a 6:00pm WELCOMING DINNER will be part of the pre-convention events which we all should consider attending if you are in town by that time. Consider making your departure from home and arrival in Cap-a-l'Aigle so that you arrive in time to attend these two events. Also, there will be a 9:00am CONVENTION BRUNCH on SUNDAY JUNE 8 which is held to celebrate the end of this convention and hope you can all attend. Then should you desire to stay longer to enjoy the surrounding areas, there will be information available to help you plan for that.

The annual ILS AUCTION will be held as usual ( see article in this journal) and should you have any lilac (non-plant) items which you might donate to the auction you are welcomed to bring them along. Your lilac purchases will come with the required certificates to get them through customs without a problem (the details are still being worked out on this procedure) —so plan to buy a lilac of your choice!! Bruce Peart and Frank Moro are working on obtaining the necessary plants for the auction which will come mostly from Canadian sources since getting the plants through customs from the USA might be a problem.

I hope that the initial information about this convention, as found in several pages and forms in this Lilac Journal, will enable you to begin your planning as early as possible. There are contact names and e-mail addresses listed to assist you if necessary. You may also contact Peter Ely of the ILS Convention Committee at e-mail—SEly634929@aol.com — or phone number—203-888-2628.



## Lilac Auction Update - 2003

The International Lilac Society Convention is still a few months away in June, 2003, but in the middle of the winter we need to know that things are all coming together for the ILS Auction. Here I whet your spring appetite with tasty treats of colour of what to expect at the ILS Auction. This is only the appetizer for the main meal! Through the kind and generous donation from Konrad Kircher, of Germany, Select Plus (Frank Moro), Quebec and myself at RBG here in Ontario, we will have many different cultivars for you to deliberate over. As you can see from the list there are many **'must have'** lilacs for your garden or collection. Start making your wish list now! So get ready for the auction of a lifetime. We are working on having phytosanitary certificates available so returning to other countries after the auction will not be a concern. Also we are looking at having access to debit and credit equipment so you can all purchase your lilacs through either payment method. All of the money raised from the auction goes directly to the ILS account so your eager, successful, and fun bidding will benefit you with your new lilac, and the ILS. Thanks for all of your continuing support. See you at the 2003 Quebec Lilac conference.

## Is Rochester Another One Going Down

By **Bruce Peart, Curator of the RBG Lilac Collection**

From the last Lilac Journal, Fall 2002, we officially hear from the President's Message that the Rochester Lilac Collection has had a fundamental change in the way that they have chosen to do business. Yes, it is a major blow to the Lilac World, but as we reflect back on the years this is not the first time that lilac collections have been placed in jeopardy.

I have not been a part of the lilac world directly for that many years. In the greater picture I have only been directly involved with lilacs in the last five years. A rookie in the lilac world. As the successor of Charles Holetich, I have been endeavouring to fill up his shoes. He was and is a mentor to me in this specialized world, but Charles had retired three years previous to my filling his position. That created an obvious concern! RBG managers were aware of this concern, but circumstances were such that I was asked to fill in this position. It is only now that I realize the magnitude of that decision less than five years ago.

All of the lilac collections throughout the world are made up of living plants - A Museum of Living Plants. A Living Museum is not like a normal museum.

During the 1980's many government-funded public museums were cut back in funds. The Museum operators just 'closed off' this wing and that wing of

the museum and continued their operation under a smaller venue. Even when the doors are closed and locked these areas are still safe and controlled. When the economy recovered, they opened the doors to those wings up again, dusted off the ancient relics and they were back in business.

This does not work with Living Plant Collections. The world continues to turn and the plants continue to grow. Good plants and bad plants will grow for their own space.

The RBG Lilac Collection has been where the Rochester collection is now. I am speaking from experience. The lilac plants and labels are there but nothing happens. Nobody was responsible for the collection. The collection soon began to decline. Each year the grass encroaches a little closer on the precious one-of-a-kind lilacs. In three years the grass and weeds swallow up lilacs, competing for nutrients and water and nothing else is done but to cut the grass around them. No pruning, no fertilization, and with the hot dry summers that most of us have been having over the last few years and will continue to have, no irrigation either.

I feel that Rochester is now heading down the same road. Let's use Rochester for my following example: The grass gets cut weekly and a new rookie lawn service guy could hit a label each time he cuts the grass. In the course of one season there could be 25 less labels in the lilac collection per year. To the lawn mower guy it is just another tree or shrub to cut around. He does not care what this lilac is, or if it is a lilac. The labels make a loud noise as they mulch through the rotary mower. That is the high-light of the lawnmower guy's day! Let's hit another one! Then, if the trees are pruned, the tags may get pruned out and not replaced, or the trees are vandalized for fun on one of those cold and lonely nights in the park. There are a lot of 'ifs' and some of these **will** occur. We can only hope that most of them don't.

If RBG had not replaced Charles' position then I believe the RBG collection would have been in jeopardy too. As I look at the events that will occur in the next five or ten years I do ask myself, where is the ILS going? That is the subject of another report.

I have not painted a pretty picture. With collections that are public city collections or institutional collections it can happen. What about private collections? Will they just 'throw in the towel' some day, or will their successors have the same drive for their lilacs? Is the ILS prepared for this?

