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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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LILACS 2005

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IN MEMORIAM –

Walter Oakes

Walter Warren Oakes of 11 Pine Street, Dixfield, Maine, passed away on Friday, March 12, at the Victorian Villa in Canton.

He was born on July 7, 1928, in Ridgelyville, Maine, the son of Emery and Helen Davis Oakes. He received his secondary education in New Brunswick, Canada, and Mexico, Me. He graduated from Mexico High School in 1949, after serving in the U.S. Navy. He was also a graduate of Bentley College. On September 14, 1950, he married Gloria Kimball, who predeceased him on January 16, 2000.

He was employed for many years as an accountant at Oxford Paper Co., was manager of the West Paris branch of the Maine National Bank, and later was an auditor for the Bureau of Maine's Elderly until his retirement.

Walter was a Mason and served for a number of years as secretary of the Blazing Star Lodge. He was a founding member of the International Lilac Society, for which he also served as corporation secretary.

Walter was a devoted husband and father. He will be remembered by many for his generosity, for his knowledge of and love of plants and antiques, and especially for his lilacs. He is survived by his daughters, Valerie Wolstencroft of Dixfield and Melissa Jordan of Greenville, South Carolina, his sons, Warren of Auburn and David of Ayer, Mass., his sisters, Dorothy Chopping of Dixfield and Ethel Hathaway of Bath, New Brunswick; his brother, Clifford of Dixfield and Leesburg, Fla., Nieces and a nephew.

He was predeceased by his parents, his sister, Patricia Ruff, and his nephew, Jimmy Hathaway. A graveside service will be held in the spring.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I write, quite fortuitously, on St Valentine's Day. It is windy and damp with touches of sleet and snow in the air and not entirely the sort of day to inspire the writing of immortal, amorous prose. Nevertheless, out there, on the front paddock beneath the great Grey Poplar (*Populus canescens*), the snowdrops are in flower and, right on cue, the bright yellow flowers of the St Valentine's Day Crocus have appeared. I noticed them when I collected the post at the gate this morning and they certainly lifted my heart out of the gloomy mire of the miserable morning weather. They also carried me through the disappointing discovery that there were no secret greetings in the post box from all my imagined hordes of anonymous admirers. Oh well, I can only hope for better luck next year and simply note that, for now, the daffodils are pushing through and Viburnum 'Dawn', *Hamamelis mollis* 'Pallida', and the winter flowering honeysuckle are flowering joyfully in the murk, so I know that Spring is on its way.

If you have not already done so, now is the time to sign up to a visit to Boston to attend the Convention and Annual meeting. Jack Alexander and Steve Schneider have put together a full and fascinating programme, the details of which are included in this edition. If anyone can donate unusual lilacs to the auction then please inform Woody Barnes so that he can prepare a list of plants for sale. Remember, it is only at Society auctions that very rare lilacs are offered for sale from private collectors and botanical garden collections. If you have never attended a Convention, now is the time to join us. You will have fun, I guarantee. I attended a Convention in 1991 and was so beguiled that, if I can make it, this one will be my twelfth.

I also urge you to pick up your pens and vote for the candidates for the election to the Board. We have entered a difficult period when most of the giants who created this Society are no longer with us. We who succeed them must plot the way forward. I have pledged my intention to follow the way that the originators showed us, and also to modernise that way in order to accommodate the changes that have been made in information technology. I have invited certain members to stand for election to the Board over the next two years because I believe that each one of them has the experience and the new ideas to take us forward. You can feel confident in voting for any of them because they will carry the Society into the future when the likes of myself are gone.

In the last edition I urged you all to try your hands at writing something for this Journal. It has subsequently occurred to me that some of you might do so but then stop and wonder if what you have created is of sufficient worth to be published. If you have such doubts then just e-mail a copy to me (to lilacprez@hotmail.com) and I will take a look and offer any advice that I can.

Colin Chapman
Wyverstone
England. February 14th 2005

INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER 3

It has not been a good twelve months. Affairs of State, illness and expensive crimes, of which the theft of the beloved Kubota tractor has been the most damaging, have not left us in good shape. We could not let the new land get out of hand, so all our energies have been directed to planting and maintaining that, which means the house and the old part of the garden have, of necessity, been neglected. Thus events have conspired to prevent me doing much in the international field.

I am, however, delighted to record the memberships of Dr. Irina B. Okunova and Dr. Voronchikhin who are, respectively, lilac curators at the Main Botanic Garden, Moscow and the Botanical Garden of Moscow State University. For the reasons mentioned above, I have not yet had the time to compose an appropriate welcome for such leading luminaries. I will do so sometime in the future when I have had the time to translate parts of the three superbly illustrated and produced articles that I have by Dr. Okunova, and when I have researched the backgrounds to the unique Kolesnikov-Mironovich cultivars that are in the University Syringetum. We now have a growing and fruitful membership throughout the Russian Federation thanks to our active and influential Regional Vice President, Tatiana Polyakova.

Actually, the tale from home is not quite as woeful as reported above. Two year's ago, the Royal Horticultural Society sent a photographer and style designer to make a double page plate showing seventeen lilac flower heads mounted on a background of overlapping lilac leaves. Those seventeen lilacs were selected because they were flowering unblemished at the time of the visit, which followed a few days after a vicious air frost. A month ago they phoned and gave me just three weeks to submit an article to go with the picture. That was done and the article will be published in the May edition of the RHS Journal "The Garden".

