

VOLUME 46 · NUMBER 2 · SPRING 2017

# Lilacs

Quarterly Journal of the International Lilac Society



*Inside this issue:*

- Lilacs and Climate Change
- The Southern Lilac Project



Above:  
*Syringa vulgaris* 'Avalanche'  
Photo by Tatiana Poliakova

Below:  
*Syringa vulgaris* 'Lucie Baltet' at Kew Gardens London  
Photo by Beryl Lee



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*On The Cover:*

Photo by Tatiana Poliakova

*Back Cover:* Photo by Tatiana Poliakova

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# President's Message

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Dear Lilac Friends,

Bonjour Spring! Finally, it has arrived and excitement is in the air. In Virginia, USA the lilacs began to wake up in the middle of winter. Leaves appeared overnight. During February, the temperatures seesawed from very low to way too high. In March, the temperatures have been so out of the norm with days in the 80's. For Virginia, this was a record. What is going on, we, the plants and animals asked? But now, it is really spring and we are back on schedule. The ILS convention from May 11th - 13th is approaching fast.

As you know we are going to Boston, USA! Thanks to Jack Alexander, Karen McCauley, ILS Convention Chair, and the Arnold Arboretum we are going to have another fantastic convention. Those of you who have never attended one, please sign up as you will not regret. The lilac collection at the Arnold Arboretum is large and superbly maintained. Register, come and enjoy the beautiful lilacs, the camaraderie of your lilac friends and see your favorite lilacs grown to perfection. But there is more. The Arnold Arboretum, part of Harvard University, was designed by famed architect Frederick Law Olmsted. It dates from 1872 and was dedicated for "the promotion of Agriculture, or Horticultural improvements". It takes up 281 acres in two sections of Boston, Jamaica Plains and Rosindale. In 2011, the living collection (Syringa being one of them) included 14,980 individual plants.

Lilac Sunday is a celebration on the second Sunday of May when visitors come to the Arboretum to admire the lilacs in full bloom and enjoy their fragrance. It is the only time picnics are allowed on the grounds. Lilac Sunday was 100 years old in 2008. The convention concludes on Saturday evening, so stay an extra day to enjoy this yearly event. John "Jack" Alexander III, who until last year was plant propagator at the Arnold, hybridized 'Lilac Sunday', a beautiful lilac with pendulous blooms and arching branches with fragrant pale purple blooms. A real beauty!

Beside the lilacs, the woody plant collections are outstanding with magnificent specimens of maple (Acer), oak (Quercus), Magnolia, Beech (Fagus), etc... I still remember those beautiful trees as we toured the arboretum during our last convention ten years ago. You will have so many things to see. Have I sold you yet on coming to the 2017 ILS Convention? I hope so.

Each year after every convention, I always say that I wish all our members could have attended. Attendance to conventions remains around sixty each year; we need to up that. A hundred would be a nice goal. It is the one time we can all be together. Can you imagine if we all came, a group of 500 plus. What a convention it would be!!!

Following the mandate of the ILS By-Laws, we will have our Board Meeting and the Annual Membership Meeting. The President's dinner on Friday night is when we will vote on our top five favorites lilacs, and the Awards and Honors dinner on Saturday night is where we recognize members and institutions for their services and present the awards.

The ILS shows appreciation to those who maintain lilacs in public and private collections, the hybridizers who give us beautiful lilacs, those who promote lilacs in small and large scale, and those who write books about lilacs. The ILS also acknowledges those who do research on Lilacs diseases, the effect of climate changes on lilacs, etc. Finally, those who serve on the ILS Board and committees, those who write articles and send photos for our journal, those who take on projects for ILS and those who host conventions are also considered for their efforts. We appreciate Freek Vrugtman, ILS Registrar, who so carefully keeps records of all the lilacs.

We remember those members who in 1971 founded ILS. Forty-six years later, the ILS is thriving but it also is challenged by the changing times. One of our main goals is to increase our membership. Tatiana Poliakovia is working wonders in Russia, steadily adding members to the ILS. We need to consider a convention to beautiful Moscow. We will see lilacs we have never seen before, meet all our Russian members as well as our European members. We want to meet Elke Haase, RVP Europe. She is a great promoter of lilacs and the ILS. She is the owner of Piccoplant Nursery in Oldenburg, Germany, and she generously gives lilacs to many lilac projects throughout Europe.