What about the Stampe Collection in Davenport, Iowa. I have heard that it is now gone. I also heard a couple of years ago that the city of Leeds, UK had been told that if they did not work on their lilac collection they would forfeit their UK National Status. They decided to work things out just as RBG did to keep the lilac collection alive and well. This is in no way to point the finger at the City of Leeds. Also, the Lilac Collection in Ottawa, Ontario was in jeopardy as well, but here is a good news story.

Volunteers from the Friends of the Farm have been working on restoring and reviving the lilac collection for the last three years. They have shown what can be done in time of need. With their positive attitude, determination, team building and a desire to achieve success, the volunteers are nearing completion: but then, a gardener's job is never done. Knowing quite a few of them they will be on to another project in the garden.

'To keep or not to keep' in a city meeting can be a simple to sort out as the signature of the Major's pen. As the news of Rochester's lilac collection filters down to the rest of the ILS membership the lilacs sit on the slope in Rochester wondering what this spring will bring. But yet they have to get through the winter and hope that the toboggans have some mercy. I wish the remaining staff of the Rochester Conservatory/Highland Park all the luck in the world to keep the collection up to an acceptable standard. After 110 years of history I, as well as many ILS members, would hate to see it 'disappear in the sunset.'

I hope that there are more good news stories out there. If there is a bad news story out there as well, let us know too. Maybe one of us can advise you on what to do.

Sometimes it is just decided with the stroke of the pen. May I conclude with one more cliché: "you don't realize how really great it really is, until after it is really gone". Let's hope not! We can only be hopeful that Rochester **Is Down, but Not Out!**

## Lilacs In The Landscape - Part I

### Introduction

An increasing number of ILS members are not professional horticulturalists but simply gardeners who love lilacs and want to use them in their gardens. There is a large body of literature which describes the flowers of lilacs, and another which describes how to cultivate, propagate and hybridize lilacs. What is more difficult to find is a discussion of how to use lilacs in a garden setting. Where do they look most appropriate? Which types of garden features lend themselves naturally to the use of lilacs? This series of articles will address these and similar questions.

Lilacs provide a very wide spectrum of landscape effects. 'Miss Kim' and 'Tinkerbelle' have a compact rounded form which gives a formal look in the right situation.<sup>1</sup> *S. × sweginflexa* and *S. wolfii* are both statuesque plants with large leaves which can be used effectively to give drama to an area filled with colorful but perhaps somewhat formless flowers. The cutleaf lilac, *S. × lacininata* is especially useful for natural landscaping. The most commonly available lilacs, such as the "old fashioned" purple, white, or magenta, and the newer cultivars of *S. vulgaris* and *S. × hyacinthiflora* (these are what you find in most nurseries - the ones with the showy flowers and delightful smell!) can assume several different characters, depending primarily on how they are pruned. A specimen in an arboretum, well fertilized and carefully pruned to encourage the best floral display, looks as refined as an 18<sup>th</sup> century lady with feathers in her hair. An old lilac, long unpruned and little fertilized, has quite a different effect, but one equally desirable for some types of landscape.

Arboreta usually plant "lilac orchards" where the plants are set out in carefully spaced rows. This is in keeping with their mission of providing the public

with an example of the flowers and plant habit of a large number of lilacs. Arboreta are a great place to start looking at lilacs to see which ones you would like to have in your own garden. They are not the best place to look for examples of how to design a garden full of lilacs, unless the point of your garden is to grow the largest number of lilacs with the least maintenance. In that case, you might consider making your own "lilac orchard".

If you have already created a "lilac orchard" and wish to have a more gardenlike look, one of the upcoming articles in this series will offer suggestions on how to achieve this without major remodeling of your landscape.

If your aim is to create a beautiful garden, including lilacs but also other shrubs as well as flowers and/or vegetables, then more imaginative planting is both possible and desirable. One place to start a garden plan is with the historical uses of lilacs in gardens. Lilacs have been in cultivation a very long time. There is a rich history from which to draw both inspiration for new gardens and historically informed recreations of old gardens.

## **Historical Uses of Lilacs in the United States**

### ***Lilacs from the Colonial Period to the Civil War***

In New England dooryards lilacs<sup>2</sup> may be located near the corners of buildings, by the driveway or the road, or in front of stone walls. Sometimes they are in the middle of a lawn, and a casual look gives the impression they have been sited at random. If they have been planted recently, that may (alas!) be true. But if they are old, it's a good bet they were actually planted near a fence that is no longer there. For until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, every New England dooryard, and most farmyards, had a fence. Nor were fenced yards confined to New England. Pennsylvania and New York, and later Ohio and the more northern states of the Great Plains used the same arrangement. As settlers moved West they took this familiar dooryard garden with them, and planted it with lilacs. Often the dooryard fence began at the front sides of the house, and continued outward to either the road or a stone wall separating the road from front fields. With the advent of the automobile, the approach to the house shifted from the front door to the side door, and the front yard fell into disuse. Eventually, the fence disappeared, as did the flowers and sometimes even the walk, but the lilacs remained.

Lilacs were also used in hedgerows in the earliest settlements, and later in towns they continued to be used for screening. In 1750 Governor Wentworth, of what later became New Hampshire, is reported to have planted lilacs around a terrace just off his council chambers. An 18<sup>th</sup> century terrace would likely have been just a level area of greensward beside the house where the councilors could stroll and talk while the lilac hedge gave them privacy, discouraged the local livestock, and of course in the Spring provided a delightful mix of flowers and fragrance. Reports of lilacs being used as early as 1695 do occur<sup>3</sup>, but garden historians have found reports of such uses difficult to substantiate.

