

Lilacs

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of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

2015 ILS Convention and
Syringa komarowii



Syringa vulgaris 'Arlene Welsh' at the Moro Farm
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Syringa vulgaris 'Eleanor Berdeen' at the Moro Farm
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

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Front Cover: An inflorescence of *Syringa vulgaris* 'Zulu' on a specimen at the Moro Farm, Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

Editor's Deadline for Fall Issue:

*****September 15*****

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President's Message

Dear Lilac friends,

The 2015 ILS Convention in Mascouche, Canada has come and gone. You have missed a good one. Frank Moro and his family rolled out the red carpet or should I say the lilac carpet for us. Saturday evening some of us made our way to the Moro's house where we were treated to pizzas and good lilac conversation. The house was easy to find since lilacs in front and in the back yard were in full bloom. The ILS Board Meeting was held there the following morning.

Our afternoon was free so we carpooled to the Montreal Botanical Garden. It was a treat to be there. The lilac collection was waiting for us with every lilac in bloom. It was early spring and the tulips display beds were vibrant. The gardeners were planting vegetables and flowers. We saw many favorite lilac cultivars and others not so well known. The peonies were at their peak. The Chinese and Japanese gardens were also worth a visit. Many, many photographs were taken.

In the evening we gathered in the Hospitality room to meet new and old friends. After dinner at a local restaurant, we went back to the hotel for a quick nap. The bus was leaving at 8:30am for La Terre des Bisons. You guessed it- they raised bisons and also deer/elk. We received a very warm welcome from the farm owners. They explained their operation and the reasons they choose to raise those impressive animals. We were taken on a trailer pulled by a tractor to the pasture to see a herd of forty females with new calves. The babies look just like our domestic cows but later develop the characteristics of the adult bisons. The mother weighs about a thousand pounds. They are very protective of their babies who, like all babies, are so, so cute. The bulls are double the size of the females. They reside in another pasture that we did not visit.

At the farm half of our group was told how the animals were processed for meat. We tasted bison and deer pates. We visited the deer/elk and found that they were much larger than the whitetail deer we're familiar with. The bull had a magnificent rack covered with velvet. It was now very cold and we appreciated getting back in our school bus. Next stop was a sugar shack. To me that was completely foreign. The trees were connected by many feet of blue hoses. My bus partner, John Kirk, enlightened me about maple syrup production, since he is involved in the harvesting and the making of maple syrup. We ate at the restaurant located in the middle of a large stand of maples. We were served at our individual table a smorgasbord of local specialties.

We held the Annual Membership Meeting at that venue. We announced the new board members. We discussed and approved having a Facebook page. Gloria Schreiber volunteered to set it up, and others offered to help maintain it. We left, but not before tasting a specialty of the region; maple syrup on ice. The syrup is drizzled over ice and collected with a wooden stick. It turns out to be like a maple syrup popsicle.

We again hopped on the bus and went to visit a strawberry farm. The wind by now was blowing hard and it was cold. After the tour many of us purchased wine and strawberry jams from the little shop. We returned to the hotel to get ready for the President's Dinner where Claire Fouquet joined us. She is from St. George, QC, Canada. She took many pictures that she posted on the internet right away. Frank Moro had asked everyone to bring a small memento from the area you came from. The idea was for you to explain the gift and have a conversation with the mystery recipient revealed at the dinner. Arlene Myers gave me cookies from Long Island. I gave Marcia Hoepfl a Tour Eiffel key chain I had purchased on the Champs Elysees in Paris, France. It was quite fun and a good way to break the ice!

The big day had yet to come! On Saturday morning we made our way to Frank and Sara Moro's nursery, or The Farm as they call it. We had the second ILS Board Meeting to elect the ILS officers and to finish some unfinished business. After that formality the whole group arrived and we spent the day there. It was a whirlwind of activities. Of course we ran to see the Moro's lilac collection planted in a large field. Many lilacs were unknown to us having been hybridized by Frank. They were just magnifiques! We appreciate every bloom and took pictures. We sat under the big white tent to enjoy a delicious and abundant lunch prepared by Sara Moro and the children. I received a register with an elegant lilac pen. My mission now is to take it to the future conventions and have every one attending sign it. We then proceeded to the auction. Bruce Peart our auctioneer outdid himself. Thank you to him and his helpers. Frank Moro had invited the general public. We had a many local people in attendance. Quickly Myrna Walberg recruited a new member, Daniel Joboin from Ontario, a very nice gentleman brand new to lilacs. He was one of our best bidders.