Last year, a professional photographer spent a whole day working here. At the same time I gave an interview to a journalist who has proved to be a great friend of the collection and has given us very good exposure in the past. The result of their collaboration will be a feature in a new magazine called "Garden Life". One of the pictures that Marianne Marjerus spent an hour perfecting was of a sublime, full yellow-coloured 'Primrose' standing alongside my own 'New York!' which was also in flower. This will be the first national exposure of 'New York!' It will be in the June edition, which actually comes out at the end of May, on the first day of the Chelsea Flower Show. I think, therefore, that we can expect a great deal of interest to attend this year's flowering.

Finally, I have received this letter. I publish it for you without comment because it does indicate some dissatisfaction with my sensitivities.

Dear Sir,

In the first of your President's Messages you mentioned a penguin, out on the ice-shelf, planting Fr Fiala's 'Glacier'. I am surprised to find that someone in your position cannot tell his Antarctic from his elbow but it takes all sorts to make a world. For your information, I am not a penguin I am a Polar Bear, working out on the Arctic shelf and I am, in fact, growing Father's 'Avalanche'. I am rather concerned that you get the cultivar right. You might be able to deduce from the following description that it is my absolute favourite single white lilac because it goes so well with my new winter coat.

Syringa vulgaris 'Avalanche'. Fr. J. L. Fiala, Medina Ohio, 1983.

From a cross between 'Flora 1953' and Havemeyer's 'Carley' it has formed a shrub which stands about eight feet tall (2.5m) after ten years. The leaf is dark green in colour and this makes a good contrast for the dense, medium sized flower heads, which are a bright, clear white. These are borne at the ends of long, arching stems which are bent almost horizontally under their weight, so that they do resemble lumps of precariously balanced snow which are just about to slide.

The florets are a good size, single, and they have lobes that are long with a tendency to reflex backwards, fold inwards, and then adopt a propeller twist. Thus it is a lilac which satisfies when viewed from a distance and also when studied in close-up. It is what we call out here a true cool dude who just invites you to linger alongside and chill out for a while. Yaba-daba-doo! Get one, and get real!

Yours sincerely,

Ursus Alba (Mr.)

(but aka *Thalarctos maritimus*, should Freek happen to read this).

Norman's Farm. March 1st 2005.

COVERS

FRONT: Walter Oaked produced this weeping standard by grafting a weeping seedling onto an upright seedling.

BACK: The lilac walk at the Arnold Arboretum in the "Good Old Days"

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

This issue (out in Summer, 2005) will contain all the convention reports. If you plan to submit a report, please get it to the Editor early on to prevent delaying the issue.

QUARTERLY REMINDER

This is a good time to get a soil test so you can promptly get lime and/or fertilizer for good growth the rest of the season.

EDITOR'S NOTES



from Bill Horman

In 1996 George Walker became the first black composer to win a Pulitzer Prize for his composition "Lilacs". (CD album called "*Lilacs for voice and Orchestra: The Music of George Walker*" Summit Records DCD274) In 2000 he was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame.

2005 CONVENTION INFORMATION

Convention Highlights

Thursday Evening: We will have a First Timer's Reception for all of us to gather and welcome members new or old, who are attending their first ILS convention.

Friday: The "Syringa Sketchbook" will be local folks doing very short (5-10 minute) talks. They are going to speak about their personal association with growing and or selling lilacs. Friday evening, our after-dinner speaker will be Jim Gorman. He will speak on Frederick Law Olmsted and Boston's Emerald Necklace. The emerald necklace is the park system that surrounds our downtown. It was designed by Olmsted. <http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/index.cgi>

Saturday's Speakers: "An Update on the Lilac Family Tree" – Benjamin Michael Goldman – Huertas & Jianhua Li. This is an update on the DNA research of Syringa and Ligustrum that Jianhua presented in the Lilac Society meeting in 2001. Benjamin is a Harvard student who is working with Jianhua on this project.

"Making Sense of Lilac Scents" - Nina Theis. Nina is a Putnam Fellow at the Arnold Arboretum. She is interested in the ecology and evolution of fragrance emission. Her primary work at the Arboreum has focused on the evolution of floral scent in honeysuckles, but she has begun some preliminary work on lilacs.

Boston Massachusetts, May 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2005

Jack Alexander and Steve Schneider, co-chairing the convention: tel. 617-524-1718

Lilacs2005@arnarb.harvard.edu

Our hotel, the Boston Marriott Quincy, is just outside of the city of Boston in Quincy, MA, near major highways and ample free parking.

<http://www.QuincyMarriott.com>

Only 8 miles from downtown Boston and 12 miles from Logan International Airport, in the historic city of Quincy. Guest amenities include a Concierge Level, business center, health club, pool, sauna and whirlpool.

Getting There: http://www.massport.com/logan/getti_typeo_taxis.html#M

Driving from the north, Boston or from Logan International airport: Follow I-93 South to Exit 7 (route3), immediately take Exit 18 (Braintree/Quincy), bear Left off ramp (at sign "T" Trainstation/Quincy), follow to traffic lights and turn Left onto Center St., then immediate left into Crown Colony Park; the Hotel is ¼ mile, on Left.

Taxi from Logan Int'l Airport, expect to pay \$35 - \$40 one way.