In Virginia lilacs were used in the gardens of the plantations along the James River<sup>4</sup>. At Brandon, lilacs and smoke trees were tied together with yellow Jessamine in a garden which featured boxwood liked walks. Woodbury Forrest estate, situated in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, had a hillside garden with squares of vegetables bordered with flowers and shrubs that also included hedges of lilacs. This garden was planted before the Civil War, and unfortunately did not survive it. Lilacs were used to conceal outbuildings and utilitarian parts of the garden, and in shrub borders for walks.

The one common feature of gardens in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is a layout which is geometrical and frequently features symmetry of some kind. The plantation gardens were the country version of the famous gardens of Colonial Williamsburg, and shared the same design philosophy. The farmyard gardens of New England were the country version of the gardens found in old established towns like Boston and Salem. The settlers of Williamsburg and Boston/Salem were far too close to the wilderness to want it in their gardens – their object was to create an oasis of civilization and refinement. A garden which reflected their image of themselves, and which was clearly “made by man for man”<sup>5</sup>

Even after 1840, when more “natural” features such as serpentine walks came into vogue, American gardens tended to include these within an overall structure that continued to be basically geometric. Jefferson designed serpentine walks for Monticello, but he arranged them symmetrically on either side of a central lawn, backed by groups of shrubs. Lilacs were used here as elsewhere, partly for their beauty and ease of cultivation, but also because they looked so at home in the prevailing garden style. The original lilacs did not survive the years of neglect in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so those you see at Monticello today were planted when the gardens were restored in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Lilacs from the Civil War to the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century***

After the Civil War gardens became increasingly “Victorian”. The Victorian gardeners had an aesthetic which was quite different from that of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were preoccupied with using the many new and beautiful flowers which flooded into Europe and the United States during this period; with using new technology to produce inexpensive (and elaborate) garden features, and with exotic shrubs and trees of all kinds. They liked these new flowers and plants to be noticeable, and they liked to arrange beds of them in such a way that they were hard to miss. Italian Gardens were in vogue, with their very formal layouts embellished with large pots, marble statues, fountains and urns – at least among the wealthy. Lilacs did not fit well into the Victorians’ view of what a garden should be, even though hybridization had already begun producing some of the lush flowers we associate with lilacs today. Lilacs, even the new hybrids, did not look new and different – a distinct disadvantage in the eyes of the Victorians.

Fortunately, gardens changed slowly and limited means and/or a distaste for ostentation kept many people from adopting the new ideas wholesale. Those with existing gardens who “modernized” them often confined their changes to putting in a few curvilinear beds of the new bright annuals in the middle of their

lawn, leaving the basic structure and permanent planting of the garden virtually unchanged. Anyone who has ever tried to remove a mature lilac will understand why they adopted this approach. In vernacular gardens<sup>6</sup> everywhere in the United States, lilacs continued to be grown.

Lilacs, and the "old fashioned" gardens within which they were frequently found, were waiting to be rediscovered by the Colonial Revival movement<sup>7</sup> in the U.S. at the end of the nineteenth century. Colonial Revival gardens created between 1890 and 1930 are among the most charming ever produced in the U.S. They were characterized by strong architecture and exuberant flowers, which is an apt description of lilacs themselves, so it should be no surprise that this is one of the best eras in which to look for historical uses of lilacs. The use of lilacs in gardens during the very late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly Colonial Revival gardens, will be the subject of a future installment in this series.

<sup>1</sup> Note that some cultivars, such as 'Miss Kim', will eventually reach 10-12 feet, although they do retain a rounded and rather formal shape. Ask your lilac supplier about newer cultivars, bred to mature at a smaller size, as new ones continue to be introduced periodically.

<sup>2</sup> Refers primarily to *S. vulgaris*, the only lilac commonly available until hybrids appeared in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> In *The Green Immigrant* by Clare Houghton, the author asserts the first substantiated report of lilacs in North America was in 1695, but she does not cite her source and attempts by Dr. Owen Rogers to trace that source after the death of Mrs. Houghton have been unsuccessful. So we must regard this report as unsubstantiated until the source is found and verified.

<sup>4</sup> *Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia*, edited by Massie and Christian, published by Bonanza Books in New York (4<sup>th</sup> edition).

<sup>5</sup> The early garden-makers of the eastern seaboard of the U.S. had as their model primarily the Tudor (manor) gardens of England, as most of them were gentry rather than cottagers.

<sup>6</sup> These are the "cottage gardens" of Europe, but that term is not usually used in the U.S.

<sup>7</sup> This was similar to the Arts and Crafts movement in England, which produced the famous Lutyns/Jekyll gardens.

## European Newsletter

By Colin Chapman

My potting shed has a floor which is about a foot (30 cm) below ground level. In July it dried out after being flooded for 2 years. As I look out of the window now, in November, I see torrential rain falling onto a saturated, mud-stained landscape through daylight so dirty that the only fit place for it is the tumble-wash. And, oh yes, the potting shed is flooded once more!

After seventeen years of coping with very dry conditions the land seems to have reverted to its ancient state of being a water meadow. I have written about the fatal effects of the floods of the winter of 2000-2001 and these were added to last year. In the spring, five full sized mature lilacs simply wilted and died. A third wet, mild winter in a row would put the collection in great peril.

