

Lilacs

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of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

'Colby's Twinkling Little Star'
and Lilac Park in Krivets, RF



The deep, rich color of 'Col. Wm. R. Plum' is an outstanding addition to any lilac garden

Photo credit Colin Chapman



Syringa vulgaris 'Azurea Plena', with its very delicate; double blue florets; a favorite parent for many of Lemoine's double-flowering hybrid selections

Photo Credit Colin Chapman

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Front Cover: 'Colby's Twinkling Little Star'

Photo Courtesy of Select Plus Nursery

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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

Dear lilac aficionados,

I'm sure you notice that our fall journal issue was late coming to you. One of the reasons was that our editor was short on material. The fall and winter issues of Lilacs are hard to produce. After the excitement of the coming of spring and the convention we all take a break of sort and think about others things. I'm asking you to write for your journal. Be mindful that a great journal is the composite work of all of us. Kent Millham is the editor; his job is to edit. We on the other hand are all reporters and journalists. The spring and summer issues are full to the brim. We have a lot to say then but think about the fall and winter issues. This is when you need to write an article or two. The garden chores are done and it gets darker earlier. Now is the time to write that lilac story you been wanting to share with your lilac friends.

Many of you have been on some great lilac adventure and it would be nice to hear from you. We are dispersed all over the globe so why not tell us about the lilac happenings in your city, town, village or country. We would like to hear lilac news from China, Australia, France, Russia etc. Anywhere we have a member we should get a bit of history about our favorite shrub. Take out that pen or set at your computer, write then forward the articles to our editor. Do we have a poet among us? I'm challenging you to compose a lilac poem for our next issue.

Write about what, you say? Here are a more few ideas. What is it about lilacs that make you happy? Why do you love lilacs so much? If you have a great lilac collection or just starting one write about it. Do you know a great lilac person who has inspired and mentor you? Write about him or her. Know of a lilac project in your neighborhood? Write about it. The possibilities are limitless. Lilac growing on roof tops, lilacs growing on the side of a cliff, lilacs growing in a field; you understand what I'm saying. Curious about lilac colors or about the shapes of their leaves write about it. I not asking you to write scientific papers, no, no, I'm asking you to write from the heart about the lilacs you love so much. Those stories are the best stories.

What is new at the present with ILS? I think the ILS Preservation Committee is taking great strides getting organized and defining their task. Dr. Deborah McGowan is chairman of the committee. Members include Gloria Schreiber, Charles Horetich and Freek Vrugtman. They are preparing to gather lilac data of the utmost importance. Where are the lilac collections, what are their contents and how can we make sure we are going to protect cultivars from disappearing? These are the three goals. The ILS Preservation Committee is mindful of the work ahead and all efforts directed toward these goals are steps in the right direction. I just heard of a new system using barcode to identify plants. Sounds very interesting..

ILS is a vibrant society. Members are engaged on the International Lilac Robin (ILR). All questions are answered with the speed of light. Things that some years not so distant would have taken several days, weeks and even months before getting a response are now answered quickly. All it takes is a click of the mouse and voila. How marvelous is that.

Our New England Group headed by RVP, Mary Lizotte, had a very successful gathering at Syringa Plus Nursery, West Boxford, Massachusetts USA. It was hosted by owner Evie King and her partner Roger Coggeshall.... I would like to see all ILS RVP's take the lead in organizing similar events. During the blooming season it is not difficult to make these things happen. People are excited about gardening and love to be around the experts. Lilacs have played an important role in the life of people over time. In the literature of the 19th century lilacs are mentioned over and over again. Through the windows drifted the sweet scent of lilacs or I could see the lilacs waving in the breeze filling the air with their perfume. Or we walked past a hedge of lilacs in full blooms; I could not resist cutting a bloom to bring into the house. Lilacs were prominent in all gardens from the most humble to the most sophisticated. Now they are making a strong comeback. Again gardeners are appreciating their beauty and their wonderful fragrance.

After a talk on lilac recently I received a thank you card. The lady said "I thought my garden was complete but after your talk I realized that I need lilacs to complete my garden". Bravo!

Plans for the 2010 convention are moving forward. To Shelburne, Vermont USA we go May 13, 14 and 15, 2010. Be sure to keep the date open and make plans to attend. There is a lot to see and do. The following year the convention will be held in the USA at Liliac Park, Illinois USA then it is off to Nancy, France in 2012 for another exciting convention. Keep spreading the word about lilacs. I will speak to a master garden group in February. I'm hoping to sign up at least one new member. Remember this remains our challenge, every ILS member is to sign up one new member. Doubling our membership is a challenging goal but a possible one. So mes amis redouble your efforts and make it happen.

Spring will soon be there again in the mean time write an article or two. By the time you get this issue of Lilacs the holidays will be over. Already we will be thinking about the new lilac season. So mes amis I'll see you on the lilac trail. It is a beautiful one....

*Amities,
Nicole Jordan
ILS President
Chester, VA USA
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European Newsletter 2010

So, how did I come to plant a book? The new land is a triangle of 4 acres (2 ha). The base of the triangle is the old fence line of the property which I had densely planted with willow trees to provide a shelter belt for the lilacs in the original (geographical) collection. This base line is about 200 yards long (about 180 m). At the right hand end it meets at right angles a deep ditch which has been the boundary between two farms since ancient times. That leg of the triangle extends 180 yards (about 160 m) and it ends at a spinney and a pond. The hypotenuse joining the two loose ends is about 280 yards. I wish I knew how to draw a diagram on a computer, but I don't.

The two new boundaries were completely exposed to the wind so my first act was to plant two shelter belts of native and long acclimatised foreign species. I included also plants to attract butterflies and one lilac – 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth' which I had once seen and admired as a fabulous hedge row plant at Bill Uiley's Grape Hill Garden, so I planted it as a little memorial to him. Then, I took the plunge, and in the dead centre of the site I planted Havemeyer's 'Dusk' – because I love it and because I admire his work so much.