Do you know there is a ballet named Jardin Aux Lilas (Lilac Garden) with music by Ernest Chausson? It is coming to The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC at the end of May. It was first performed in 1936 in London. Of course, it is a love story set in the Edwardian period, a sad but a lovely one. I know that during the last dance the young man gives his beloved a bouquet of lilac as she leaves him to marry the "man she must marry". Young women did not choose who they marry...

Very soon, we can have magical moments walking among the lilacs at the Arnold Arboretum. Karen McCauley has planned a great convention for us. So promise me you will be there! I hope you have not forgotten to vote for the new board members. And if you are donating lilacs to the auction, please contact Bruce Peart, Auction Committee Chair and Auctioneer, and give him the names of the lilac cultivars you are donating so he can compile a list. Last year's auction was exciting and fun thanks to all the great donations we received. Let's have an encore!

I'll see you in Boston on the lilac trail!

Mes amities,

Nicole Jordan  
ILS President  
Chester, VA USA

## Membership Announcement

At press time, we learned of William 'Bill' Tschumi's passing. Please keep Bill's family in your thoughts and prayers. In the interim, John Kirk will assume the Assistant Treasurer's responsibilities. If you have recently sent your payment to Bill and the journal envelope still indicates December 2016, please send a note to John Kirk at [ibitinobi@hotmail.com](mailto:ibitinobi@hotmail.com) or the address below. The payments will make it to the ILS but with Bill's passing, there will be a delay. If you still need to pay your 2017 dues, please send your payment to:

John Kirk  
892 Woodard Hill Road  
West Halifax, VT 05358

# 2017 Convention & Annual Meeting – Boston, MA

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Thursday May 11th – Saturday May 13th, 2017

## Agenda

### ***Thursday, May 11th***

**10:00 am-1:00 pm** Board of Directors Meeting

**1:00-3:00 pm** Check in

**3:00-4:00 pm** Speaker – Jack Alexander

**4:00-5:00 pm** Speaker – Rachel Brinkman (Lilac Pests)

**7:00-10:00 pm** Hospitality Suite at the hotel

### ***Friday, May 12th***

**8:45 am** Meet & greet in hotel lobby

**9:00 am** Board bus to tour local gardens

Tours given by Gary Koller

**10:30 am** Board bus to Arnold Arboretum

**11:00 am** Learn about plant record keeping and labeling from the Arnold's Manager of Plant Records, Kyle Port

**12:00 pm** Lunch & General Meeting at Arnold Arboretum

Lunch catered by Fiore Bakery

**1:00 pm** Meet the Arnold's Curator and learn about collecting plants from the wilds

**1:45 pm** Tour the Arnold Arboretum & Lilac Collection

Tours given by Jack Alexander and Rachel Brinkman

**4:00 pm** Board bus to returns to hotel

**6:30 pm** Meet in lobby & depart for dinner

*Dinner at Holiday Inn Hotel*

Speaker – Margery Daughtrey (Lilac Diseases)

### ***Saturday, May 13th***

**7:45-8:45 am** Board meeting

**9:00 am** Board bus to Mount Auburn Cemetery

**9:45 am** Tours of Mount Auburn Cemetery

Tours given by Jim Gorman

**11:15 am** Board bus to Harvard Natural History Museum

**11:30 am** Self-Guided Tours at Harvard Natural History Museum (Glass Flower Collection)

\*Food Truck Lunch on Harvard Campus

**1:00 pm** Board bus for hotel



**2:00-4:00 pm** Auction (Open to the public)

**6:00 pm** Meet in lobby & depart for cash bar, Silent Auction & Awards dinner

*Dinner will be at Joe's American Bar & Grill with the following presentations:*

- Speaker – Nan Sinton (Gardens that evoke memories)
- Awards Presentation
- 2018 Convention Preview

## ILS Convention Auction List 2017

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*S. vulgaris* 'Rochester'

*S. ×chinensis* 'Lilac Sunday'  
*S. ×hyacinthiflora* 'Declaration'  
*S. ×hyacinthiflora* 'Excel'  
*S. ×hyacinthiflora* 'Mount Baker'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Buffon'  
*S. ×julianae* 'George Eastman'  
*S.* 'Red Pixie'  
*S. ×prestoniae* 'Miss Canada'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Charles Joly'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Flower City'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Krasavitsa Moskv'y'  
*S. ×laciniata*  
*S. vulgaris* 'Marie Frances'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Mrs. W. E. Marshall'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Nadezhda'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Paul Thirion'