For years I have stood at the southern fence and looked longingly at the land beyond which slopes gently upward to a spinney (Old English for a small clump of trees) about 200 metres away. In the spinney there is a large pond and the land is free draining and sandier than our clay-with-flints. "If only we could buy that slope", I often sighed.



Well, the offer came suddenly on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. The price was high but we knew that we would have to pay it, and so it was that on October 11<sup>th</sup> the four acre (2 Ha) slope and the spinney became part of Norman's Farm. We must now have it ploughed, harrowed, grass seeded and fenced and then I shall start planting in the late Summer and Fall.

I will leave the existing collection where it is and make a note of which cultivars thrive in the wet conditions (and there are some which clearly do). I will plant the entire back-up collection in the new area. These are all in containers but some are quite large at seven to ten feet tall (2 to 3m). There is space for a shelter belt and for beds to trial my own seedlings. I can grow some lines of plants to sell and I can now plant as many of the rare and precious ones that I want. Above all though, and here comes the bad news guys, I have the space and good conditions to go on collecting. Thanks go to Shelagh who spotted the opportunity and seized the day.

Sadly this means a postponement of a possible English Convention. It will be at least three years before we are putting on a decent show again. In the meantime, any ILS member who passes this way will always be welcome here.

And now my friends for something completely different. Early last February, Shelagh received an application for membership from Mrs. Tatiana Polyakova in Moscow. I duly responded by sending the previous two editions of the Journal and a word of welcome. I mentioned this in LILACS Vol 31 No 2 and commented that finding a contact in Moscow with an interest in lilacs and having perfect English was "the answer to this little Executive Vice President's prayers". I did not realize at the time what a magnificent response I would get from those little, excited prayers.

It so happens that it is not Tatiana who has the perfect English but her younger sister Irina. Since February, we have conducted a three-way correspondence which as been as hilarious as it has been absorbing. The following two articles are the ripe and delicious fruits of that correspondence. I have concocted the "Moscow Diary" from the ladies' own words in their e-mails. When I asked for permission to do this it was graciously given but Irina added these words: - "Do my a favour - make it sound English, because no matter how hard I try it still is Russian translated into English". I think you will agree that someone who can use the phrase "Do me a favour" shows sufficient command of both the American and English Languages to need absolutely no help from me.

I am indebted to Irina's infant son Yegor. Without his tolerant acceptance of confinement in his playpen, Ira could not have found the freedom to concentrate on all this translating. He made the next two articles possible.

Finally, I must express a tincture of disappointment. In my last article I buried two references to the lyric of a great archetypal western settlers' song in my paragraph about the Wupatki National Monument. I mentally decided to donate a Tootsie Roll to the first person to spot it. I have had to eat it myself. Think cloudless skies and playful antelopes. Oh Dear, such subtlety gone to waste!



## Moscow Diary

By Tatiana Polyakova, translated by Irina Semyonova

*March 11, 2002*

A few years ago our family bought a piece of land south of Moscow to build a "dacha" which is an out of town house in the countryside for use in the summer. Each Friday night in the Summer we stand for hours in traffic jams or take overcrowded trains just to get out of Moscow in order to tend our beloved summer gardens.

Originally, it was weedy waste ground with poor clay soil. We started the transformation with such enthusiasm that my father declared "What an unforgettable sight! My daughters with shovels and wheelbarrows full of - Ugh - manure!". We had plans - a pond, roses, peonies but most of all I wanted lilacs.

The pond has been dug and planted. The peonies I already have, the roses are ordered and there are now 35 varieties of lilac in my collection. As yet, just 10 of them have reached the age of five years old and are blooming well. The best are 'Nadezhda', 'Mechta', 'Indiya', 'Galina Ulanova', 'Krasavitsa Moskv', 'Ogni Donbassa', 'Sholokhov', 'Bogdan Khemel'nitskii', 'Kosmos', 'Anne Schiach', 'Flora', 'Sensation', 'Agincourt Beauty', 'Monique Lemoine' and 'Congo'. My absolute favourite is Mikhailov's 'Mulatka' (1).

Finding the plants was not easy because they are usually sold as just white or violet varieties. My search brought me to the Moscow Flora Club - a society of amateur gardeners - where I met other people as fond of the lilac as I am. We decided to start our own section within the club and held our founding exhibition in 2000. As the Chairperson of the Exhibition Committee I can say that both exhibitions were successful despite the difficulties of organizing them. In 2001, the Jury gave First Prize to 'Mechta', Second Prize to 'Pamyat o S.M. Kirove' (2) and the Third Prize was awarded jointly to 'Kosmos' and also to 'Zarya Kommunizma' which visitors invariably called the best.

The members of our section are proud and happy to have Mr. Nikolai Mikhailov among our friends. He is not only the breeder of famous varieties like 'Alenushka', 'Kosmos', 'Ostankino', and 'Yubileinaya', but he is also an experienced and dedicated gardener. He is always open and friendly and ready to help us with advice and provide answers to our questions. Despite his being busy with scientific aspects of hybridization (and the Main Botanical Garden, Moscow, has just registered 7 of his new cultivars - the best of which is named in his honour 'Nikolai Mikhailov'), he often comes to the club to lecture and teach us the art of grafting.

*April 9, 2002*

Thank you for your letter. I called up Mr. Mikhailov straight away after receiving your message. He was very glad to learn about your work and your kind

words about him. "I am happy that there are people abroad who still remember me", he said. And in my turn I am very happy because thanks to your letter I have been invited to visit Mr. Mikhailov's dacha this coming summer. He is 78 this year and he is still a great lecturer. His last talk at the club attracted more than 100 listeners.