I then went to the left hand corner of the site where the base line joined the hypotenuse. There I planted a *Syringa vulgaris* grown from wild collected seed at Kew. Next I planted 'Charles X', also known as *S. vulgaris* var *purpurea*. These two lilacs started a line which ran parallel to the hypotenuse. Seeing that I had just planted two of the lilac colours, I offset from them a lovely *S.v.* var *alba* and the cultivar that brought pink into the lilac palette *S. v.* 'Macrostachya'. Having just planted the basic lilac colours it seemed to make sense to plant the first ever verified double lilac, so third in the line came *S. v.* 'Azurea Plena'. Because this had been bred in Liege in Belgium in 1846 by Libert-Darimont, and was subsequently described in "La Belgique Horticole" by Charles Moren, it seemed a good idea next that I should plant a white cultivar, also bred by a member of the Liege School, so in went the eponymous white 'Marie Legraye'. By now I was itching to get to Victor Lemoine but something told me I should show a cultivar from a pre Lemoine nursery, so in went 'Charles Baltet' and offset from it I planted 'Lucie Baltet' and 'Ville de Troyes'. Next I planted 'Victor Lemoine', then 'Emile Lemoine' and, out of respect for her climb up the step ladder to hand pollinate the minute florets of 'Azurea Plena' to give Victor, in 1876, a lilac with larger double florets to play with, I planted 'Mme Lemoine'. It was then that I realised what I was doing. Step by step, along the line, I was starting to tell the lilac story. Alongside these three, I began to plant my Lemoine Tribute Bed.

I then planted 'Pamyat' o Kolesnikove' which was selected from Kolesnikov's seedlings and named in his honour after his death by Nikolai Mikhailov. With one plant, therefore, I commemorated both my hero – who created it, and one

of my dear friends – who named it. To the right of this, I started planting my Kolesnikov and Mikhailov tribute beds, as I had just begun to do alongside the Lemoine lilacs. Next to be planted was 'Pamyat o Vekhove', and a bed devoted to Prof. Nikolay Kusmich Vekhov. It was then into the Americans. I used 'Katherine Havemeyer' because I had, by now, already planted all my Havemeyer lilacs in the centre of the field and because Katherine has a story to tell in her own right. Then it was onwards to Archie Mack Brand of Minnesota, then to Col. Wm. R. Plum of Illinois, whose home founded Lilacia Park in Lombard IL. I planted 'Clyde Heard' in memory of my lovely friend Bill Heard who once paid me a supreme compliment. I then used my previous trick of commemorating two-for-one with Ken Berdeen's lilac 'Joel Margaretten' (and I first met Dr. Margaretten at the 1991 convention at Lilacia Park – now the venue for the 2011 convention). I then repeated the trick by commemorating Father Fiala with Joel's 'Fiala Remembrance'. This did not worry me because I had already set out my Fiala memorial bed with lilacs ranging from the demure, copper pink, 'Marie Frances' to the bold 'Albert F. Holden' with its large single florets which shimmer with silvery-lilac outside the lobes but which then suck you down into the deep violet-blue depths inside. Between these last two I planted 'Rochester' to illuminate a major breakthrough in lilac breeding, and to honour both Alvan Grant and Richard Fenicchia. Then came three Canadians with 'McMaster Centennial', 'Agincourt Beauty' and 'Bright Centennial' before moving into the Ukraine, then Belarus, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Latvia and Poland. I tucked in Ole Heide's 'Lilac Princess' and two for our Royal Family in 'The Queen' and 'Prince of Wales'. I then came to the end of the hypotenuse and signed off the story of *Syringa vulgaris* with a Trade Mark lilac 'Monore' (aka BLUE SKIES™). In 280 yards I had planted a line of 60 lilacs in historical sequence.

To make the turn into the next leg of the triangle I changed from a single line of lilacs to an avenue. First of all, I established the colour range of the lilac with matching single and double cultivars. For SI and DI, I planted 'Slater's Elegance' and 'Mme Lemoine'. For SII and DII, I matched the marvellous pairing of 'Leonid Kolesnikov' and 'Pauline Fiala'. Then for III, IV, V, VI and VII I planted 'Wonderblue' and 'Président Grévy'; 'Nesterka' and 'Victor Lemoine'; 'Nevesta' and 'Zhemchuzhina'; 'Lady Lindsay' and 'Maréchal de Bassompierre'; and finally 'Sarah Sands' and 'Adelaide Dunbar'. I continued the avenue with lilacs with variant leaves – 'Aurea' and 'Aucubaefolia', then *S. pinnatifolia* and *S. protolaciniata*, plus an offset which came from Kew as a regular *protolaciniata* but which has changed over the years and is now covered with small entire leaves.

Then it was onto the hybrids with first, the *xhenryi* forms and then onto the Villosae Group. Finally, these give way to my "Hyacinthiflora Avenue" as they reach the shelter of some big trees and the orchard. At the end of the avenue, standing alone as a punctuation mark is the origin of them all *S. xhyacinthiflora* 'Hyacinthiflora Plena'.

We then turn into the final leg along the third side that is alongside our former boundary. This is a bit of a jumble since it mops up many things that have not yet been featured. There is a place for the cultivars from the University of New Hampshire, for instance, and also the hybrids of the late Wladislaw Bugala. There is a space for a cluster of the seedlings of John Dunbar and Claude Bellion, and also some wild collected *josikaeas* of Vasily Gorb, and also for the seedlings of a little known lilac grower called Colin Chapman. The line then ends with a flourish at the far eastern end of the new land in China, where it joins the lilacs on the other side of the fence line which is, geographically speaking remember, also China. As we reach the end of the China bed we are back to the start of the lilac walk and the whole circuit is completed. Thus my lilac story ends where it begins - in China and the Balkans.

So, you might ask, "Where is the book that you say you have planted?" Well, it is right there growing its way into readiness. What I do now is plug the microphone into my walkman and, going to the start of the walk, I will interview each lilac in turn and I will record what each one tells me. When I have completed the entire circuit the book will be there, ready to be transcribed. What it says will be what the lilacs tell me. It will not be a formal catalogue of plants for that has been done already with great success. Instead, it will be a chronicle of what the lilac is, what it means to us as human beings, who it commemorates, and how - and by whom - it originated. The chapters will be crowded with historical characters and across the pages ghosts will flicker to-and-fro, to-and-fro. I do not have to go out and do the research because, over the years, I have brought the research here to Norman's Farm. For the next three years I will tell their stories, chapter by chapter, in a blog if some kind person can instruct me how to create one. I will let you know where and when that blog will start and I will certainly maintain contact with anyone who wishes to keep in touch.