From the West: Mass Pike (I-90 E): Exit 14 onto I-95 South (MA-128) toward South Shore/Cape Cod, 13 miles; (Caution, I-95 exists right, and straight ahead becomes I-93 N) Take I-93 North (US 1 North) toward Braintree/Cape Cod 7 miles to Exit 7 and follow directions above.

From the South: I-95 North to Exit 12, I-93 North (US 1 North) toward Braintree/Cape Cod 7 miles to Exit 7 and follow directions above.

Note: If you plan to rent a car, consider flying into Providence, RI (South of Boston) or Manchester, NH (North of Boston.) These airports are smaller, friendlier and easier to access, but getting from them to the hotel by taxi will cost approximately \$100 one way.

The cities of Boston and Quincy have an abundance of historical, cultural and entertainment attractions. You may wish to extend your stay to allow time to visit some of them.

<http://attractionguide.com/boston/>

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60745-Activities-Boston_Massachusetts.html

<http://www.historictours.com/boston/default.htm>

<http://www.discoverbostontours.com/>

<http://www.bostonducktours.com/>

A good historical look at Boston

Pre-settlement: <http://www.iboston.org/mcp.php?pid=taleOfTwoBostons>

Post-settlement: <http://www.umkc.edu/imc/boston.htm>

2005 CONVENTION – TENTATIVE AGENDA

Thursday, May 12

10:00 – 1:00 Registration

1:15 Board Buses to Adams National Historical Park – Home of 2 Presidents

<http://www.nps.gov/adam/> See gardens, including lilacs, planted by Abigail Adams.

http://www.ppplants.com/magazine/articles/articles_ne/39/39.html

5:00 Buses return to Marriott

5:00 – 9:00 Registration

5:30 – 8:30 Directors' Meeting

7:00 – 9:30 First Timer's Reception – Let's all welcome those who've never attended one of our Conventions.

Friday, May 13

8:00 Board Buses to Syringa Plus <http://www.syringaplus.com/>

John Thurlow's "hobby" lilac nursery

Newbury Perennial Gardens and Nursery

<http://www.newburyperennialgardens.com/>

Lunch and Annual Meeting

Syringa Sketchbook – Several very short talks by local folks.

King's Tree Farm and Nursery

<http://www.syringaplus.com/kings/index.htm>

5:30 Return to Marriott

7:00 President's Dinner followed by Speaker: "Olmstead and Boston's Emerald Necklace" – Jim Gorman

Saturday, May 14

7:30 – 8:00 Directors' Meeting

8:15 Board Buses to Arnold Arboretum

http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/plants/lilac_intro.html

Linger in this lilac collection whose oldest plant, a Japanese tree lilac, dates from 1876. It is believed to be the oldest specimen of *Syringa reticulata* in North America.

Bus Tour of Arboretum.

Lilac Tour

Lunch

Speaker: Lilacs, Culture and Care

Auction

5:00 Return to Marriott

7:00 Awards Banquet

Sunday, May 15:

OPTIONAL – *additional fee, see registration form*

10:00 Buses to Arnold Arboretum for Lilac Sunday Celebration

2:30 Buses return to Marriott

Sunday, after the official end of the Convention, thousands of Bostonians, young and old, will be enjoying Lilac Sunday at the **Arnold Arboretum**. It is the day when Boston's populace gathers to usher out winter and celebrate spring, by reveling among the blooming lilacs.

2006 CONVENTION INFORMATION

Next year's convention is all set. It will be held In Woodland, Washington/Portland, Oregon, USA, April/May of 2006. The Hulda Klager Lilac Garden, and a National Historic site, will welcome ILS for its 35th convention during "Lilac Days" when the lilacs "are in full bloom and the fragrance is almost overwhelming." The gardens also sell thousands of lilacs during their Lilac festivities. Hulda Klager, known as the 'Lilac Lady', was a leading horticulturist and lilac hybridizer. Other nearby sites we could visit are: the Hoyt Arboretum, the Leach Botanical Garden, Portland's first class parks and gardens, and the famous International Rose Test Garden.

2007 is pending. Planning for a meeting at Mackinac Island is underway.

BIOGRAPHIES OF ILS BOARD NOMINEES

John Alexander 111

Plant Propagator of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University since 1976. Speaker and writer of the lilac and plant propagation. Third generation nurseryman. An active member of ILS, presently serving as a Member of the Board. Awarded the most prestigious Award of Merit from the International Plant Propagator's Society. One Eastern Region member is selected each year for significant contributions to the field of plant propagation. This can be in the form of scientific discovery or application of facts to the propagation of plants development of new practices or techniques; services rendered to the science and practice of plant propagation, and/or extraordinary service to the Society.

He is a recipient of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's Jackson Dawson Medal. He often speaks and writes on the subject of lilacs and plant propagation. He teaches popular classes on these topics in the adult education program at the Arnold Arboretum. In addition to gardening, Jack may be found cross country skiing with his Siberian Husky dogs, riding his vintage Norton motorcycle or piloting his Cessna airplane.

Jack has been a member of the IPPS Eastern Region since 1977, and has not missed an annual meeting since. He has moderated at the annual meeting or presented papers no less than 30 times. Jack has faithfully served the Eastern Region on several committees (Fellow and Award of Merit committees as well as the Local Site Committee). He served as a Director on the Board of Directors from 1997-1999 and was named a Fellow of the Eastern Region in 1995.