Arlene Myers also joined ILS. Right away she asked to join and gave her dues to Karen McCauley our treasurer, which made two new members. I had and have challenged everyone in ILS to sign up one (1) member this year. Already we had two and the convention was not over. Bravo! We had a wine tasting conducted by Frank's cousin Moreno Ruaro., and a huge cake was baked to celebrate the convention. After lunch we had two fantastic workshops. The first one was on pruning by David Gressley. The other on grafting conducted was by Jack Alexander. I'm sure many of us went home eager to prune and propagate our lilacs. The wind by then was blowing hard and flapping the tent's sides. It was time to go back to the hotel. But not so fast we gather quickly to take the traditional group picture.

In the evening we gathered at the hotel for the Honors and Awards Dinner. Myrna Walberg, Honors and Awards Chair, announced the winners. Frank Moro and his family, who were all present, were recognized for their work planning this wonderful convention. We had a very nice silent auction organized by Karen McCauley. At our table three of us had winning bids. Woody Barnes got the pen made out of lilac wood that he much coveted. Phoebe Hubbard was

pleased to win the lilac soaps she wanted. She immediately shared them with two others. Arlene Myers, one of our brand new convention members, won to her delight, the cookbook on International Cuisine.

All the details will be in our fall journal. Impossible to describe it all. Read the minutes of the three meetings posted on the ILS Web Page. Thank you again to Frank Moro and his family for putting on this "show". I asked for everyone to send articles and pictures to ILS Editor Kent Millham. One of our members from New Zealand, Beryl Lee, who attended the convention, has already sent an article to Kent including pictures. Those of you who could not come missed a wonderful time.

Plan for next year we are going to Longwood Gardens, Mount Cuba Center, Chantecleer Garden and Tyler Gardens in the State of Pennsylvania, USA. The date April 28-30, 2016. The auction will have some surprises so don't miss the 2016 ILS Convention!

Mes Amities,

*Nicole Jordan
ILS President
Chester, VA USA*

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Board Members

The following ILS members were elected to serve as board members until 2018:

Jack Alexander
Tim McCauley
Connie Simonnet
Giles Waines

International Lilac Convention 2015

Mascouche Québec

Why would someone travel over 10,000 miles to a convention? Maybe it's the temptation of seeing hosts of different lilacs in bloom, maybe to get a whiff of lilacs' heavenly perfume or maybe the likelihood of meeting knowledgeable, lilac enthusiasts who could teach a thing or two. In my case it was probably a little of all these reasons.

After a few months of mulling the idea of making the trip from New Zealand to Mascouche, the decision was made. Emails requesting information that probably seemed ludicrous to my cosmopolitan, northern hemisphere counterparts were written, flights booked and after contacting friends in various parts of the North American continent, accommodation was sorted. And so, full of anticipation, I departed these southern shores.

Four flights and 32 hours later, I arrived in Minneapolis where I was kindly hosted by Karen and Tim McCauley and given time to recharge my batteries before moving on to Montréal. It was in Minnesota that I first saw large plantings of lilacs in bloom. What joy! My initiation took place in Karen and Tim's own garden where they told me their lilacs were past their best, but they still looked good to me. Then it was to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska where I went into sensory overload. By the time I'd made my way around all the lilacs, I could see that the task I had set myself of photographing and becoming familiar with all the lilacs I know to have been brought into New Zealand, was indeed possible.

But this was just the beginning. Before long it was on to Montréal where I enjoyed a look around the wonderful lilac collection at the Jardin botanique de Montréal before settling into the hotel at Terrebonne. A gift bag containing bootie such as strawberry liqueur, raspberry jam and an appropriately coloured scarf awaited us, hinting of the delights to come.

The first event hosts Frank and the Moro family scheduled, was a hospitality room which provided an opportunity for delegates to mix and mingle before the programme began in earnest on Friday morning. This was the start of the pleasurable task of putting faces to names that up until then, had been only the names that appeared in the quarterly journal or at the end of emails.

A cold wind heralded Day One, the day we travelled to La Terre des Bisons in the rural region of Lanaudière. As well as seeing the bison herd from the safety of a trailer and a sturdy fence, we sampled bison pates made by the friendly staff of the family-run business. It was on board again for the journey to a traditional Québécois sugar shack for a lunch served in a cosy room heated by a blazing log burner. No opportunity was lost to showcase the versatility of maple syrup, with maple glazed ham and fried maple crepes being a couple of the many offerings.

The final stop was a strawberry and raspberry farm where we were introduced to the products made by the lively young owner and her family. The day's proceedings concluded with dinner at the hotel's bistro and grill and a fun filled gift exchange and a false alarm, fire evacuation providing some of the evening's entertainment.

For this southern visitor, the trilliums colonised under the maple trees and the culture of lilac growing evident by the large number of lilac bushes growing on private properties, made a lasting impression. Coming from a country where few lilacs grace gardens, this was quite a revelation.