I have mailed a new book "Ciren" ("Lilacs") to you which has just appeared in the book stores. It is not the result of professional research but the result of a 50-year love of lilacs. The authors are Mr. Ivan F. Strekalov and his daughter Mrs. Nina I. Potapova and they live in Solnechnogorsk, a small town near Moscow. A landscape designer, Mr. Strekalov has created a collection of lilacs in a garden of 6 hectares (about 12 acres). The lilac collection includes 100 cultivars, 47 of which are Kolesnikovs and he got most of those 47 directly from Kolesnikov's own garden. The book also contains a section on lilac poetry (3).

Last February, I bought an outstanding book about lilacs by Fr Fiala and I would like to learn more about his biography and his work.

### ***June 27, 2002***

May and June have been incredibly busy for me. Early in May I received from Kordes in Germany my order of 70 roses and 16 rhododendrons and all of them had to be planted. On May 22<sup>nd</sup> I visited Mr. Mikhailov at his dacha where his summer house is drowning in roses. As you may already know he is one of the leading Russian specialists in roses. There are four lilacs near the house - "In Memory of Kolesnikov", (4) 'Krasavitsa Moskv', 'Maximowich' and the new one 'Nikolai Mikhailov'. Nikolai Leonidovich and his wife Nina Andreyevna showed incredible hospitality and I had one of the best days of my life.

Spring was very early this year - too early for the show which took place in late May so we could not exhibit many varieties. Despite that, we had a lot of visitors who expressed many kind words and thanked us for the beauty we gave to them again. As in previous years, especially successful were 'Pamyat o S. M. Kirove', 'Mechta' and the rest but Mr. Mikhailov showed us two of his new cultivars - "Nina", named for his wife, and "Sheremetev". I loved both of them. I am going to send you a magazine with Mr. Mikhailov's article which has photos of those cultivars.

At our dacha I am generally busy with fighting the weeds which are a metre high. As a member of the club I went to the Main Botanic Garden to help with deadheading the lilacs. We cut 40 bushes in two hours and got burned by the sun as the temperature was 35 degrees Celsius.

I have very pleasant news to tell you. I meet Kolesnikov's grand-daughter and we made an arrangement for the end of the summer to see the archives of her distinguished grandfather, to show me photographs and tell the history of the famous family.

You may have heard of the large forest fires in the Moscow area. Remaining in the smoke of burning peatbogs made us look like smoked salmon! Under the cover of the smoke I planted my new lilacs at the dacha.

I have a nice collection of peonies, part of which I exchanged for lilacs with Yoshkar-Ola Botanical Garden. So my new lilac collection is enriched with such varieties as 'I.V. Michurin', 'Znamya Lenina', 'Aleksei Mares'ev', 'Leonid Leonov', 'Olivier de Serres', 'Mrs Edward Harding', 'President Poincarre', 'Marechal Foch', 'Emile Gentile' and 'Reamur' (all on own roots). Of all their collection, they can only be sure of these varieties. There is a long tradition in Russia of losing the name labels. (5) I also bought 'Nebo Moskvyy', 'Pamyat o Vekhove', 'Mme Charles Souchet' and 'Emile Lemoine' from the Main Botanical Garden in Moscow but these are grafted. A quick war was fought at the dacha based on the "36 Stratagems" and other tricks of classical Chinese military science. It as fast moving, violent and triumphant. The potato patch has been captured and the new lilacs are planted on it!

I attended the annual International Flower Show at the All-Russian Exhibition Centre. Working at the club stand I met Andrey Nikolayevich Gromov who is a professor and Doctor of Biology and, as you may remember, Kolesnikov's student. After I told him about you and what you do to popularise Russian varieties worldwide, he softened and gave me his home phone number and we made an arrangement to meet in November to talk about his collection. I know he has Kolesnikov lilacs in his garden but he did not tell me at the time what he managed to save.

My next task in the field of hunting rare lilacs is to get a Kolesnikov seedling (no name, lost number) from the Chairman of our section. It is something very special! Large reddish-lilac buds. Florets are lilac with pink shades, diameter 4.5 cm and have petals with raised ends and curved sides. There are pairs of very large, wide-pyramidal panicles on a medium-tall bush with thick foliage. It stands out for the size of the florets and the beauty of the flower clusters. I am prepared to wait for it for years! (6)

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**Footnotes** (By Colin Chapman)

(1) *As soon as I can photograph my own plant in flower I will write a feature on this lilac and its originator. Nikolai Leonidovich Mikhailov, co-author of "Lilac Species and Cultivars in Cultivation in USSR", is one of the fountainheads of our knowledge of the East European cultivars. He co-operated with Charles Holetich to send the original propagating material to RBG Hamilton. He is one of my own personal heroes.*

(2) *Tania actually refers to this plant as "Pamyati Kirova".*

(3) *I have not begun to work on the poems yet but I will!*

(4) *S. Vulgaris 'Pamyat o Kolesnikove'.*

(5) *We are all guilty of that, Tania!*

(6) *Tania e-mailed three pictures of this seedling to me.*

# New Russian Cultivars

By Colin Chapman

In July, I received from Tatiana Polyakova a copy of the magazine "Tsvetovodstvo" (Floriculture) for May-June 2002. It contained an article by N.L. Mikhailov titled "Lilac: new Russian varieties". It featured pictures and descriptions of the seven new cultivars introduced by the author and Nina Ivanovna Rybakina in January of this year.