Thus ends my final European Newsletter. Now that ILS-Europe has been closed to maintaining memberships I have little incentive to go on because I have lost my entire purpose. I work exclusively through my inter-reactions with people and what they have to tell. Without those contacts I have no stories and cannot, therefore, continue the service I have given of providing articles and pictures for almost every issue of the Journal since 1991. I have many lilacs of great rarity coming on. I will still provide the occasional feature as and when they come into mature flowering.

Colin Chapman
Suffolk, England.
December 15th 2009.

2010 Convention in Vermont

The 2010 ILS Convention will be hosted by Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont on May 13, 14 and 15. Our host hotel will be the Burlington Hilton. Assisting in hosting the Convention will be the Friends of the Univ. of VT Hort Farm and the Vermont Master Gardeners.

Burlington is the economic capital of Vermont and its largest city. The University of Vermont (established in 1791) and Champlain College are located in the City with St Michaels College located in neighboring Colchester. The Hilton Hotel was the host hotel the last time ILS came to Burlington and for good reason. To the west is the Lake Champlain waterfront with the ECHO environmental center, the Boathouse, restaurants, walking paths and bike trails. To the east is Church St, five blocks of vehicle free shopping and restaurants indoor and out. On Thursday we will tour these spots and the Univ of VT where we will have our director's meeting and lunch.

On Friday we will have a series of presentations on the flora of Vermont and New England from area horticulturists, nurserymen and master gardeners. Lunch will be in the same presentation room along with our annual meeting. After the meeting we will take a short bus trip to the University of Vermont's Horticultural Research Center, known as the Hort Farm, for a tour of the Farm including its Lilac Collection. Friday night we will have our President's dinner at the Hotel.

Saturday will start early and bus to the Shelburne Museum. We will have a short director's meeting then a welcome from Shelburne. Shelburne will be closed to the public and open for members only, so we will have a great opportunity to explore one of America's premier museums. We will have lunch there and our auction in the afternoon. The Awards banquet will be at the Hilton.

We will have an optional dinner cruise on Wed night and a Shelburne Farm visit on Sunday.

Flight arraignments can be made directly to Burlington International Airport which is about 4 miles from the hotel. The Hilton's shuttle is available to and from the hotel. AMTRAC service is available in adjacent Essex Jct. With notice we can have a van get you to the hotel, otherwise, it is a 10-mile cab ride. If you are coming from the west and I-87, there is direct ferry service to Burlington from Port Kent, New York, just south of Plattsburg.

*Jeff Young
December 24, 2009*

Voting for New Slate for ILS Board of Directors

During the ILS 2010 elections of candidates for the ILS Board of Directors, members in good standing will have two possible ways to vote—traditional mail and electronic mail.

A paper ballot for 2010 is printed in the winter issue of the journal. If you choose to vote using this paper ballot, simply mark that ballot as indicated and return it to address shown below, as you have done in the past. Please sign the back of your envelope.

Warren K. Oakes
63 Roak St.
Auburn ME 04210

Ballots will also include a special e-mail address that has been established just for voting in ILS elections. To vote electronically, send an e-mail including your name to "vote@internationallilacsociety.org" requesting a voter access number. You will receive an e-mail with your access number in the subject line. You simply click reply, type your choice(s) and click send. Your choice(s) will be recorded, and if there is enough time, a confirmation e-mail will be sent to you to indicate that your ballot has been received.

In the event that the Elections Committee receives more than one ballot from a member, only the most recent ballot received before the election deadline will be counted.

The Elections Committee will retain a list of e-mail addresses for use in future voting, since voting electronically could save postage costs for future elections. Following the 2010 election, members who vote by e-mail will be surveyed regarding their satisfaction with the electronic voting process.

If you have questions about this process, you may send an e-mail to "vote@internationallilacsociety.org" or "ILSExecVP@gmail.com".

Bios of the 2010 Slate of Candidates

JOHN BENTLEY

John is a graduate of NHTI and Southern NH University. He is the founder of the Katie Bentley Memorial Lilac Project and the Katie Bentley Memorial Charity. The lilac project is engaged in planting lilacs at public locations in central New Hampshire, USA, including cemeteries, town offices, and public schools. The entities are named after his young daughter who died in 2007, and have resulted in a greater awareness of the possibilities of lilacs as low maintenance ornamental shrubs to beautify public gardens. He works closely with the New Hampshire Governor's Lilac Commission to promote the planting of lilacs, and lives with his family in Salisbury, NH, where he makes his living as a contractor.

BONNIE CULP

Bonnie has been a life member of ILS for 14 years. She lives on a farm in British Columbia surrounded by lilacs right in the Rocky Mountain Trench, confronted by all the challenges of growing lilacs in zone 2. She and Linda Black, another ILS member from B.C., spread bouquets and the word about the wonders of lilacs all around the countryside. Her pet peeve is nurseries with mislabeled lilacs, and she makes sure to bring it to their attention. She says maybe she could qualify as an official member of the lilac police. She strives to help increase ILS membership, to achieve other society goals, and to build enthusiasm for the flower she loves the most.

GUY J. GIUNTA, JR.

Guy is a Landscape Specialist for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. He is also Chairman of the New Hampshire Governors Lilac and Wildflower Commission. Of course the lilac is the State of New Hampshire official state flower. He has been involved in the distribution, planting and caring of thousands of lilacs throughout the state. He also has accomplished many presentations and demonstrations on the pruning and care of lilacs. He has a degree in Ornamental Horticulture and had a landscape business in the Boston area. He is known as "Mister Lilac" throughout the state of New Hampshire and displays 2 state vanity plates on his vehicles (Lilac and Lilacs). He lives with his family in the town of Sanbornton, New Hampshire.