Day Two saw board members leave the hotel early for a meeting at the Moro family farm. Those not involved followed a little later. After a leisurely wander through the garden and the nursery stock, we made our way to the large tent that had been erected for the lilac auction. Such excitement! Convention participants were joined by locals as bidders jostled for treasures. Of course some left happy while others were disappointed. How I wished I could take some new lilacs home with me but bio security restrictions being what they are, there was never a chance. (On the way home, my shoes were taken away to be dipped in disinfectant as I'd been on the bison farm!)

By the time the auction had concluded, the cold wind died down a little and the sun decided to make an appearance. A tasty, appropriately Italian-themed lunch was served complete with a beautifully decorated cake and wine from a massive 9 litre bottle Frank had acquired.

The educational part of the programme was particularly relevant to me. I had never before heard anyone talk of the planting, care or the pruning of lilacs let alone their propagation. Consequently the workshops by Jack Alexander and Dave Gressley were most useful and I felt I could return home with a little more knowledge to look after my own growing collection. Likewise, listening to convention participants with so much expertise was quite illuminating to this novice.

The convention was drawing to a close as we congregated for the final time at the formal dinner. A silent auction of an interesting assortment of items had been set up and this too, was a novel way to me, to raise funds. Typically gardening groups in my country organise raffles and have the prize(s) on display for the duration of the particular event. It has the advantage of getting outsiders involved although I can't say which method is most successful in bringing in revenue.

And so it was farewell to the delegates and a big thank you to Frank and Team Moro for their sterling work in organising the convention. Still, it was not yet time for me to return home, for it makes sense to do and see as much as you can when long distances are involved. It was the beginning of the next stage of my adventure, an adventure that was to take in a number of lilac collections including those at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, the Katie Osbourne

Lilac Garden at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, the Lilacs of Lindsay and The Centennial Lilac Garden at Niagara Falls. But - this is another chapter in my lilac story and can be shared sometime in the future.

After visiting so many wonderful lilac collections, seeing Russian lilacs in flower for the first time and the Preston lilacs in their hometown, I'm left wondering, can you ever get too much of a good thing? When it comes to lilacs, I believe not. While floating between the rows of lilacs in the Jardin botanique de Montréal, I seemed to constantly encounter another visitor to the garden as she walked around bushes one way and I, the other.

'This is absolute heaven,' I enthused. She responded with, 'Well, if this is heaven, I'm not afraid of dying'. Who can argue with that? And yes, I do intend packing my bags again and making the journey to Pennsylvania in 2016. I hope to meet up with my new lilac friends then.

*Beryl Lee
June 2015*



Preparing for the auction
Photo Credit Claire Fouquet

Memories from the Convention



Karen McCauley (seated), Nicole Jordan and Myrna Walberg
visiting the Jardin Botanique de Montreal
Photo Credit Beryl Lee



Lilacs smell almost as good in a jar as on the plant
Photo Credit Claire Fouquet



The bidding for those prize lilacs heats up!
Photo credit Claire Fouquet



Jack Alexander conducts an informative propagation workshop
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Dave Gressley discussing the intricacies of pruning lilacs
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



The gracious hosts of the 2015 ILS convention,
the Moro Family
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

International Lilac Society Convention Auction May 2015

S. vulgaris 'Lila Wonder'
S. vulgaris 'Princesse Sturdza'
S. vulgaris 'Prince Wolkonsky'
S. yunnanensis 'Rosea'
S. vulgaris 'Krasnaya Moskva'
S. × prestoniae 'Handel'
S. vulgaris 'Znamya Lenina'
S. vulgaris 'Elsie Lenore'
S. vulgaris 'Biala Anna'
S. vulgaris 'Blue Revery'
S. × josiflexa 'Royalty'
S. vulgaris 'Alpenglow'
S. vulgaris 'Aino'
S. vulgaris 'Frank's Fancy'
S. pubescens subsp. *patula* 'Excellens'
S. 'Dancing Druid'
S. × henryi 'Julia'
S. vulgaris 'White Lace'
S. vulgaris 'Sacrament'
S. vulgaris 'Lilac Lady'
S. vulgaris 'S. V. Lavrov'
S. vulgaris 'Reva Ballreich' (Peterson)
S. vulgaris 'Porcelain Blue'
S. vulgaris 'Drifting Dream'
S. vulgaris 'Hosanna'
S. vulgaris 'Ville de St. Georges'
S. vulgaris 'Jubilee'
S. komarowii subsp. *reflexa* 'Beautiful Susan'
S. 'Snowy Beach Party'
S. vulgaris 'Atheline Wilbur'
S. pubescens subsp. *julianae* 'George Eastman'
S. pubescens subsp. *microphylla* 'Superba'
S. vulgaris 'Yankee Doodle'
S. vulgaris 'Wonderblue'
S. vulgaris 'Triste Barbaro'
S. vulgaris 'Marie Frances'
S. vulgaris 'President Lincoln'
S. × chinensis 'Red Rothomagensis'
S. 'Penda' BLOOMERANG PURPLE®
S. 'SMSJBP7' BLOOMERANG DARK PURPLE®

2015 International Lilac Awards, Mascouche, Quebec Canada

Award of Merit Frank Moro and Family Mascouche, Quebec, Canada
For organizing and hosting the 44th annual International Lilac Convention, for generously offering lilacs to the lilac auctions and for producing and introducing new lilacs.