The International Plant Propagators' Society is a non-profit organization of nearly 2500 members organized into eight separate regions around the world. The membership is made up of those with a professional interest in plant propagation from businesses, colleges and universities, botanic gardens and arboreta. The motto of this non-commercial organization is "To Seek and To Share" knowledge and experience in plant propagation. Jack Alexander has exemplified this motto through his research, his publications and his lectures.

Nicole Jordan

Long term involvement with several plant societies in leadership capacity. Organized plant festivals in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Presently a Garden Judge for the American Hemerocallis Society and member of the Botanical Garden, Richmond, Va. An avid plant person with lilac and flower gardens, Nicole is presently serving as ILS Regional VP for the South.

Aldona Kasper

One who enjoys the making of beautiful gardens, having collections including lilacs, daylilies, rhododendrons and numerous perennials. An enthusiastic member of ILS for the past 10 years, helping support New England lilac events. A member of the local Natural Science Center helping with various projects.

Karen McCauley

Growing lilacs on a prairie homestead in Minnesota has been her gardening interest. A long experience of doing volunteer work with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and various plant societies. Appointed last year to fulfill a vacancy on the Board of Directors for ILS

Kent Millham

Employed at the Highland Botanical Park in Rochester, N.Y. for 30 years in various horticultural positions, including plant propagation. Presently responsible for the maintenance of the Lilac and Iris collections, as well as designing floral gardens in the Arboretum. An active member of numerous plant societies. Currently a member of ILS Board of Directors.

Eric Weizel

A long time garden and nursery professional, having worked for many years at the Western Nurseries, MA. For several years he has been the owner of Fox Hill Nurseries in Maine, specializing in growing and selling lilacs. He has often helped to promote ILS activities at garden shows in New England. He has managed the local Farmers Market and has been a member of the Maine Landscape and Nursery Association for many years.

Jeffery Young

A US Government employee working on infrastructure improvement, electronic communication and database management. Soon to be curator of the Lilac Collection at the Vermont Horticultural Farm and a Vermont Master Gardener. Presently working with various horticultural groups in the Vermont area developing garden projects and data management programs. He is helping to start an ILS chapter in New England.

NEW LILAC COLLECTION

By Craig Hibben

This is a follow-up on the 'Witches Broom' article published in the Winter issue.

The lilacs are located in the Lasdon Park and Arboretum, Somers, NY. Lasdon is operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation of Westchester County, NY. I work at Lasdon as a volunteer.

In 1991, I transferred to a nursery at Lasdon the lilacs I had used in my research at the Brooklyn Botanic Research Center. We accumulated additional lilacs largely by donations. Two ILS members were especially helpful. Max Peterson kindly sent me many transplants from his collection, and Jack Alexander allowed us to harvest cuttings for rooting from several Arnold Arboretum lilacs.

In 1999, we transplanted the lilacs held in the Lasdon nursery to a series of nine oval beds prepared along a winding walkway in the arboretum. To display the variability in shrub characteristics, flower color, and time of bloom, we designed five beds with *Syringa vulgaris* cultivars, and four beds with hybrids and species other than *vulgaris*.

Included were beds with early and late blooming lilacs. Additional plantings were made each year to reach a total of 90 specimens, most of which have thrived. Following an exceptionally wet spring in 2003, we lost about one quarter of the collection because of sites with poorly drained soil. After sinking drain pipes and replanting on raised beds, we hope to restore the collection to full health and will be able to entertain visitors.

I was delighted to hear from you. Forgive me for abandoning ILS for so long, but I became very involved in another equally worthy organization, the NY Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, which is supporting a genetic engineering research program at Syracuse University. As a cooperator in this program I helped plant and manage a 400-tree chestnut seed orchard, also at Lasdon.

PEST ALERT: THE EMERALD ASH BORER

By Kent Millham

Although the International Lilac Society is all about the genus *Syringa*, we should also be concerned about dangers to our native trees and shrubs. An exotic pest is now in the United States that presents a grave danger to all native ash trees. It is the Emerald Ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis*. It probably arrived in the US via ash pallets or crating material. It is established in southeastern Michigan, where around 10 million ash trees have been killed

by the larvae feeding in the cambial regions of native and cultivated varieties of ash. It is also established in Windsor, Ontario, as well as outbreaks in Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, and Virginia.

Not only is this pest a threat to native forests, but also a threat to nursery businesses and logging in the infected areas. Some infected ash trees that were illegally shipped to Maryland from Michigan caused an outbreak there, and then in Virginia when 121 were shipped from Maryland to Virginia. The beetles and larvae can also be present in logs and firewood, so the logging and firewood industries in the infected areas are affected. In fact, there is now a \$4,000 fine for transporting ash tree lumber or firewood from Michigan.

In its native habitat of Asia, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) attacks several species of *Fraxinus* (Ash), *Juglans* (Walnut), and *Pterocarya* (Wingnut). So far in North America only green, white and black ash and some cultivars have been attacked. EAB doesn't discriminate between healthy or diseased ash trees, and has been known to attack branches from one inch to trunks of 55 inches!