MARY LIZOTTE

Mary, a fourteen year member of ILS, enthusiastically promotes and encourages members to appreciate and plant lilacs. She actively participates in New England regional programs, including state flower shows, and assists communities with lilac plantings. An avid gardener and local garden club member, Mary has developed ways to make our convention attendees feel comfortable, welcomed and informed through her Hospitality Committee. She is currently a board director and regional vice president for New England and is anxious to continue to develop progressive goals that will serve the needs of ILS

MARYMAE MEYER

Marymae Meyer refers to herself as a farm girl turned businessperson turned lilac afficianado. An Idaho native now semi-retired, she worked for many years in marketing, human resources and advertising in four other states before eventually settling in the Lilac Village of Lombard, Illinois. In 2008 she began to voluntarily assist Lilacia Park's horticulturist in mapping and cataloging the collection. In 2009, with the end goal of preserving the provenance of each lilac in Lilacia, they have successfully lobbied for funding needed to produce permanent signage and are currently developing what will become a searchable database complete with detailed photographs. Marymae hopes to showcase this achievement for Lombard at ILS' 2011 convention."

BRUCE PEART

Bruce is a former employee of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton/ Burlington Ontario, Canada with over 25 years of horticultural expertise and knowledge in the horticultural field. During his last 5 years at RBG he was curator at one of the largest collection of lilacs in the world. Employed at a 100-acre private estate north of Toronto, as Grounds Manager / Horticulturist for the most recent 5 years, he continues to plant and promote lilacs in the landscape. He also teaches, volunteers and consults throughout the seasons. His specialty of interest is the Lilac, and as an active member of the International Lilac Society he is in contact with other lilac enthusiasts from all over the world.

New Lilac Registered- 'Colby's Twinkling Little Star'

Syringa pubescens subsp. *patula* 'Colby's Twinkling Little Star' was registered 12 December 2009 by Frank Moro, Select Plus International Nursery, 1510 Pine, Mascouche, Quebec J7L 2M4, Canada. The original plant was selected from seedlings in 2008; the seed resulted from open pollination of *S. pubescens* subsp. *patula* 'Excellens'. The new selection was discovered by Corinna Moro, named by Sara Moro and described by Frank Moro. Initial vegetative propagation took place in 2009.

The foliage is dark green. Thyrses are on average 12 to 15 cm long and 6 to 8 cm wide; usually there is one thyrses per flowering branch. Flower buds are dark purple. Florets about 1 cm in diameter, apex of corolla lobes sharply turned inward; the tubes about 1.5 cm long; tubes and corolla dorsally dark to medium purple, ventrally pale purple with a deep purple stigma, giving the florets a bicolor effect. The florets are considerably darker in color than those of 'Miss Kim'. This lilac reblooms in autumn.

At seven years of age the original plant is about 1.5 m tall and 1 m wide. Hardy at least to USDA Zone 4b, but has not yet been tested elsewhere. Plants of this cultivar will be introduced and distributed by Select Plus International Nursery. A standard portfolio will be opened at Royal Botanical Gardens Herbarium, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada(HAM).

Frank Moro
Select Plus Nursery,
Mascouche, Quebec
December 2009

Editor's Note

In the fall issue I forgot to give credit to Joshua Miller

as the interviewer of Freek Vrugtman in the article,

"Ten Questions with Freek Vrugtman".

My apologies, Joshua, and thanks for the great interview!

The Founding of Lilac Park in Krivets, Russian Federation

There is a Russian superstition that if you find a five petal flower in a lilac cluster and eat it your dream will come true...

Lilac Park was founded in September of 2008 in the village of Krivets (300 miles southeast of Moscow). As a journalist from one of the local newspapers, I wanted to talk to the people who came up with the concept and the design of Lilac Park. The following is my interview of these people. This article was published in "Lipetsk news".

"In the beginning of this year (2008) the department of public relations of Lipetsk region was having a contest for social grants among noncommercial organizations. The Lipetsk branch of All-Russian Nature Protection Society presented a project called "Lilac park" as a part of Environmental Protection in Lipetsk region. As a result, the project was granted 300 000 rubles.- says Natalia Peshkova, the head of this organization.

The project called for the planting lilacs in a 2.0 acre park in the village of Krivets. The idea originated from, Elena and Sergei Terekhovs, who are residents in the area. Sergei served as the manager of the project. Elena and Sergei fell in love with lilacs about 15 years ago and have been professionally cultivating and recovering traditional Russian lilacs for many years. They also collect lilacs from all over the world by adapting plants from Germany, America (SyringaPlusNursery), Canada (Selectpluslilacs) to the Russian soil and climate. Interestingly enough, the gardeners themselves previously resided in Moscow and neither of them have a degree in biology or botany. Sergei finished the Art and Theater School and then graduated from the Leningradskiy Institute of Motion Picture Engineers. Elena is a professional nuclear chemist. The Russians like to say, the ways of God are inscrutable and sometimes someone's hobby becomes a matter of someone's life...

I was surprised to hear that their degrees were totally unrelated to what they are doing now. "It was a surprise for us as well. We did not expect to start a business based on our love of lilacs, - smiles Sergei. "When we were building our house here in the village we decided to plant an orchard as well. We planted some fruit plants and a couple of lilacs... And when the lilacs started blooming we were shocked; it was almost like we saw the world in a different light."

"This affected me the most, - said Elena. "It was a very dry summer and I could not wait for the rain to saturate all our plants. Finally, it rained and the lilacs started blooming. It was unbelievably beautiful... I do not even have the words to describe how beautiful it was! It was so touching that I started crying, can you believe it? So, that is where our passion for lilacs began. Indeed, the

blooming lilac bushes look so fascinating especially after the snow and our monotonous everyday life... Later on I found out that the blooming lilac that I liked so much was called "Mechta" (Russian for dream). It is symbolical, isn't it? 'Mechta' (Dream) was blooming! I began to learned more about lilacs and I learned about an amazing man, Leonid Kolesnikov (one of the most famous lilac breeders)."

"We used different sources while we were buying lilacs for our park,- said Sergei. Some of them were bought from Dendrological Park of Forest-steppe experimental station, the other part was supplied from Germany. In fact, these kinds of lilacs are very rare for our region these days."