Award of Merit Irina Podosinkina Member of Lilac Section of Moscow Flora Club
For many years of work promoting lilacs, for participation in events and projects related to lilac and for her charity work.

Award of Merit Landscape Studio Veliky Novgorod
For their enthusiasm, perseverance and hard work in creating a public Lilac Garden in Veliky, Novgorod

Award of Merit Harry and Nancy Latimer, Emory, Virginia
For your long time steady support of the International Lilac Society by serving on the board and in different capacities, for your great support of the Lilac Auction both in supplying and buying lilacs and for maintaining a large lilac collection in Virginia.

Award of Merit Members of Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Canada

Joan Speirs Lilac Advisor
For organizing the digitizing of the International Lilac Society publications and journals from 1971 to 2014.
For organizing the indexing of the International Lilac Society journals from mid 1993 to the end of 2014.

Maura Giuliani Eileen Reardon Catherine Pink
For assisting with the indexing of the ILS journals from mid 1993 to the end of 2014.

President's Award Eastern Iowa Community Colleges Clinton, Iowa
For continuing and advancing the mission of the Bickelhaupt Arboretum, for the promotion of lilacs, including education about their care and display.

Distinguished Recognition Award The Bickelhaupt Family Clinton, Iowa
For your generous donation of the Bickelhaupt Arboretum and its financial assets, which enable continued access to lilacs, lilac information, and other botanical displays and settings for people of Iowa and beyond

Treasurer's Report 2015

Fiscal Year 4/1/14 - 3/31/15

KeyBank Checking Account Balance 4/1/15	\$ 18,922.46
Edward Jones Company Investments:	
HSBC Finance 5.00%	5,000.00
Tennessee Valley Auth Gbr Pwr 4.65%	20,000.00
FHLMC Note 5.625%	18,000.00
South Broward HDFB Municipal Bond 6.978%	5,000.00
Franklin Adj US Govt Secs	8,000.00
Money Market/Cash	495.18
TOTAL	\$ 75,417.64

Special Accounts (Included in the above total)

Life Member/Endowment Fund	\$ 39,944.57
Plant Propagation Fund (Laurene Wishart)	1,862.51
Education & Research	3,618.88
Youth Program Fund	1,449.12
Reva Ballereich Memorial Fund	298.08
Total Funds in Special Accounts	\$ 47,173.16
Total Funds in General Accounts	\$ 28,244.48
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$ 75,417.64

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 4,835.00
Contributions to ILS	435.00
Interest Income	2,569.38
Auction Income	3,138.00
Misc Income (Royalties, Old Journal sales, European account closure)	815.66
Total Income	\$ 11,793.04

Expenses

Journal	\$ 8,475.26
Postage	1,366.62
Bank Fees	412.01
Web site expenses	0.00
Awards	18.00
Insurance	417.50
Printing (Membership brochures)	349.00
2014 Convention loss	761.93
Total Expenses	\$ 11,800.32

Net Income (Loss) **\$ (7.28)**

NOTE: Misc income includes funds (\$620) from the closure of the European account formerly managed by Colin Chapman.

Submitted 4/15/15 by Karen McCauley, ILS Treasurer

Highlights of International Lilac Society 2005 Board of Directors Meetings, May 21 and May 22, 2015, Mascouche, Quebec

The board passed a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the 2014 meeting.

The board discussed adding the ability to accept memberships directly through the web site and this will be investigated anew.

Some regions are conducting regional meetings, which is encouraged where it is feasible.

Does ILS captures information about what lilacs were sold to people? While there are records of the lilacs that are sold at auctions, information about who buys what is considered private.

Nicole Jordan recognized the transfer of the Bickelhaupt Arboretum to Eastern Iowa Community Colleges. The transfer was accompanied by a generous amount of funding to support the continued operation of the arboretum.

Ellen Steward, the last remaining founder of ILS, passed away during the year. Kent will add a tribute in the journal. There was already an article about Ellen in the robin.

The Registrar's written report submitted by Freek Vrugtman was read. David Gressley reminded us that it is incumbent upon our Society to keep up with the list of new registrations of lilacs and publish these in our journal. There is concern that there is not an heir-apparent for the position of ICRA Registrar for the genus *Syringa L.*

All the back issues of lilac journals are digitized and posted on the web site, except for the three most recent years, which are available to members in the "Members Only" section of the web site per Board policy. There is an index of the digitized content of the journals.