I cannot produce those pictures but thanks to Tatiana I can show at least one of them on a picture taken in Mr. Mikhailov's garden. Therefore, in mid July I took a deep breath and armed with a Russian-English Dictionary I set about translating the descriptions.

Each completed description I e-mailed to Irina Semyonova and I am indebted to her for her suggestions and refinements. In two very difficult instances she actually consulted Mr. Mikhailov to make sure we had the precise meaning.

These descriptions are, therefore, their first publication in English. No species names were given so I presume that those with 'Esther Staley' or 'Pascal' in their parentage are *S. xhyacinthiflora* and the rest are *S. vulgaris*.

## **'Aria' (As in opera) (Mikhailov, Rybakina, 2002) 'Kosmos' × 'Esther Staley'**

Buds deep lilac; florets with blue shades, bluish lilac, large, diameter almost 3 cm. Single, fragrant. Flower clusters pyramidal, pointed, ribbed, dense, formed from 1-2 pairs of inflorescences, size 25 x 15 cm. Leaf dark green, of typical shape. Bush slightly spreading with height above 2 metres. Blooms abundantly at mid-season. Distinctive for beautiful lilac-blue colouring and dense, candle-shaped clusters..

Single. III-IV (Blue-Lilac).

## **'Elena Rosse' (Famous Russian choreographer who worked for the Bolshoi and other Russian theatres) (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002)**

### **'Esther Staley' × 'Lucy Baltet'**

Buds bright, wine-red; florets lilac-pink (similar to cultivar 'Gortenziya'), large, single, very fragrant; petals oval, undersides coloured more intensely. Flower clusters wide-pyramidal, pointed, dense, firm, 20 x 15 cm. Leaf dark-green. Shrub not too tall, about 2m. deep. Blooms abundantly at the beginning of the season.

Distinctive for its bright, cheerful colour and early flowering of bushes which are not too tall.

Single, V - VI (Pink-Magenta)

## **'Nikolai Mikhailov' (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002) 'Flora' × 'Lady Lindsey'**

Bud violet-purple; florets deep reddish-purple, not fading, large, diameter 2.5 cm, single, fragrant; petals oval with slightly raised ends. Flower clusters from 1 - 2 pairs broad-pyramidal. Silvery, dense, firm inflorescences, 20 x 16 cm. Leaf medium size, dark green, somewhat brownish when young. Bush average size, spreading. Blooms abundantly for a prolonged period from beginning to mid-season.

Distinctive for its bright, unfading colour and long period of flowering (20-25 days).

Single. VI. (Magenta)

**'Nina' (Dedicated to Nina Andreyevna - Mrs Mikhailov) (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002) 'Esther Staley' × 'Krasavitsa Moskv'**

Bud lilac-pink; florets light pink, large, diameter 2 cm, double, with two corollas, fragrant; petals rounded, twisted inside the flower with the inner petals almost white. Flower clusters shapely, pyramidal, filigree, large 22 x 15 cm. Leaf dark-green. Shrub medium-tall, upright. Blooms at beginning of the season.

Distinctive for the tender-rose coloured flowers. Double, v. (Pink)

**'Sheremetev' (Earl Sheremetev, 18<sup>th</sup> century; famous for his exquisite gardens) (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002) 'Kosmos' × 'Esther Staley'**

Buds purple, florets lilac, even shades, very large, diameter 3 cm, single, fragrant; petals rounded, pointed, becoming brighter towards the centre. Flower clusters usually solitary, pyramidal, dense, with those slightly protruding from the lower branches bigger, 30 x 15 cm. Leaf large, dark-green. Shrub tall, upright, producing many shoots.

Distinctive for monumental height and well-proportioned flower clusters.

Single, IV. (Lilac)

**'Skromnitsa' (a modest girl hence, I think, "Demure"). (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002) 'Alenushka' × 'Pascal'**

Buds light lilac-pink; florets pale, straw-coloured rose to white, single, diameter 2 cm. Fragrant; petals rounded with slightly raised ends. Flower clusters usually solitary, narrow-pyramidal, tall, erect, loose. Leaf dark-green. Bush strong, up to 4 metres, broad, powerful. Blooms abundantly to the middle of the season.

Clearly distinctive as if with waxen flowers, within shapely clusters, on a powerful shrub.

Single, VI (Pink-White)

**'Vek' (Century) (Mikhailov & Rybakina 2002) (Parents not given)**

Buds deep lilac; florets light lilac with whitish tips, large, diameter about 2.5 cm, double, made up from 3 - 4 densely layered corollas, petals twisted inside forming tight, compact, rose-shaped florets. Flower clusters oval, dense, from one pair of closely drawn inflorescences, 20 x 25 cm. Pleasant aroma. Leaf dark-green, elongated, pointed. Shrub medium-tall, dense. Blooms at mid-season.

Stands out for abundant double flowers.

Double, IV. (Lilac)

**'Tiny One' (Syringa vulgaris), S V**

Said to be a Hulda Klager introduction, the name appeared without description in an anonymous listing, ILS Newsletter Vol 14, No. 4, p. 3, April 1998; and one by Peg Stenlund in Lilacs Quaterly Journal Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 41, Spring 1991 issue, only as "pink".