*S. komarowii* subsp. *reflexa*  
'Beautiful Susan'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Brent Sirois'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Olive May Cummings'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Bridal Memories'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Sesquicentennial'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Rochester'  
*S. vulgaris* 'General Sherman'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Blue Delight'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Silver King'  
*S. ×hyacinthiflora* 'Blanche Sweet'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Lavender Lady'  
*S. ×*'Purple Haze'  
*S. ×hyacinthiflora* 'Vesper Song'  
*S. vulgaris* 'Avalanche'

**More to come & a few surprises too!**

# Things to Do and Places to Visit in Boston:

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## **In Boston:**

The Museum of Fine Arts:

<http://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/upcoming>

The Museum of Science:

<https://www.mos.org/exhibits>

New England Aquarium:

<http://www.neaq.org/exhibits/>

Consider a whale watch:

<http://www.neaq.org/exhibits/whale-watch/>

The Freedom Trail:

<https://www.thefreedomtrail.org/>

Fenway Park

May 12, 13 and 14 the Red Sox will be playing the Rays. See a game, take a tour or both:

<http://boston.redsox.mlb.com/bos/ballpark/tour.jsp>

## **Some gardens to tour:**

*North of Boston:*

Strawberry Banke:

<http://www.strawberrybanke.org/>

Shelburne Museum:

<https://shelburnemuseum.org/>

Home studio and gardens of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens:

<https://www.nps.gov/saga/index.htm>

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens:

<http://www.maine gardens.org/>

*West of Boston:*

Elm Bank:

<https://www.masshort.org/gardens-at-elm-bank>

Tower Hill is a bit farther away, but beautiful:

<http://www.towerhillbg.org/>

Garden in the Woods is a logical stop between the other two:

<http://www.newfs.org/visit/Garden-in-the-Woods>

Another possibility nearby:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter\\_Hunnewell\\_Arboretum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Hunnewell_Arboretum)

Weston Nurseries - a very nice garden center:

<https://www.westonnurseries.com/garden-centers/hopkinton-garden-center/>

Naumkeag - it's farther West, but well worth a visit:

<http://www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/berkshires/naumkeag.html>

Windy Hill Farm - They grow and sell lilac plants:

[http://windyhillfarminc.com/field\\_grown\\_nursery\\_stock.php](http://windyhillfarminc.com/field_grown_nursery_stock.php)

*South Coast:*

Private gardens at the home of ILS members Ned and Elizabeth Newton, South Dartmouth, MA. By appointment only. Call 508-636-4920, email [ehnewton@comcast.net](mailto:ehnewton@comcast.net) OR chat with them at our convention. More than 50 lilacs in their collection.

Nearby Sylvan Nursery:

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

Nearby beautiful beaches:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-south/horse-neck-beach-state-reservation.html>

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-south/demarest-lloyd-state-park.html>

Newport, Rhode Island:

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

<http://www.newportmansions.org/>

Cape Cod and the Islands:  
<http://www.capecodchamber.org/>

Beaches:  
<http://capecodonline.com/beaches/>  
<http://capecodonline.com/cape-cod-top-10-best-beaches/>

Lighthouses:  
<http://www.capecodlighthouses.info/>

Plimoth Plantation (before you get to Cape Cod):  
<https://www.plimoth.org/what-see-do/17th-century-english-village>

Sandwich Glass Museum:  
<http://www.sandwichglassmuseum.org/>

Heritage Museums and Gardens:  
<http://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/>  
<http://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/gardens/>

Whydah Pirate Ship Museum:  
<http://www.discoverpirates.com/about-us/>

Cape Cod National Seashore:  
<https://www.nps.gov/caco/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm>

A favorite trail:  
<https://www.nps.gov/caco/planyourvisit/atlanticwhitecedar.htm>

Take a ferry to Martha's Vineyard:  
<https://www.steamshipauthority.com/>

Once there, visit the Polly Hill Arboretum:  
<http://www.pollyhillarboretum.org/>

# Looking for Lilacs? Attend a Spring Festival!

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## **Boston, MA Lilac Sunday**

May 14, 2017

<http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/news-events/lilac-sunday/>