Please write articles for Editor Kent Millham to use in the journal "Lilacs."

There was a cleanup of the membership of the Lilac Robin discussion group. This is a benefit to ILS members only. We will try to archive the content of the Lilac Robin in ILS archives.

Frank Moro and Nicole are working on a video for ILS. Gloria Schreiber and others will create a Facebook page for ILS on a trial basis. The board will launch work to add Welcome web pages in other languages such as Spanish, French and Russian.

The ILS Auditor, John Kirk, reported that all is in order in ILS records.

Treasurer Karen McCauley reported that we took in about \$12,000 and spent about \$12,000 last year. We also received the balance of European funds, so all ILS funds are now consolidated. **The board passed a motion to direct that the Reva Ballreich Memorial Fund be moved to the endowment. The board passed a motion to accept the Treasurer's report.**

The 2016 convention will be at Longwood Gardens near Philadelphia, April 28-30, 2016. We are trying to keep the cost low. We will visit three to five gardens in the area. Karen McCauley will need help in shipping plant material since we don't have a local host there. The 2016 event will include many plants that have never been at an ILS auction.

Future conference possibilities include: Belgium/Netherlands, Clinton or Des Moines (Iowa), Cincinnati, Kent, OH (Daisy Wolcott Gardens).

The McCauley's worked with Max Peterson to preserve some threatened lilacs at the Peterson lilac collection in Ogallala NE. Plant samples from some 40 rare plants were collected, including many Berdeen and Kolesnikov plants. Not all of the collection is in danger. **The board passed a motion to reimburse expenses for this trip.** Some lilac collections have not submitted their cultivar list to be integrated into the master list of cultivars that exist in different locations around the world.

Dr. Giles Waines was contacted by someone from the University of North Dakota to talk about fusing cells to get a cream color of lilac. We have not yet received this formal proposal. **The ILS Research Committee chair, Giles Waines, will send out a request for research projects that will be printed in the lilac robin, the journal, and the website.**

Kelly Applegate is drafting an "activity book" for youth.

There have been many publicized lilac plantings and media events in Russia and Europe. Coverage of some of these events will be linked from the ILS web site.

Frank Moro said there may be two kinds of members—"traditional" with paper and garden applications, and "modern" with more internet and electronic options. We should appeal to both. Frank suggested that we offer a special category of membership that would only be an on-line version of the journal at a lower cost. The Board discussed whether we could have an electronic-only journal. Previous member feedback has indicated that ILS cannot eliminate the paper journal because people still like getting the paper journal, and libraries still like to get the paper journal. **The board approved a motion to try a \$5 promotional membership on Facebook where we offer two sample journals from our stock to prospective new members.** The board also asked if we could make a membership form in another language. **Brad said he will create samples of membership forms in other languages for review.**

The board elected the following individuals as its officers for 2015-2016:

- **President: Nicole Jordan**
- **Executive Vice-President: Bradley Bittorf (term ends 2020)**
- **Secretary: John Kirk**
- **Treasurer: Karen McCauley**
- **Assistant Treasurer: William Tschumi**
- **Editor: Kent Millham**

The list of regional vice-presidents is available on the ILS web site <http://www.internationallilacsociety.org/regions-and-vp>.

LILACS OF ACADEMICIAN KOMAROV

This time we are to familiarize ourselves with Komarov's lilac (*Syringa komarowii* C.K. Schneider). This unusual shrub of amazing appearance belonging to the section of Villous (*Villosae*) is rarely found in our gardens.

I like its Polish name - lilak zwisłokwiatowy (lilac with hanging flowers). Similar name is used in Germany – Hänge-Flieder – hanging lilac. The British call it eccentrically – nodding lilac.

For the first time, I saw the shrubs of Komarov's lilac in Tallinn Municipal Botanical garden located in the flood-lands of the Pirta River. Last year, I could get to the capital of Estonia only in the second half of June exactly on the eve of Yanov Day (Yanipyaev) when night air was filled with smoke of family bonfires. And during the whole short festive white night, I saw elegant blue-black-white banners streaming everywhere.

As early spring and the first half of summer happened to be warmer than usual, by the time of my arrival all the cultivars of common lilac ceased to bloom. Usually in these northern parts they are in full bloom. Feeling blue I strolled about the deserted syringarium of the Botanical Garden when all at once in a remote corner I saw several flowering shrubs of lilac of unusual species. Their reddish rather narrow solitary arching panicles hung like shaggy icicles and resembled inflorescences of a mysterious wisteria. There was something unimaginable around the shrubs: myriad of bees flew and crept over from one flower to another. A penetrating soft fragrance of lilac spread all around. I could not recollect when else I took pleasure in such a wild festival of Mother Nature! Involuntarily I was involved in its passionate rhythm and as an unknown insect ran over from one panicle to another examining their marvelous outlines, coloration, and shape of buds appreciating delicacy of opening florets, trying to ignore their gradually fading beauty and breathe in their wonderful fragrance. I hoped to retain in memory this enchanting picture for a long time.