Reva reports this to be a single pink (S V).

It is difficult to be accurate when one has not seen the plants but from the photographs of the lilacs in this delightful and informative magazine I can add these comments. Modestly, there was no picture of 'Nikolai Mikhailov' with Mr. Mikhailov's article. The florets of 'Elena Rosse' do indeed resemble those of my own plant of 'Gortenziya' and there is a clear influence from parent 'Esther Staley'. The florets of 'Aria' are large and they open lilac, with blue shade appearing progressively from the eye and the margins. 'Sheremetev' is similar but darker, opening purple and fading to lilac. The rose-shaped florets and oval clusters of 'Vek' are very fine. The parentage of 'Nina' tells you all you need to know. A pinker daughter of 'Krasavitsa Moskv' and from, as Shakespeare put it, "a consummation devoutly to be wished." That just leaves 'Skromnitsa'. The flower is delicate and sparse and, indeed, demure. If she is true to the illustrated colour of clear, pale, breathtaking, rose-pink then I can only confess that she has broken my heart. Without her fragile presence I shall surely wither, and simply fade away.

## Moles In Your Lawn

Dr. John Roberts, the Turf Specialist at the University of New Hampshire has written a bulletin on "Moles in Home Lawns." Apparently this is an age old problem since your Editor found the quote in Martin Hoyle's "The Gardener's Perpetual Almanac" taken from William Thompson's "The New Gardener's Calendar" published in 1779. The quote is this: "To destroy moles. Take some white or black hellebore, the white of an egg, some wheat flower, milk and a little sweet wine, or mead; make it up into a paste, and put pellets of the size of a nut into their holes, which being greedily eaten by them, will occasion their death. Put two or three heads of garlic, leeks, or onions, into their holes, and they will run out greatly terrified, so that they may be easily caught by means of a dog."

Dr. Roberts' recommendations on mole eradication also elicited the following comments from Arch Doty published here with permission of all parties.

### ARCH DOTY

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Mr. John M. Roberts  
University of New Hampshire  
113 Eastern Avenue  
Rochester, NH 03867

September 11, 2002

Dear Mr. Roberts,

As I will eventually be spending a long period of time in New Hampshire ( in the family plot in the Old Cemetery at Jaffrey Center) I am always interested in the latest work being done by the University of New Hampshire.

Thus I was most interested in your paper "Moles in Home Lawns", particularly because, after three miserable years, I have finally solved just that problem.

A brief review of my activities, which have resulted in the untimely death of ALL of the moles and gophers on our three acres, is enclosed for your amazement and elucidation.

As you can appreciate, moles hate having someone dig out the plug of dirt that they always use to fill the entrance to their tunnel. I guess that the opening makes a draft! Thus, the micro switch shown is placed in the opened tunnel entrance, so that it will be activated when the mole tries to "close the front door" by piling dirt into it.

One serious item: If anyone should try to copy the setup shown they should be sure to include a control box (see picture) that has TWO positions for the activating switch. One position allows the micro switch (in the mole hole) to be checked (note the red pilot light on the box) without activating the solenoid that pulls the trigger. The other position energizes the solenoid when a mole piles dirt on the micro switch.. This feature helps to retain fingers.

If you **do** publish any of this data, I would appreciate a copy, please,

Best regards,

## Of Moles and Men

These are the methods that I tried to eliminate moles from our property:

### METHOD

Poison Bait (3 kinds)

Gasoline poured into their holes

Diesel fuel poured into their holes

\$35 Electric vibrator drilled into the ground near mole holes

Mixture of cayenne pepper, Tabasco and detergent.

Sulphur smoke flares

Exhaust from my diesel tractor pumped into the mole holes.

.410 Shotgun aimed down mole hole - with micro switch at end of barrel (to sense when moles push dirt to close their holes). Micro switch is attached to a battery and solenoid that pulls trigger and fires shotgun loaded with a lead slug.

A.C.D., Jr.  
July 2002

### RESULTS

Moles found it delicious

Singed MY eyebrows

Nice chaser after a snack of poisoned bait

Moles dug a hole next to it - apparently liked to listen to the music while nibbling poisoned bait and sipping diesel fuel.

Found to be almost as tasty as the poisoned bait.

Moles dug them out and tossed them on the surface.

Moles found it nice to inhale while eating the poisoned bait, quaffing diesel fuel and listening to the electric vibrator.

### **MURDER!!**





## Central Regional Report

By Irene Stark

As one of the members of the ILS who attended the 2002 lilac convention in California at the Descanso Gardens, it was wonderful to see and smell so many in full bloom. I returned home looking forward to seeing my own in Michigan in May. However, Mother Nature had other plans. In our area of western Michigan we had a very warm spell with daytime highs in the 50's to 60's for days and then a drop in temperature to 15 degrees with a foot of snow.

It was the worst year in memory for lilacs. All of my newest, youngest plants had most of their buds frozen and never opened. The old 'Monique Lemoine', 'Ludwig Spaeth', and 'Glory' supplied me with many fragrant bouquets to take to our local favorite restaurant as I have done for years. The elder customers really appreciate seeing the vases of lilacs, and so many tell the story of the ones they planted so many years ago back on their farms or by their homes in town. It is wonderful to see their faces when they catch sight or the smell of the lilacs. Many touch them to see if they are real. Last year I had 'Sensation' in the bouquet and most people had never seen anything of that color before. It was quite a hit.