The insect causing all of the damage is an attractive, glossy green beetle ranging from 7.5 to 13.5 mm (about 1/2"). The larva, however, grows to slightly more than 1" long. It is the larvae which cause all of the damage to the ash trees, by feeding on the phloem and outer sapwood of the tree. This causes a disruption to the vascular system of the trees and girdling of the trunk and branches. Symptoms first seen are a thinning of the canopy, which is also a symptom of ash dieback. Later, as more of the branches are girdled, epicormic shoots or watersprouts appear, usually at the juncture of live and dead tissue. An important sign to look for is the distinctive D-shaped exit holes that the adult beetles make when emerging from the tree from June to late July. Also look for increased woodpecker activity, as they feed on EAB. Woodpeckers leave holes with jagged edges when searching for these insects. Another symptom is vertical cracks in the bark, caused by callus tissue over the feeding galleries of the larvae, which pushes against the bark and cracks it. Death of the tree usually occurs in 3-4 years.

It is important to stop the advance of this exotic pest before it causes devastation to our forests such as chestnut blight did to the American Chestnut, and Dutch Elm disease and phloem necrosis did to the American Elm. If you think an ash tree may be infested with EAB, be sure to contact your County Extension Agent, State Dept. of Agriculture, or USDA Forest Service. More information can be found on websites about EAB from the USDA Forest Service (<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/eab/>), Michigan Dept. of Agriculture (<http://www.michigan.gov> keyword emerald ash borer), or Michigan Multi-Agency Emerald Ash Borer Web Site (<http://www.emeraldashborer.info>).

Note: research for this article was taken from the January 2004 Pest Alert of the USDA Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, Northeastern Area. Also, an excellent article appeared in the October 1, 2004 issue of *American Nurseryman*.

A LILAC TRIO

By Eugene and Gail Fox

This past lilac season was very sweet for us at our rural residence. We had endured three years of drought and also three years of lilacs with meager blooms with very shortened panicles and tiny florets. Finally, last year, we received good fall rains and plentiful snow cover, which melted off and raised the spring water tables for 2003. Then, soft rains kept up the life giving supply of moisture for all the early growing and budding season. Our lilacs seemed to bulk up before our eyes with plentiful leaves and generous new growth. Each and every panicle elongated nicely and each and every thyrse filled out generously. As the lilac buds swelled, so did our hopes for a good bloom season. We have about 80 named cultivars of lilac and species plus well over 130 hybrid lilacs from our own preplanned and controlled crosses growing in our yard and fields. With that investment in time and plants, it may be seen that we are not just into a passing lilac fancy.

As the bloom season started, it was clear that a super year was upon us. Among the first lilacs to offer bloom were two hyacinthiflora clones from the work of Frank L. Skinner. Specifically, they were 'The Bride' in white and 'Maiden's Blush' in pink. The large panicles on huge thyrsi were magnificent. Both these plants were so vested with life that when cut and put into a vase would continue to open over three or four days. As the term hyacinthiflora implies, the fragrance was intoxicating. Just as the sun moved below the tops of the very tall trees to the west of our ranch yard a bit of shade would fall over the two hyacinthiflora lilacs and it seemed the fragrance would intensify around the yard. If a bit of a breeze was coming from the northwest, one could be downwind a hundred yards and catch the charm of it and be swept up in the wonder of it all. All of the long evenings of the early summer both the 'Maidens Blush' and 'The Bride' were heavy bloomers. They are covered yearly from tip to ground with panicles of floral delight. The many pink shades in the 'Maiden's Blush' give pleasant texture and permit light to dance off the flowers in all directions. The pure white and large panicles of 'The Bride' make it visible from afar and even when the night falls it stands out majestically. We would be walking by late after working or watering in the warm evenings in the fields and admire the blooms in the nightlight from the moon.

Before these early hyacinthiflora blooms were more than halfway through bloom, Father Fiala's 'Wonder Blue' opened. Those big pastel blue florets are a wonder for certain. Gail was elated and picked and arranged large tricolored bouquets for Gene's sister and niece. The ladies at Gail's hair salon also drew a bouquet or two in those three colors. The pastel pink of 'Maiden's Blush', 'the Bride' in pure white and the powder blue of 'Wonder Blue' all went together with the grace only nature imparts to colors of flowers. So many



Fox Seedling S. vulgaris x The Bride



Maiden's Blush 6-yr old Shrub



The Bride



The Bride Upclose



Wonder Blue



Maiden's Blush

Meyeri paliban & Swallowtail



people still expect all lilacs to be the small-floreted, lilac lavender that is so characteristic of *S. vulgaris*. Gail transported those novices from that low level of appreciation to new heights with her bouquets. So many people asked and then visited the ranch yard and fields to revel in the many hues we grow. Some of the work Gene is doing in hybridizing drew a lot of attention. He likes to hybridize with hyacinthiflora such as 'The Bride' or 'Maiden's Blush' to enlarge on the fragrance one can get with *S. vulgaris* clones. He tends to pick large floret *vulgaris* hybrids and cross them with a hyacinthiflora to keep good floret size, fragrance and copious bloom from top to bottom. Both 'Maiden's Blush' and 'The Bride' are very precocious. That is, they start to bloom as very young plants of two feet in height. They can have 8 or 10 large panicles of bloom when barely knee high shrubs.