The buds of Komarov's lilac are carmine red and resemble tiny bunches of grapes. From the time of opening, florets on the outside grow lighter and become dark pink; on the inside they become almost white. Their petals are distinctly squarrose but not everted. Narrow unbroken solitary panicles are extremely ornamental. The same as in other villous plants, 15–30-cm-long panicles are located on the ends of green shoots by 1 to 3 pieces. The leaves are lanceolate. It is interesting that the branches of Komarov's lilac diverge from the stem at an almost right angle (about 70–80 degrees). As the shrub is not dense, this feature is easily visible even in summer. Erect shrubs are 2.5–3.5 m tall. Lavish blooming is very late and occurs a week after *Hungarian lilac* sheds its blossoms. This lilac is frost resistant in middle Russia. *Komarov's lilac* originates from Central China where it occupies a vast natural habitat covering five provinces (south Guangzhou and Shanxi, west Hubei, all over Sichuan, and

north Yunnan). Here it grows along the rivers and ravines and in backwoods on well permeable gravel soils at an altitude of 1000–2000 m and sometimes 3400 m above sea level. Komarov's lilac does not endure full sun, clay and poorly irrigated soil.

For the first time, Komarov's lilac was described by a well-known German botanist Camillo Karl Schneider way back in 1910 in St. Petersburg Botanical Institute by herbarium specimens collected by G.N. Potanin in 1893 in the province of Hubei. As a matter of fact, Grigori Potanin was the first among European scientists to discover this tremendous lilac, a real masterpiece of Chinese flora, and only after that C.K. Schneider named this botanical species after Komarov and this name became generally accepted. Hence, at that time V.L. Komarov was already known as a venerable botanist and indisputable authority on Chinese flora. At first, E. Wilson (1917) assumed that Komarov's lilac was only one of the extreme forms of another very variable species - *Syringa reflexa*. Just the opposite, the latter actually turned out to be a subspecies of Komarov's lilac. Recently, this species was merely subdivided into two subspecies that differ by three key features (Green, Chang, 1995):

dark corolla with more or less squarrose or prominent petals, the panicle is more or less compact —Syringa komarowii ssp. komarowii;

pale corolla with strongly deflected (reflexa) or bent-under petals, pyramidal panicle is broken – Syringa komarowii ssp. reflexa (cited by 'Lilacs'. A Gardener's Encyclopedia, 2008, p.108).

It was E. Wilson who assumed that Komarov's lilac would become a unique parental form for producing interspecific hybrids. Indeed, way back in 1920 Isabella Preston from Central Experimental Station in Ottawa crossed Komarov's lilac (subspecies *reflexa*) with related *Syringa villosa*. As a result, numerous late (prestonian) hybrids were produced, which became classical. In our time, John Fiala (USA) crossed *S. komarowii* (subspecies *komarowii*) with a diminutive *S. wolfii* and obtained a lovely compact hybrid 'Spellbinder'. As a result of more complicated combination where one of the parental forms was hybrid *S. sweginzowii* E *S. tomentella*, he produced a pale pink almost white hybrid 'Lark Song'.

Komarov's lilac was named after an outstanding Russian botanist and geographer Academician Vladimir Leont'evich Komarov (1869- 1945). Early in life, he made several long breathtaking trips from St. Petersburg to Manchuria, Korea and Far East, to Mongolia and China, Sayan Mountains, Baikal Region, and Kamchatka resulting in a number of fundamental works on flora and geography of these parts. For these works, Komarov received a number of high awards: Przhval'skii Gold Medal from Russian Geographic Society (at the age of 27!), and at the age of 39 he received an honorary Karl Baer Prize from Imperial Academy of Sciences and Tournefort/Linnaeus Medal from International Academy of Bo-

tanical Geography in France. In his declining years (1936—1945), Academician Komarov became President of the USSR Academy of Sciences. An interesting aspect of his scientific activity was elaboration of a doctrine of phylogenetic series realized in a fundamental treatise Flora of the USSR. Investigating and comparing plant natural habitats, he worked out a doctrine of meridian zoning of floras and canopy associated with migration of floristic complexes under the effect of living conditions, climate, configuration of continents and seas. This turned out especially relevant to lilacs. Presently, their natural habitats are very much disconnected and located only in three mountain regions of Eurasia: Balkan and Carpathian Mountains, the Himalayas, and in a vast East Asian region (mainly in China). Komarov supposed that lilac arose in Tertiary period and at first had a common broad natural habitat. Then in the period of high geological activity on the Asian continent, it came apart into independent fragments under the effect of rising mountain ranges. Along with glacial activity, this drove away two small parts of once common natural habitat to the South and West of Eurasia to some mountain formations where they turned out to be a sort of enclaves. But the core of its natural habitat in East-Asian region (central China) remained firm to our time. It is interesting that there are no lilacs in the Caucasus or in the mountains of Central Asia.