After a disappointing show of lilacs at home, we crossed the state to Emmett near Port Huron to visit at Bill Horman's Sunny Fields. It proved to be the highlight of early summer - late spring. The lilacs, and so many, were in full bloom. Sunny Fields isn't just lilacs - it is so much more and lovely every season of the year. Bill has a large collection of crabapple trees, many the works of Father Fiala. The one I thought was the most beautiful was named American Masterpiece. He has an extensive accumulation of rare trees, shrubs and flowers, too. Of special interest to me was a weeping mulberry that produced fruit. My sister had been trying to locate one for years and was told that the weeping mulberry trees sold today did not produce fruit. Leave it to Bill Horman to find the "real thing." My husband and I enjoyed our day with our gracious host, Bill and Major, his large, friendly dog.

The leaves were so late to fall that it was November before they got tillered into the garden, after another hot, dry summer. All of us that have gardens in these cold states are ready for the cold winter and the snow, so we can sit inside, rest and look at the seed and plant catalogs that are starting to arrive--well, we can just as soon as we get the snow cleaned off of the driveway.

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## Editor's Note

Are you going to be in New England any time in February or March? If so, you might like to volunteer to help Evie King and Roger Coggeshall in one or more of the Nursery and Flower Shows to be held in 2003.

### **ILS EDUCATIONAL - MEMBERSHIP BOOTHS**

New England members plan to participate in two shows this coming year. Our purpose is to promote Lilacs and membership in ILS

#### **New England Grows 2003:** *Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Mass.*

February 5 <sup>th</sup> Booth Set-up	February 7 <sup>th</sup> 7 am - 5 pm
February 6 <sup>th</sup> 7 am - 5 pm	February 8 <sup>th</sup> 7 am - 2 pm

This Wholesale trade show drew over 13,500 Green Industry Professionals in 2002. Complimentary meeting space can be arranged in advance if we desire. Most ILS Nursery members have registered for the show. There are three full day passes available for anyone not registered. Additional day passes, if needed, can be purchased in advance for \$7.00 each.

#### **People, Places & Plants 2003 Spring Flower & Garden Show:**

*New location is Scarborough Downs in Scarborough, Maine.*

*March 5 Booth Set-up March 6-9 Tentative hours 10 am - 8 pm.*

*There will be ample free parking and vendor passes.*

As in the past, Syringa Plus will supply educational materials, photos, etc. for the exhibits. Members are needed to man the booths and talk Lilacs. All suggestions are welcome. For further information please contact Roger or Evie at:

**Syringa Plus**  
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**Phone: 978-352-3301 Fax: 978-352-3313**  
**E-mail: SyringaEvR@aol.com**

## Reviving a Lilac Collection: *Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm*

Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) have been working for the last two years, along with the horticulture staff of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), on the rejuvenation and restoration of the lilacs on this federally owned farm. At last count, there are over 700 lilacs of 302 types, including 42 cultivars originated by Isabella Preston at CEF. Our consultant and advisor is Bruce Peart, Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ontario, Canada.

Bruce has given demonstrations on pruning techniques, presented an informative lecture, searched for obscure references in the RBG library, and answered innumerable questions regarding lilacs. He has also supplied stock to replace some of the aging plants in our collection as well as adding to our Preston Heritage Collection.

The CEF was established by the Canadian government in 1886, the central one of five experimental farms across Canada, to assist farmers with adapting plants and animals to the Canadian climate. Although the main concern was agriculture, a major industry at the time, areas were allocated for an Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens, as beautifying Canadian gardens was also an early objective. Several scientists devoted themselves to horticultural research and breeding, among them Isabella Preston, whose lilacs, featured in the CEF collection, are world famous.

In 1998 CEF was designated a National Historic Site and a Cultural Heritage Landscape which further defines the land's use and evolution. The Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens have always been open to the public and are much enjoyed and valued by Canadians and visitors from abroad. Over the past number of years there has been a gradual reduction in funding for the horticultural segment of the Farm, as this is no longer part of AAFC's core objectives. As a result, the Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens staff has been reduced mainly to maintenance. At that time, AAFC appointed and paid for a senior employee as caretaker, who recruited a core group of volunteers from AAFC retirees and others from all walks of life, the beginning of the Friends of the Farm. They took up the job of preserving, maintaining and restoring the Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens. Many of those volunteers have extensive horticultural knowledge which has been invaluable in the restoration and rejuvenation of those parts of the Farm.

The Lilac Team exists to ensure continuation of the lilac collection established in the early years of the Farm, especially cultivars developed by Ms. Preston and other Canadians. Responsibilities include identification and tagging of all lilacs, bringing nomenclature up to ILS standards, and considerable pruning of older and overgrown specimens. The team is currently developing a database that will include the description of all the lilacs on the Farm, and photos are being accumulated. Cuttings are being taken from our aging lilacs (many date back to the '40s and '50s), to ensure true replacement stock. The Lilac Team also contributes to the AAFC Herbarium, to ensure that all cultivars are represented in the collection.

All this work will make the Farm's lilac collection more accessible to the public and other institutions. We are grateful to Bruce Peart and the Royal Botanical Gardens for all their help and guidance, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for all their assistance, and the Board of the Friends for their financial support and encouragement.

Joan Speirs and George Vorauer, Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (Contact through Bruce Peart)



*Tatiana Polyakova at the Moscow Show 2002.*



*Nikolai Mikhailov with his new cultivar "Nina."*