Overall, we planted more than 700 lilac plants and about 50 kinds of lilacs in the park. Among those are very famous lilacs by Kolesnikov: 'Krasavitsa Mosky', 'Nadezhda' (Hope), 'Mechta' (Dream), 'Izobilie' (ABUNDANCE). The park also has a good representation of lilacs created by European and American breeders such as Victor Lemoine, Madame Lemoine, Ludvig Spath.

Seedlings from Germany were delivered on specially equipped refrigerators, which maintain optimal temperature for the plants keeping them fresh. Serious preparation work was started before planting the park. It began in early spring and the peak of work fell on April 22nd, the Earth Day.

"We got a lot of help from Dobrovskoe Peat company, farmer Victor Popov, said Sergei. – The head of local administration Anatolyi Glazunov actively participated in the project as well. Particularly, he helped with the clay delivery. However, most of the flowers were planted by the local elementary, middle and high school students. Krivets boarding school also got involved in the project. Eventually, the kids from Krivets boarding school are going to take under their patronage the Lilac Park. You know, we saw that the children were very understanding and interested in the park. You should have seen how much they were enjoying the work!"

"I think that the children, planting the Lilac Park, will remember the experience the rest of their lives. I am sure that they will never break lilacs or destroy other plants, - Elena is agreeing with her husband. "You know, I noticed a small ribbon on one of the bushes and asked my husband what that meant. It turned out that a child marked "his" lilac, the one that he planted!" "It is imperative to get children involved in such kind of work", - Natalia Peshkova said. "Volunteering is an important part of ecological education. It will take years before our park will become an attraction. Hopefully, the dream will come true."

"I also would like to add to the conversation, - Elena Terekhova is saying,- "Lilacs of Kolesnikov are, using the modern slang, brand of Russia. Leonid Kolesnikov made our country famous – his lilacs are grown all over the world. We founded our park in his honor as well. He deserved this for his work."

Elena Terekhova

Research Summary at Longwood Gardens

Focus: Micropropagation of *Syringa vulgaris* L. cultivars

Many botanical gardens and arboreta propagate lilac varieties and cultivars via softwood cutting and grafting methods. However, not all lilacs readily propagate in these ways. There are substantial difficulties in the propagation of many *S. vulgaris* cultivars (e.g. 'Mme Lemoine', 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Monge' and other white and pink cultivars) using old-fashioned softwood cutting and grafting methods since they are time- and labor-consuming, season-sensitive and require constant care of the plants). For breeding and conservation of these lilac varieties and cultivars, specialized tissue culture methods offer a solution.

This research began in June of 2009, in the tissue culture laboratory at Longwood Gardens, under the leadership of Dr. Jim Harbage, Research and Production Division Leader. The focus of my research has been aimed at establishing specialized tissue culture protocols for several popular lilac cultivars. Live plant material was obtained from the collections of Longwood Gardens, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Boston, MA, and Highland Botanical Park in Rochester, NY. The selected *Syringa vulgaris* cultivars were: 'Mme Lemoine', 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Monge', 'Krasavitsa Moskvya', and 'Capitaine Baltet'.

We conducted 13 experiments that included various combinations of cultivars, explant size, explant's storage time and 11 recipes for growing media. The preliminary results of micropropagation were encouraging: we determined the concentrations of the bleach treatment time, and growth media composition that significantly improved the explants' survival rate. In the future it is necessary to determine best treatments for rooting and for multiplication.

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Rooted in Lilacs

By Lorraine Eaton

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My 'Katherine Havemeyer' lilac was inexplicably bigger and more beautiful this spring than I had ever seen her. She came into her glory while my father, whose love of plants began in the Long Island nursery where she has roots, withered away.

As clusters of tight buds emerged in March (98 of them – I couldn't help but count), my father lost his ability to walk. In early April, when a pink profusion of petals proffered a heady scent to the world, my father lost his ability to converse.

In early May, I knew that the blooms and my father would soon be gone. Lilacs are a sentimental plant. At once resilient and delicate, they can sometimes seem like kin, perhaps a beloved aunt, plumpish and punctual in colorful clothing and a trail of perfume. Europeans immigrating to America in the 17th century couldn't leave their lilacs behind; they packed them with their other possessions. Some of those original settlers, now more than 250 years old, still grow in gardens in northern Michigan.

My childhood memories are entwined with lilacs, acres and acres of French hybrids on what was once my grandparents' Long Island nursery, Lilac Land. My grandfather, uncles and father and mother worked that land for years. It was my first home. My grandfather named and introduced 11 new cultivars – or varieties – of French hybrid lilacs. Sightseers came by the score.

Shortly before my father died, he tried to describe Lilac Land in springtime. "I've never seen anything that was as spectacular as that all in one place," he said, choking back the only tears I'd ever seen him shed.

Decades ago, Lilac Land was sold, divided and developed. With my father's passing this spring, I had to know whether anything survived on that piece of storied earth. It was time to find my roots.

Carved from a province of privilege and wealth, Lilac Land was on the north shore of Long Island where, in the early 1900s, Gilded Age barons built country estates – 120-room mansions with children's wings, stables, tennis courts, swimming pools, formal gardens and greenhouses. Teddy Roosevelt lived there, and so did Walter Chrysler.

Upper Brookville, where Lilac Land was, rests in a valley. But a wealthy widow who in the 1930s worked to incorporate the village, sniffed at the suggestion that it be called Lower Brookville. "I refuse to live in lower anything," she said. The barons built the Brookville School for the children of the help. Butlers had a country club of their own organized by J.P. Morgan's man.

Theodore and Katherine Havemeyer were of this aristocracy, he a member of the industrialist family that founded what eventually became Domino sugar, she the daughter of a wealthy New York banker.

They owned a 37-acre estate, Cedar Hill, and a short walk from the main house Theodore Havemeyer indulged his interest in horticulture – dahlias, iris, crab apple trees and especially French hybrid lilacs. Havemeyer's love for lilacs grew during visits to Victor Lemoine's famous lilac nursery in France. He brought Lemoine's finest back to Cedar Hill and crossed them with the best available stock, intent on improving the color and size of the blooms. Havemeyer became one of the most respected names in the lilac world.