## **Lombard, IL Lilac Time**

May 6-21, 2017

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

## **Rochester, NY Lilac Festival**

May 12-21, 2017

<http://www.rochesterevents.com/lilac-festival/>

## **Warkworth, ON, CA Lilac Festival**

about May 15-June 15, 2017

<http://warkworthlilacfestival.ca/>

## **Taos, NM Lilac Festival**

May 19-21, 2017

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

## **Spokane, WA Lilac Festival**

May 20, 2017

<http://spokanelilacfestival.org/parades--events-2017.html>

## **Pine Mountain Club CA Lilac Festival**

May 20-21, 2017

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

## **Franktown Lilac Festival, ON, CA**

May 27, 2017

<http://lanarkcountytourism.com/events/franktown-lilac-festival/>

## **Algoma, ON, CA Lilac and Lavender Festival**

June 3-4, 2017

<https://www.algomacountry.com/events/suffragette-lilac-lavendar/>

## **Calgary 4th Street Lilac Festival**

June 4, 2017

<https://www.lilacfestival.net/>

## **Mackinac Island, MI Lilac Festival**

June 9-18, 2017

<https://www.mackinacisland.org/mackinac-island-lilac-festival/>

# Lilac Bloom in St. Petersburg in February

by Maxim Leschinsky

---

Late February 2017, the second “February Lilac Festival” was held in St. Petersburg, Russia. The festival was organized by the Botanical Garden of Peter the Great and the Guild of Perfumers of Russia with the support of the International Lilac Society (ILS) and the Consulate General of France in St. Petersburg.

The idea of this event, based on the historical facts, originated with the president of the Russian Guild of Perfumers, Oksana Chernyshova, and the Smolny Institute’s gardener, Maxim Leschinsky. The Festival, held for the first time in 2016, has become very popular with visitors as well as participants.

Lilac branches in full bloom were supplied to the Russian Empire from autumn to spring, and in a short period of time became the most fashionable shrub at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time there was a fashion for lilac dresses, as well as for interiors in lilac colours and tones. The lilac was the favourite flower of the last Russian Empress, Aleksandra Feodorovna. In St. Petersburg, flower shops were opened, specializing in the sale of flowering lilacs. The largest and most famous shop was owned by Hermann F. Eilers, a German by birth who, prior to 1919 was importing the forced lilac branches from the firm of Friedrich Sinai in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

Flowering lilacs greeted the guests of our festival. The following cultivars were forced to the target date, ‘Buffon’, ‘Vera Khoruzhaya’, ‘Hermann Eilers’, ‘Dresden China’, ‘Izobilie’, ‘Mme Florent Stepman’, ‘Reaumur’, and ‘Sensation’. The halls where the main events of the festival were held were decorated with beautiful installations in lilac colour and spectacular lilac compositions created by Maria Koblova. The Fairy of the Lilac, painted by the artist Alla Volkova, was the event’s emblem.

The opening ceremony of the festival was attended by the leadership of the Botanical Garden, representatives of the city administration of St. Petersburg, the Consul General of the Republic of France in St. Petersburg, the Consul General of Germany, and two regional vice-presidents of ILS, Elke Haase and Tat’yana Polyakova. In a welcome speech Dmitry Geltman, Director of the Komarov Botanical Institute, concluded that “plants do not recognize borders, and lilacs unite people much better than politicians.”

Three new lilac cultivars were unveiled at the opening: *Syringa vulgaris* ‘Marshal Govorov’, ‘Peterburzhenka’ and ‘Normandia – Nemen’. The certificate of *S. vulgaris* ‘Normandia-Nemen’ was presented to M. Thibaut Fourriere, Consul General of France. This lilac was named in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the creation of the legendary Normandie-Niemen aviation regiment sent by General de Gaulle in 1943 to aid the Soviet Armed Forces on the Eastern Front during the Second World War.

The program of the Festival was intense and consisted of three main parts. In the Green Pavilion of the Botanical Garden a fashion show was presented by the designers of St. Petersburg. Ten fashion designers presented their collections, including collections for children. The displays were accompanied by Lilac Scents. The Guild of Perfumers not only recreated the ancient lilac scents of Imperial Russia and vintage fragrances of Russia of the 20th century, but also created their own new charming compositions. Visitors to the festival could not only try, but also buy any of these. The choice was great.

“Lilac of the Empress”, “Lilac Ice Cream”, “Lilac Veil”, “Leningrad Lilac”, “White Lilac”, “Lilac Fairy Tale”, “Lilas Noir”, “Lilac Suede”, “Midsummer Night’s Lilac Dreams”, “Lady Lilac”, “Watercolour Lilac”, “Lilac Fairy”, “Lucky Lilac”, and “Lilac d’Arabie” were some of the names.