Gene also likes to cross his lilacs into hybrids with 'Rochester' breeding or even 'Rochester' itself. 'Rochester' brings surprises in floret size, color and growth rates to the seedlings. Gene has a line of lilacs from his own hybridizing that have recurved (turned back) florets and these are also given parental roles. The panicles of recurved florets look smoother and more knitted together than flat-floreted panicles. Gene is careful about parentage and tags each of his crosses with tiny plastic tags carrying the names of the pod parent and the pollen parent and the number of the cross. He likes double flowers, but does not seem to hybridize much for that aspect. Double flowers do occur however from time to time. He is trying to get bicolor lilacs that are natural and not chimeras such as 'Sensation'. 'Sensation' cannot pass along that super picotee mutation by breeding as it is not programmed into the genes. Rather, the picotee pattern of 'Sensation' comes from a mutation of an adult lilac and can only be passed on by growing cuttings or grafting. Gene, however, has some young lilacs among his seedling crosses that are both deep red and pink and others that are darker blue with white stars in the center of each floret. Now we have to wait to see if they retain that coloration as they grow into mature plants. Gene says if he could tend to more plants, he could likely reach his goals sooner, but cannot transplant, water and weed huge numbers of new seedling lilacs, which would take the fun out of the hobby.

Several people ask him how many lilacs he has named and registered and he says "none". He says he doesn't know enough about all the named lilacs to know if his are any good or unique and worthy of names and registration. He just uses the year and cross number plus the plant number in the row of sibling lilacs e.g. 98- 40 -7 is the "name" of a favorite cross of his involving the breeding of 'Rochester' and two other of his numbered lilacs. As the 2003 season progressed, all of our many favorite, named lilacs bloomed and brought back fond memories. It seemed for us that most of the early and mid-season lilacs bloomed very close together or even simultaneously as the spring was late getting underway. That made a tour each day a must and an adventure in both a visual sense and an olfactory sense. Thanks to those new digital cameras where no film is needed, we have grown unafraid to snap photo after

photo. The end result has been that we have enjoyed the bloom season over and over from the images downloaded onto our computer and put into a sequence that automatically plays through for us, complete with our choice of background music.

If you have a home yard or garden that would permit growing three lilacs, do remember that in our humble opinion you could do no better than to secure 'Maiden's Blush', 'The Bride' and 'Wonder Blue'. You will have a patriotic red, white and blue garden, you will provide an intriguing fragrance up and down your block and you will be able to give away breathtaking bouquets to appreciative audiences.

Fox Lily Ranch
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Millet, Alberta T0G 1Z0
Canada

LILACS BLOOMING OUT OF SEASON

By J. G. Waines

For several years I have been keen to find lilac cultivars that bloom out of normal season in southern California. This might include plants that bloom very early, such as in January and February, before the normal flowering months of March, April and May, or plants that bloom late in June and July. Also plants that bloom two or three times a year: that is are "multi-flora" types. The earliest lilac we have found is a seedling of an experimental plant developed by Louis Erickson, presently called E2 (LE). It usually flowers in late January or early February, and has single, small light pink flowers in small inflorescences. The flower clusters are full opened and conical, the individual flowers are small to medium, and they have wonderful scent. It usually blooms before most other lilacs.

A week or two later in early February, another of Louis' selections blooms. He tentatively called this plant 'Ramona' named after Helen Hunt Jackson's novel of the same name, and the community in San Diego County. This plant reaches around 3 feet in height and has single medium to large purple flowers in large inflorescences. It is a seedling of 'Pocahontas', although Louis' notes are not clear as to whether it is a selfed seed, or open pollinated seed, for which he did not know the male parent.

In 2005, I noticed that 'Grace Mackenzie' a hyacinthiflora type bred by Frank Skinner at Roblin, Manitoba, Canada, also bloomed in early February. I had not noticed this before, but the plant was hidden behind some other lilacs in Louis' experimental garden, and I may have missed seeing it. Individual flowers are single lilac, widely spaced in the inflorescence, which is reminiscent of its published parents *S. oblate* and *S. × persica* var. *alba*. After the third week of

February, 'Excel' blooms. This has single lilac flowers, larger than E2(LE), and with larger inflorescences. It is a very reliable bloomer in southern California. Unfortunately, 'Excel' appears to be susceptible to Pierce's disease, caused by the *Xylella* bacterium, which is endemic in wild plants, especially along stream sides in southern California. Fortunately the epidemic appears to be dying down. If you do not have Pierce's disease in your area, 'Excel' is a good lilac to start with.

Something I do not understand is why so many of Skinner's cultivars, bred in Manitoba, horticultural winter hardiness zone 2, do well in southern California, winter hardiness zone 9, and mostly bloom early. Skinner released many *hyacinthiflora* types, listed in order of bloom time, 'Grace Mackenzie', 'Excel', 'Pocahontas', 'Gertrude Leslie', 'Mount Baker', and 'Maiden's Blush'. Some of Skinner's cultivars flower in southern California before Descanso hybrids selected at Upland, close by Riverside, or Clarke's *hyacinthiflora* cultivars, bred in San José. However, 'Maiden's Blush' may flower in May, or even June.

At the other end of the spectrum, besides *Syringa reticulata*, the Japanese tree lilac with its creamy white blossoms in June, *S. × Henryi* 'Rutilant' with lilac flowers, also blooms in late June – July. A *Syringa pubescens* × *S. meyeri* hybrid 'Josée', kindly donated by Frank Moro, will bloom several times during the growing season, starting in late April, with small, single lilac-pink blossoms.