When monsieur tried to honor their bond by naming a new variety of lilac for his friend, Theodore Havemeyer suggested it instead be named 'Katherine Havemeyer'.

Back at Cedar Hill, in 1924, Havemeyer debuted 'Mrs. W.E. Marshall', among the deepest purple lilacs. Later, he named 'Zulu' and 'Glory', still popular today. Other new cultivars followed – 45 in all – named for society friends and family. 'Carley', with her single pristine blooms, considered one of the finest white lilacs ever, was named for a favorite niece.

Then in 1936, Theodore Havemeyer died.

Sometime in the 1940s, Katherine Havemeyer and my grandmother, Alice Eaton, started talking real estate. During World War II, Alice built a booming real estate business on Long Island. My grandfather, Mark, who had been a cellist, a newspaper publisher, a Montgomery Ward catalog copywriter, a ladies' belt manufacturer and Spanish editor for the Sears catalog, was nearing retirement. He also was a self-taught gardener who tended a nine-acre victory garden during the war.

"Enough for two families," my father once told me. "Enough for two wars." In 1949, my grandparents bought the seven acres of Cedar Hill where the lilacs grew, renamed it Lilac Land and wasted no time in going public. My Uncle Gene, the oldest of their four boys, cleared out cedar trees and brush at the top of the hill to make way for the parking circle. My dad, Tom, the youngest, helped. They heaped piles of brush all morning and then ate roasted hot dogs and drank scotch for lunch.

Meanwhile, my grandfather managed the media. On May 21, 1950, The New York Times announced that "One of the most magnificent displays of lilacs in this country is now coming into full flower, and may be seen by the public for the first time at Lilac Land." The writer continued: "At Lilac Land, no gardener can believe, at first, what he is seeing. Lilac-hung paths lead through the six-acre (sic) park where more than 7,000 bushes, each one more beautiful than the last, flourish. ... Each new kind quickly erases the memory of the one just seen."

The collection included the French hybrid lilacs, as well as Chinese lilacs. Admission was \$1.10.

The New York Times announced the opening of the season at Lilac Land in 1951 and 1952. In 1953, my grandfather, obviously enchanted, began writing gardening columns himself.

"We should get to know them," he said of lilacs in his May 3, 1953, column. "Not just one, but three visits to a good lilac collection are recommended, when the early hybrids are in bloom, when the mid-season lilacs are at their best, and when the late lilacs are on display. That is the only way to get acquainted. . . ."

This was during the "golden age of automobiles," and Lilac Land quickly became something of a tourist attraction and was listed as a "place of interest" for happy motorists using Esso road maps.

To further publicize the nursery, my grandfather would have his boys load the back of the battered blue pickup with dreamy boughs of blooms wrapped in newspapers and tied with twine. Then he'd send them to New York City to try to get mention of Lilac Land on the radio shows.

Always they arrived unannounced. Sometimes they were successful. Once, my Uncle Gene recalled, Arthur Godfrey spoke of lilacs for 45 minutes after the Eaton boys arrived in the studio with their bounty. That's today's equivalent of getting on Jay Leno.

Soon after the opening season, my grandparents built an office, a six-bay garage and their house, cementing a 1924 silver dollar in the center of the brick sunroom floor in honor of the year of their wedding. Directly outside their living room window grew a gigantic crab apple tree, a blush of fuchsia in the spring that paled to a tender pink. In front of the crab apple were planted rows and rows of young lilacs for eventual sale. In the rear of the property were two "selection beds" of unnamed lilacs, hybrids that Havemeyer had deemed worth watching. But he died before naming and putting many promising lilacs into production.

New varieties of lilacs, like most plants, can take a decade to bring to market. First, the crosses must be made, either by hand pollinating or planting open pollinated seed. Then the hybridized plant must grow for a few years to determine the true quality. Then cuttings must be nurtured to a salable size. A new color is hardly enough to win a lilac official "cultivar" status. A plant must be a "notable improvement" over existing cultivars. An application detailing flower color and size, fragrance, growth habit, hardiness and other factors is required. The International Code of Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants lays out the rules for acceptance or rejection. And the name must be evaluated by the International Lilac Registrar at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Canada.

My grandfather introduced seven "Havemeyer-Eaton" lilacs in 1954, including 'Mr. Big', with its double-flowering magenta blooms, and 'Serene', a pinkish-purple still considered by some to be the most fragrant of the *Syringa vulgaris*, or common lilacs.

Dad dug and propagated plants at Lilac Land throughout high school. He made a little money on the side in the greenhouses at the nearby 409-acre Coe estate. After the Army, Dad went straight back to gardening. He graduated in ornamental horticulture from the State University of New York at Farmingdale, where he met my mother, Sandra, an art student.

Mom and Dad married in 1958 and moved into the wood-paneled Lilac Land office. Three babies came in quick succession – 1958, 1960 and I in 1961. One of my mother's most treasured memories is of bathing her babies under clouds of perfumed lilacs. In my memory, it is always spring at Lilac Land.

A winding road through a tunnel of trees, and a purple, wavy-edged "Lilac Land" sign, led to our gravel drive. I can still hear the crunching of gravel as cars carrying nurserymen and sightseers and plant collectors approached the expansive parking circle at the top of the hill, at its center a weeping lilac, a fountain of blooms each spring.

An arc of buildings at the outer edge of the circle encompassed almost my entire world. My grandparents' one-story house stood to the left, and next door to it the six-car garage, dark and foreboding to a child. Adjacent to the garage stood the "office," where my family lived. Our kitchen could hold only a speck of a table, but the door behind it opened to a 25-foot-long greenhouse, filled with sunshine and seedlings and the scent of earth.

A gap between my grandparents' house and the garage led to the lilacs. The 24 beds and the maze of grassy pathways between were our playground. Tommy and Crystal, my brother and older sister, and I each had a favorite tree, mine a soaring cedar. We knew where a patch of lily-of-the-valley grew. My grandfather sometimes gave us nickels to feed the fat, red Coca-Cola machine behind the garage. Sometimes we'd venture to the chain-link fence that separated Lilac Land from the Brookville School and wish hard that we were old enough to go there.