*Igor Semenov, Moscow
translated by Natalia Balakshina*



Closeup of *Syringa komarowii* subsp. *komarowii*
Photo Credit Igor Semenov



Syringa komarowii subsp. *komarowii*
Photo Credit Igor Semenov



Vladimir Leon'tevich Komarov
Photo provided by Igov Semenov

Lilacs with African-American Connections

The International Lilac Society (ILS) Executive Vice-President, yours truly, received a request for a list of lilacs that hold some connection to African-American history, culture, or persons. These lilacs are to be planted in a garden that includes similarly-identified plants from many species, and is to be a tribute to African-American history, but also a reminder of past challenges that African-Americans have faced.

Preamble:

The requester of this list and I are very aware that the treatment of African-American people over time has been historically a politically and culturally sensitive subject, and continues to be so. Terms once commonly used to identify African-Americans have often come to be regarded as insensitive, racist, and negative, even though they were the most-used terms of their day. Over time have terms such as "negro," "black," and "African-American" (and other more pejorative or unpleasant terms) have been used to describe people of color in North America.

This report seeks to share terminology with limited commentary regarding the "goodness" or "badness" of these terms, except with regard to how the lilac name is pertinent.

In consultation with many members of the ILS, I have compiled the following list of lilac names which meet these honorable requirements. Explanations have been provided for the inclusion (or in some cases, the exclusion) of lilacs from this list. This list is probably not comprehensive as candidates for this list continue to come to light.

During the 2015 ILS annual conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, it was noted that it would be a worthy endeavor to prepare similar lists for other cultures or themes as well. Your suggestions for such themes, as well as additions to this list, are welcome, and may be submitted by email to ILSExecVP@gmail.com.

Below is the list of lilacs with connections to African-American culture. This report heavily leverages information from the [International Register and Checklist of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa* L. \(Oleaceae\)](#). Entries below are of the following format.

<Lilac Cultivar Name>, <Name of Originator>, <Year introduced>
<S or D, indicating Single or Double flower> <Roman numeral I-VII indicating color>, <species or hybrid>
<syn. Indicating synonym or variant names for the cultivar>
<Named for explanation (if known).>
<Rationale section explaining why that cultivar does or does not fit into this list, and any notes..>

Lilacs Having Connection to African-American History or Culture:

'Toussaint-Louverture', Lemoine 1898

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - 'Taoussaint l'Ouverture', 'Toussaint L'Ouverture', 'Toussaint-l'Ouverture'
Named for Pierre Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture [1746-1803], Haitian black revolutionary leader.

Rationale: Toussaint Louverture, although not actually American, negotiated trade treaties with USA on behalf of France, 1798.

'Frederick Douglass', Fenicchia, 1972

S VI, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - 'Frederich Douglass', 'Frederick Douglas', R74

Named for Frederick Douglass [1818-1895], American slave, abolitionist leader and author.

Rationale: Frederick Douglass is well-known for his contributions to African-American history.

'Pol' Robson', Kolesnikov 1965

S IV-III, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - 'Paul Robeson', 'Paul Robson', 'Pol Robson'

Named for Paul Leroy Bustill Robeson [1898-1976], American lawyer, actor, singer, American all-star football player, and civil rights activist.

Rationale: Robeson was African-American activist whose activities caused him to be ostracized by the U.S. Government. Robeson toured in the Soviet Union, partly to escape racist attitudes in the USA. Because of his popularity in the Soviet Union, Soviet lilac introducer Leonid Kolesnikov named a lilac for him (using the Russian form of his name, "Robson") Note: Robeson also played the roles of Othello and Toussaint L'Ouverture in plays. Both have lilacs named for them on this list.

'L'Oncle Tom', Lemoine 1903

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

common name: Uncle Tom

Named for the hero of Harriet Elizabeth Stowe's 1852 novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

Rationale: Uncle Tom was identified as an African-American man in the novel. Wikipedia (retrieved 25 May 2015) further states, "The phrase 'Uncle Tom' has also become an epithet for a person who is slavish and excessively subservient to perceived authority figures, particularly a black person who behaves in a subservient manner to white people; or any person perceived to be complicit in the oppression of their own group.[1][2] The negative epithet is the result of later works derived from the original novel."

'President Lincoln', Dunbar 1916

S III, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - Dunbar m 202, 'Pres. Lincoln'

Named for Abraham Lincoln [1809-1865], 16th president of the USA.

Rationale: Abraham Lincoln is issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves (who were predominantly African-American) living within Confederate states of the United States of America.