In 2004 I was surprised to notice that *S. × chinensis* 'Lilac Sunday', released by Jack Alexander of the Arnold Arboretum, MA, flowered in spring, September and November. Another *S. × chinensis* 'Duplex', with double pink flowers, also bloomed in spring and twice in the fall, with well shaped blossoms. As did *× chinensis* 'Saugeana' but only where the plant received sufficient bright sunlight in summer to develop flower buds. Similar observations were made for some lilacs by Rudy Schaffer and Joyce Kjarsgaard at Descanso Gardens at La Cañada-Flintridge, CA (*Lilacs* 34: (1) 8, 2005).

A Clarke *hyacinthiflora* release, 'Esther Staley' selected at San José, CA, bloomed at Riverside in spring, in September, October and November, and at Irvine, near the coast, in spring and November. The November blossoms at Riverside were well shaped and conical, with well developed flower stalks (pedicels). The plants at Irvine had blossoms that did not expand their flower stalks, so they were ball-shaped, rather than conical. The plants were all donated by the same nursery, L. E. Cooke, Visalia, CA, and are genetically the same. The main difference between Riverside and Irvine in fall is the day time temperature: It is hotter inland at Riverside, 70-80 degrees F. whereas day temperatures at Irvine are 10-15 degrees F. cooler. From this I conclude that high day temperatures are needed for optimum development of individual flower stalks within the blossom. Without sufficient heat, the flower stalks do not develop and the blossoms do not expand into cones, but remain globose. Similar conclusions were reached by floriculturalists (for example Jonkers) working at Aalsmeer, The Netherlands, in the 1960's. Many of my experimental seedling plants form globose inflorescences in fall and winter. Even some of the named cultivars will do this, such as 'Excel' and other *hyacinthiflora* types, as well as *S. oblata*, a parent of the *Hyacinthiflora* hybrids. Obviously, experimental plants that develop only

globose blossoms in spring and fall should be culled. We need to select plants that are able to expand their flower stalks into cones at cooler temperatures outdoors.

One point is certain, there is great variability among existing lilac cultivars, especially those developed from interspecific hybrids, for the ability to open well shaped blossoms in the fall and winter. Nor can I predict from the place of selection, that the plant will flower early or late. Skinner's cultivar releases which flower late in Canada, because of low winter temperatures, can be among the earliest bloomers in southern California, where they can express their true bloom potential. Many members of the International Lilac Society think that lilacs need long cold winters to flower well in spring. Some may, but lilacs are native to southeastern Europe and China, where the winter temperatures are not as cold as Manitoba or Ontario. Perhaps we need to test more named lilacs in different locations around the USA, to discover their true bloom potential in the sun-belt and southeastern states.

Botanic Gardens, University of California
Riverside

Letter From Cap-à-l'Aigle Village des Lilas

By Bruno Simard, President

Six years ago, the corporation Cap-à-l'Aigle Village des Lilas undertook the ambitious task of turning the village of Cap-à-l'Aigle into an **"inhabited garden"**. They began by creating a park located at the east entrance of St-Raphaël Street, and featuring a magnificent sculpture of an eagle, for which the village is named. Following this, interpretative panels were placed at different locations of interest in the village and since then the Corporation has concentrated its efforts on the creation of the Gardens of Cap-à-l'Aigle, situated on a beautiful ancestral terrain.

Inaugurated in June, 2003, these gardens are decorated with over 800 different varieties of lilacs. Since its opening the gardens have required enormous energy and resources; so much so that the Corporation is offering you the opportunity to join us in the continuing evolution of the project.

This collaboration may be in the manner of a donation or preferably by the sponsorship of one or several of our lilacs for the next three years at a cost of \$100 per year per lilac.

In the latter case, for each lilac sponsored the sponsor will receive a certificate of sponsorship and his or her name will appear on the site where the lilac is located as well as on our official sponsorship board. In addition, for each lilac sponsored the sponsor may choose between receiving a receipt for income tax purposes or a free seasonal summer pass for the family.

If you would like to receive sponsorship forms or more information, you can visit our website at www.villagedeslilas.com or contact us by telephone at (418) 665-2127, facsimile (418) 665-2679. We are counting on your generosity and your involvement in this marvelous project, and we thank you for your support.

Hot Lilacs With Potential For the South

By Dick Bir

A common request by gardeners in the South is for lilacs that “look and smell like lilacs.” There’s big demand for a plant with qualities similar to *Syringa vulgaris*, but that will grow well near Raleigh, N.C., or Atlanta.

For the past 20 years there have been plantings of lilacs at North Carolina State University’s Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station in Fletcher, N.C. The objective has been to evaluate lilacs that “look and smell” like common *Syringa vulgaris*, which is more suited for more Northern climates. Twenty years ago it was accepted as common knowledge that lilacs won’t grow in the South because it’s not cold enough for a long enough duration in winter. Also, lilacs are killed by mildew, borers or some other malady. Our objective at NCSU was to test common knowledge.



‘Blanche Sweet’ has bluish flower buds that open to pinkish-purple flowers.

Early Results: Initial trials proved that all species and cultivars trialed grew well and flowered. Powdery mildew, while existing has rarely been a problem. Cultivars touted as mildew resistant, particularly those introduced by John Fiala, really are mildew resistant under North Carolina mountain conditions. Among these are *S. vulgaris* hybrids ‘Albert F. Holden,’ ‘Atheline Wilbur,’ ‘Marie Frances,’ ‘Wedgewood Blue’ and ‘Yankee Doodle.’ However, borer damage eventually showed up on most *Syringa vulgaris* cultivars in our trials.