Meanwhile, legions of lilac lovers kept driving up the hill. My mother remembers one sunny day when a long, lean limousine crunched up the drive. The chauffeur emerged, snapped open a parasol and opened the door for an Asian woman ... Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Chinese leader. A black woman came to buy lilacs for a park in Harlem; Uncle Gene went back with her to plant them. And for many years, the head of a Virginia school for girls – my mother cannot recall which one – would drive up the hill with his wife and buy as many 3-inch cuttings as they could fit into the car.

Nursery work was physical. Dad and my grandfather and my mother kept busy

pruning older lilacs, making cuttings and coaxing them to life in the greenhouse, digging full-grown lilacs, balling the roots in burlap, heaving them into the pickup and delivering them all over the island and as far as New Jersey. Lilacs were tagged with heavy metal nameplates, twisted to the trunks with heavy-gauge wire. Just keeping the paths mowed and the weeds at bay was enough work for a crop of gardeners.

I don't remember spending a lot of time with my father back then, but sometimes Mom and Dad would pile four children and the dog onto their 14-foot sloop and spend the day on Oyster Bay. My whole life, Dad kidded me for falling off the boat so often that they tethered me to the mast.

In 1963, my grandfather registered two more Havemeyer-Eaton lilacs, 'Mauve Mist' and 'Romance', a bush with single pink blooms. Around that time, my mother's father, Allen E. Owen, visited Lilac Land and was taken by a cultivar with deep purple blooms. Mark named it 'Ethan Allen'.

But as the age of the automobile waned, the crowds at Lilac Land thinned. Another baby arrived in 1965. Dad took a job as a horticulturist at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx and propagated lilacs on the side. A couple of years after that, he became Portsmouth's first director of parks, a job he would hold for 35 years.

I was 5 years old when the moving van was packed with toys and furniture and my dad's books, which had titles like "Pest Management" and "Proper Propagation." When my parents began to stuff the hull of our sloop with balled and burlaped lilacs, it was perhaps the first time I rolled my eyes at them, wondering why they were putting all that dirt in our sailboat.

I later learned that since ancient times, lilacs had migrated across the land with the people who loved them. We arrived at our new home in Virginia laden with lilacs and greeted by a little media fanfare.

On Feb. 12, 1967, the Page 1 headline in The Virginian-Pilot and The Portsmouth Star read, "Eaton to Start Beautification Work on Monday."

By then, Lilac Land was in deep decline. It was too much for my grandfather to care for. In 1970, when he was 70 years old, he made his last introduction, 'Tit Tat Toe', a single pinkish-purple bloomer. Two years later, my grandparents moved to Florida. Later that year, he was awarded the International Lilac Society's Award of Merit.

In America's nurseryman's "lilac bible," a book titled "Lilacs: The Genus *Syringa*," author Father John L. Fiala explained: "Rarely does a team such as Havemeyer-Eaton come forth for the good of all. Most of the Havemeyer lilacs were relatively unknown until they were offered to the public through the efforts and nursery of Mark Eaton. Often hybridizers' most mature and best work is done towards the end of their life, and most frequently the best fruit of their work is lost upon their death. The best seedlings are often not evaluated

Development of Lilac Park in Photos

all photos by Elena Terekhova



Digging and preparation of the site



The children begin digging the planting holes
for the lilacs



The whole crew assembles after digging the planting holes



The lilacs are placed in the holes;
and set at the proper depth



The nourishing topsoil is brought
to the lilacs to be packed in the planting site



The lilacs are carefully packed in with
the fertile topsoil



'Mauve Mist', a Havemeyer-Eaton lilac;
still in the collection at Highland Botanical Park
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Closeup of 'Mauve Mist'
Photo Credit Kent Millham

by trustees of estates and discarded.”

That last sentence has always made me wonder what happened to the lilacs at Lilac Land. Many of the plants that traveled south inside our sailboat were already gone, the entire row ripped out by the new owners of the Portsmouth home where we were raised. When my parents divorced, my mother moved a ‘Glory’ and a ‘Hallelujah’ to her new home but later found the rest dead in the creek.

In the pre-dawn hours of May 4, my father died of pancreatic cancer. At sunrise, I walked into my garden to check on ‘Katherine Havemeyer’. Her blooms were shriveled and brown, the last speck of pink from two days before had vanished.

Ten days later, Mom, my sister Crystal, my daughter, Peyton, and I set out for Lilac Land. I already knew that a few of my grandfather’s lilacs had vanished, including ‘Dazzle’, ‘Mr. Big’, ‘Ethan Allen’, ‘Eaton Red’ and ‘Tit Tat Toe’. It was a long shot, we knew, but what if some of the Havemeyer-Eaton lilacs were still living on that hill that was once Lilac Land? The heavy metal tags might still be on them. Or maybe Mom could recognize ‘Mr. Big’ if she saw him.

Halfway there, we checked into a hotel. We spent the evening remembering the quirky side of Dad – how he always said he was 16, and the amazing apricot birthday cakes he would make for us. All the while we sifted through a box of papers and pictures that my stepmother had given to Crystal.

We found yellowed football programs from high school days when Dad was No. 62, a starting right guard for the Glen Cove Big Red, and high school and college report cards. A crumpled copy of his college paper revealed that his fellow classmates predicted that he would be “a playboy.” Gosh. Who knew? Crystal and I never imagined that Dad was a playboy, much less sentimental enough to save this stuff for more than 50 years. But pictures or pieces of Lilac Land remained elusive.

The only trace in this cache was two small photographs, dated 1970, of Crystal and me walking down a path carrying bouquets of lilacs in our arms. That was 38 years ago, likely our last time at Lilac Land.

Our day on Long Island dawned cloudless, despite a gloomy forecast. Since we didn’t want to start knocking on doors too early, first stop was the Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park, the former Coe estate where Dad worked as a teenager. Even Peyton, who came on this trip only for the hotel swimming pools, was enchanted. There are soaring greenhouses with Greek columns at the entrances and exits, formal gardens and a corridor of fragrant lilacs in full bloom, some flower masses the size of footballs. The corridor was like a little bit of Lilac Land.