'Purple Haze', Alexander III, 2005

S VII, {*S. protolaciniata* × *S. oblata* subsp. *dilatata*}

Named in memory of a song by that name and the artist, Jimi Hendrix, 1942-1970.

Rationale: Jimi Hendrix was an African-American musician.. In personal communication with originator Jack Alexander, I learned Alexander was a fan of Hendrix,

'Foxy Lady', Alexander III, 2008

S V, {*S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* × *S. meyeri*, }

Named in memory of a song by that name and the artist, Jimi Hendrix, 1942-1970.

Rationale: In personal communication, originator Jack Alexander acknowledged being a fan of Hendrix, an African-American musician, ILS member Tim McCauley reported that this was the origin of the name.

<Wentworth lilac> (named for locale, not a recognized cultivar)

Rationale: The Benning Wentworth lilacs at the former governor of New Hampshire's home are, according to some reports, arguably the oldest continuously growing lilacs in North America. According to at least one source, the Wentworths kept slaves at this location. See:

https://books.google.com/books?id=Y3A3PMKOVkEC&pg=PA44&lp=PA44&dq=benning+wentworth+and+the+slave+trade&source=bl&ots=Zy8h5B_mIL&sig=l4w03VrJP5ZX-kQ

5E9BA9bmgQmgw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=jv4VVYaBJrLgsATz5YCQBQ&ved=0C-CUQ6A

EwAQ#v=onepage&q=benning%20wentworth%20and%20the%20slave%20trade&f=false

EwAQ#v=onepage&q=benning%20wentworth%20and%20the%20slave%20trade&f=false

Lilacs having a weak connection to African-American culture or history, or that are solely connected to Africa but not America:

'Nigricans', origin not known; pre 1869

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - *S. vulgaris nigricans*; possibly same as 'Nigra'

Rationale: A 2014 definition of "Nigricans" appearing on "Urban Dictionary" states, "A politically correct slur. Used to describe a fully grown African-American 'niglet'. Obama's re-election was greatly influenced by the Nigrican vote."

Although this definition evolved after the naming of this lilac, another source indicates that "nigrican" means "blackish." Various fish and flowers have Latin names including the term "nigricans," so the term has long been used for something of darkish color. It appears that this term is likely to have had some use in the description of African-Americans in the past.

'Negro', Lemoine 1899

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

Rationale: Although 'Negro' might readily be thought of as former term for "African-American," the use of this term as a lilac name probably was used to indicate its dark color, rather than for a race of people.

'Mrs W. E. Marshall', Havemeyer 1924

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - 'W. E. Marshall', 'William Marshall'

Rationale: The parentage of this cultivar is {'L'Oncle Tom' × 'Negro'}. Refer to those items elsewhere in this report.

'Tombouctou', Lemoine 1910

S VII, *S. vulgaris*

common name: Timbuctoo

Named for the town in the Gao region of northern Mali, West Africa, centre of Muslim learning.

Rationale: This name is African but not African-American. Certainly many African-Americans have ancestry from Mali..

'Congo', Lemoine 1896

S VI, *S. vulgaris*

syn. - 'Kongo'

Named for the red colour of Congo dye, used to dye cotton.

Rationale: There now exist two countries in Africa with similar names—the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo). Per the Lilac Register, the lilac is named for Congo dye rather than for a country. Congo red dye was actually synthesized in Elberfeld, Germany in 1883 and thus the lilac actually has no connection to Africa.

'Othello', Lemoine 1900

S VI, *S. vulgaris*

Named for the Moor in Shakespeare's tragedy and Verdi's opera.

Rationale: The character was a Moor, and there exist various definitions for "Moors" as an ethnicity. Wikipedia (retrieved 31 March 2015) gives this alternate definition for "Moor":

"The term "Moor" has also been used in Europe in a broader, somewhat derogatory sense to refer to Muslims,[2] especially those of Arab or Berber descent, whether living in Spain or North Africa.[3]." Again, Moors would not have been

African-American unless they emigrated to the United States.
'Desdemona', Preston 1927
S III, *S. xprestoniae* (*S. villosa* × *S. komarowii* subsp. *reflexa*)
Rationale: Named for the Wife of Othello in Shakespeare's Othello. See rationale for 'Othello.

Respectfully submitted,
Bradley J. Bittorf
Executive Vice-President
International Lilac Society
May, 2015



Syringa vulgaris 'Negro'
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Syringa vulgaris 'Pol' Robson'
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Syringa vulgaris 'Toussaint-Louverture'
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

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Syringa vulgaris 'Lee Jewett Walker' at the Moro Farm
 Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



A beautiful welcome to ILS at the hotel
 Photo Credit Beryl Lee



Syringa vulgaris cluster at the Moro farm in Mascouche, Quebec, Canada
Photo Credit Brad Bitorf