Tree Lilacs *S. reticulata* and *S. pekinensis* ‘Ivory Silk’ (some list this as a *S. reticulata* cultivar) are now 15-25 feet tall and flower spectacularly every year. *S. meyeri* ‘Palibin’ was a consistent performer as were *S. microphylla* ‘Superba’ and the related interspecific hybrid ‘Bailbelle’ (Tinkerbelle). They were highly floriferous as were the late lilacs *S. × prestoniae* and *S. × josiflexa*. Among the best late performers were ‘Donald Wyman,’ ‘James Macfarlane,’ ‘Miss Canada’ and ‘Redwine.’ *S. patula* ‘Miss Kim’ was excellent as was *S. × chinensis* ‘Lilac Sunday’. None of these had problems with powdery mildew or borers. ‘Palibin’ and ‘Miss Kim’ are regular garden performers in the North Carolina piedmont. Unfortunately, none of these look and smell like common lilac.

More Additions: In the early 1980s *S. oblata* var. *dilatata* was included in our trials because it had proven to be a dependable performer at the North Carolina State University Arboretum in Raleigh, which is now the J.C. Raulston Arboretum. It was hardy and resistant to both powdery mildew and borers, but it would flower consistently in March in the mountains. This meant that newly opened flowers were quickly killed by late winter or early spring cold temperatures.



'Blue Skies' was the top-performing blue variety.

Also in the 1980s, we planted our first *S. × hyacinthiflora* hybrids at the trial. These are hybrids of *S. vulgaris* and *S. oblata*. They allegedly require low chilling and are the dominant lilacs growing in Southern California. Their initial performance in Fletcher was excellent, plus they looked and smelled a lot like common lilacs.

We were so enthusiastic about finally finding "look and smell" that we established a replicated trial that included 13 hybrids planted 8 feet apart within rows. No plants in the test were grafted, so they were all on their own roots.

The Winners: All *S. × hyacinthiflora* cultivars listed have flowered under our conditions and performed well. None have shown problems with powdery mildew or borers. They flower more dependably from year to year than *S. vulgaris* and have had far less basal suckering. They have potential for the warmer South and should be tried in the piedmont as well as the coastal plain along with *S. oblata* hybrids 'Betsy Ross' and 'Cheyenne'.

These were best for floriferousness, vigor and fragrance:

White flowers: *S. ×* 'Angel White' and *S. × hyacinthiflora* 'Mount Baker.' **Blue flowers** *S. ×* 'Blue Skies'. **Pink flowers:** *S. × hyacinthiflora* 'Maiden's Blush'. **Lilac flowers:** *S. hyacinthiflora* 'Excel'. **Violet flowers:** *S. × hyacinthiflora* 'Pocahontas'.



'Angel White' has the look and fragrance of *S. vulgaris* along with the vigor in the south

S. × hyacinthiflora 'Blanche Sweet' belongs on this list of top performers, but we were never able to agree on color. The flower buds are bluish but the flowers are pinkish, which produces an effect that needs a better eye for color than mine.

Other *S. × hyacinthiflora* cultivars worth mentioning are 'Asessippi' and 'Evangeline,' along with other hybrids 'California Rose,' 'Dark Night', 'Forrest Dresser Smith' and 'Lavender Lady.'

FIFTH ANNUAL LILAC WALK

Robson Valley, Valemount, BC
Bonnie Culp and Linda Blackman

In 1997 we began to seriously collect lilacs. In order to purchase a wide variety and by-pass the more common varieties found in the box stores, we made our first purchase from Briggs Nursery in Washington and placed a small order with Select Plus. This put us in the business of buying and selling while planting and collecting for the next few years.

In 2001 as our collections started to mature and bloom, we decided to hold our first "Lilac Walk". We hoped that it would inspire local gardeners and help our lilac sales. As our rural area has always had successful community events that highlight its famous food and baking, we decided that if we served coffee and goodies we would be sure to have some guests. The first walk was so successful that we did it again the following year. It has now become a permanent annual celebration that takes place when the lilacs are in full bloom. We still serve coffee along with lilac tea, lilac angel food cakes and lilac blossom crepes. The Lilac Walk starts at the Culp Farm situated in the centre of a narrow 2 mile wide valley along the banks of the Fraser River. Beginning at 1:00 p.m. guests are personally introduced to each and every lovely lilac. A display of almost 100 named varieties delights the senses of all as they roam throughout the yard and garden. All the official colors are represented and a small nursery offers a variety of field grown lilacs.

Mid-afternoon, the lilac fanciers carry on to Tête Jaune Cache, the home of Linda Blackman and her Secret Garden. The Secret Garden is in a wilder setting surrounded by a mature forest on the banks of the Fraser River. Here guests are free to explore the garden and the Swedish Lilac Berga while enjoying views of snow-capped mountains. Tea is served in the original handhewed log house. Potted lilacs are available for sale. There are tried and true varieties as well as unusual varieties for collectors.

This year the Fifth Annual Lilac Walk will take place at the end of May or beginning of June, depending on the weather. Please come and join us for a wonderful day of lilacs, relaxation and good food. Phone Bonnie at 250-968-4309 or Linda at 250-566-9194. You can also reach us by e-mail at Blackman@vis.bc.ca

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