"I get it," Crystal said, standing beneath the boughs. "Now I get it." All the books on botany and borers, Dad's unwavering interest in horticulture, his will to make Portsmouth a pretty place. He witnessed the splendor of nature early in life. "How could he have done anything else?" Crystal said. With an epiphany in our pocket, we pressed on.

We had three phone numbers we hoped would gain us access to what once was Lilac Land: one for the people who live in my grandparents' house on the hill, another for a woman who lives on part of the old Havemeyer estate but not on Lilac Land proper and another for Carley Wagner, the exact Carley the lilac was named for.

Fifty-eight years ago, Carley moved into what was once a gardener's cottage on her great Uncle Theodore's estate. Carley was a most gracious hostess. She brought cookies and iced tea – apologizing that it wasn't Southern sweet – and a stack of lilac memorabilia. We realized that for a few short years, we were neighbors. She rarely went up the hill to Lilac Land, she said.

Carley has three lilacs in her garden, including 'Katherine Havemeyer', but no Havemeyer-Eaton lilacs, nor her namesake 'Carley'. Her garden slopes upward from her terrace. She walked us to the ridge where a whisper of the Havemeyer estate remains, a straight line of yews that once led to Lilac Land. If not for a fence, we could have walked there.

Our next stop was Polly Sealy's house. On the phone, Polly said she wouldn't be home but welcomed us to roam her expansive property and check out the two acres of lilacs that front the road. We could hardly wait. Even though it wasn't on the site of Lilac Land, maybe, just maybe, we'd find something familial. We exited the car and spotted them immediately, across a grassy expanse that seemed as wide as a football field. But when we reached the hedge, we saw the ragged-edged leaves. These were another variety of lilac, not French hybrids. Along the edges of the property, we found a young single lavender bloomer, and another white. Both looked like French hybrids, but when I checked my notes, I saw that none of the missing lilacs fit those descriptions.

We still had not been able to talk with the present owners of the Lilac Land proper, but it was now or never. I strained the car straight up the hill, but there was no crunching. I continued up the asphalt drive and bore sharply to the right once more.

The bones of what was once my whole world were still there, an arc of low buildings fronted by a circular bed, although the circle was edged with concrete blocks and the weeping lilac had vanished, replaced by a soaring spruce and a meticulously clipped hedge. The greenhouse and the gap that once led to the lilacs were missing.

I knocked on what was my grandparents' front door. A woman answered. She seemed busy. I explained my ties to her land as quickly as I could.

She nodded while I was talking. She'd heard about my quest; I felt like a nuisance. "There's nothing to see," she said through the glass, in her strong New York accent. "Gone. "Bulldozed."

I never dreamed it would end this quickly. Could we just take a look around? I asked. "There's nothing to see," she repeated. "Nothing." I wasn't going away.

I told her that my mother, who worked this land with her hands, was in the car. Could we just have a moment of your time? She softened slightly and moved to the porch. When my mother walked toward us, I saw her eyes flicker to the right, where our greenhouse once stood. I saw it, too, clusters of faint purple buds, not yet burst into bloom.

On the porch, the owner told us that when her family moved here 12 years ago, they tore down the greenhouse, paved the driveway and converted the garage and the gap to living space. They puzzled over the wavy-edged "Lilac Land" sign they found in the garage and sent it to the landfill. We were 12 years too late.

She sensed our sorrow and apologized. The lilacs on the property were so old, she explained, and they had not been cared for. She feared that her grandchildren might venture into the tangle. "And the smell," she said, waving her hand in front of her face. "When those white ones turned brown, you couldn't stand it."

The owner offered to show us the backyard, now an in-ground pool surrounded by terra-cotta pavers and manicured lawn. As she said, gone. All gone.

She welcomed us to take cuttings of the one lilac left and lent us her scissors. The lilac was growing on a spot that once was the far end of the greenhouse. Its roots clenched a sloping hillside; the gnarled trunk leaned toward land. I couldn't find a tag; Mom didn't think it was a French hybrid anyway.

But this lilac had been growing there forever. Tears welled up in my mother's eyes as she did what she used to do hundreds of times, right here on this land. Our timing was bad; this was not the season for cuttings. But as we rolled down the drive with our clutch of green leaves, we hoped that this little piece of Lilac Land would survive.

EPILOGUE

No nursery I can find has 'Tit Tat Toe' or 'Blue Angel' or 'Dazzle' or 'Mr. Big', but I have learned that other Havemeyer-Eaton cultivars flourish across America, in Canada and even in England.

On the way back to Virginia, we stopped at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. There, in the T.A. Havemeyer Lilac Collection, we found 'Mauve Mist'. 'Pink Mist', 'Romance' and 'Serene' live on at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Ontario. Colin Chapman, former International Lilac Society

president and its current executive vice president for Europe, has a whole bed of Havemeyer-Eaton lilacs at his home in Suffolk, England.

Chapman, who met my father and grandfather at a lilac society convention in 1991, said it "was a very proud moment in my life, and I have never forgotten it."

Brad Bittorf, executive vice president of the International Lilac Society, sent me a note saying that "your family name is recognized among the top dozen or so within the lilac world."

I had no idea how respected they were. There is peace and solace in knowing that while Lilac Land may be gone, the legacy of my father and grandfather lives on.

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International Lilac Robin

Not only is the Lilac Robin used to communicate observations and questions about lilacs, but it is also used to talk with other members. Gloria Schreiber was one of many who reached out to others in ILS during the holiday season. Here are her thoughts:

Dear Friends,

I just wanted to send out to all my lilac friends warm thoughts and good wishes for the holiday season. Also wishing you a wonderful, happy, healthy, joyful and prosperous New Year. I'm so lucky to have found such wonderful new friends through my love of lilacs.

May God Bless each and every one of you and remember the reason for the season.

Warm Hugs to all,
Gloria

International Lilac Society

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The deep violet 'Albert F. Holden' with its light silver undersides and cupped florets is one of Father Fiala's most unique and beautiful hybrids
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



A fine light blue, heavily flowering lilac, 'Monore' or better known as BLUE
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



Colby Moro enjoying liacs in his garden
Photo courtesy of Select Plus Nursery