First row (from left to right):

Elke Haase, Natalia Makedonskaya, Vera Zykova, Tatiana Polyakova, Irina Okuneva,  
Natalia Polyakova, Yury Kalugin, Ekaterina Romanova, Galina Gordeeva

Second row (from left to right):

Anastasia Naumenko, Irina Sapozhkova, Vladimir Reynvald, Maxim Leschinsky, Eugen  
Rack, Victor Degtev, Maria Koblova, Tatyana Veremyova, Alexander Rappoport

The Food Court prepared for the festival a special menu in which drinks and food displayed shades of lilac. Many enjoyed tasting lilac cakes and lilac ice cream, inspired by the poem by Igor' Severyanin, "Ice cream of lilacs".

The two-day scientific-practical conference was held in the Assembly Hall. This was the most important part of the Festival for us. For the first time in thirty years curators of lilac collections of different botanical gardens of the countries of the former Soviet Union were able to meet and discuss interesting topics. The main theme of all reports was the collections of lilacs of botanical gardens and parks. Director of Piccoplant Nursery Elke Haase (Germany) told about rare historical cultivars of lilac in the collection of her nursery and about the process of "in vitro" propagation. The report of Tatyana Veremyova (Lilac garden of the park Izmailovo, Moscow) was devoted to the history of the Lilac Garden of Leonid Kolesnikov. Victor Degtev (Kazakhstan) spoke about the collection of lilacs at the Botanical Garden of Almaty and the history of hybridization at the Botanical Garden. Other interesting reports, lectures and presentations were made by Nina Adonina (BG of St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University under name of S.M. Kirov), Vladimir Reynvald (St. Petersburg, Botanical Garden of Peter the Great), Maxim Leschinsky (St. Petersburg, Smol'ny Institute), Alexander Rappoport and Ekaterina Romanova (Moscow State University BG), Vera Zykova (Nikitsky BG, Crimea), Natalia Makedonskaya (Belarus, Central Botanical Garden), and Natalia Polyakova (Bashkortostan, Ufa BG). Tat'yana Polyakova (Moscow) presented two reports. She told about the history of the project "Lilac of Victory", which commenced in 2005 and for the next 12 years developed into a very popular all-Russian movement. Her second report was devoted to the history of the creation of the Highland Park lilac collection and the famous Rochester, New York, USA, Lilac Festival. Irina Okuneva (Main BG, Moscow) spoke about the methods of propagation of lilacs and conducted a master class on pruning lilac shrubs.

During the conference, a very important topic was voiced in all reports, namely the need to propagate rare cultivars that exist in collections of botanical gardens represented by one single plant. The curators brought scion wood of such cultivars and exchanged them. Thanks to the courtesy of Victor Degtev, such cultivars as 'Yurii Gagarin', 'Akademik Sakharov', 'Obmanshchitsa' and others will now be duplicated in other collections.

Natalia Makedonskaya brought 'Siebold', which was preserved only in Minsk, and cultivars of Belarusian breeders. Recently, the search for lost cultivars has intensified. Maxim Leschinsky discovered in the park of the Smol'ny Institute six of Kolesnikov's cultivars which appeared to have



been lost almost 40 years ago, namely ‘Nadezhda Krupskaya’, ‘Farforovaya’, ‘Serdtshe Danko’, ‘Liza Chaikina’, ‘Pamyat o Tripolsky Tragedii’, and ‘Baikal’.

Expert gemologist Andrei Voznyi, in a magnificent presentation showed how one can describe the colour of different lilac cultivars with the help of precious stones. Image maker and stylist Liliana Modigliani told about the “lilac style” in clothes and interiors. The Lecture of Olga Fedorova was dedicated to lilacs in Russian poetry of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The owner of the Perfumery Museum, Elina Arsenyeva, told about the history of perfumes with lilac scent.

A special program was prepared for children. They could take part in master classes on making lilacs thyrses from polymer clay, and were kept busy with other entertaining projects.

One of the most interesting events of the Festival was a haiku contest, which was attended not only by lilac fans from Russia, but also by our friends from Japan. The declared themes of the competition were lilac, winter, snow. We thank everyone who sent poetry to this contest. The texts of the best haiku were printed on sheets of paper that adorned the walls of the halls. Special thanks for the wonderful haiku by Hideo Ihara, Rimi Ihara, Chio Ihara, Kaho Ihara, Noriko Ihara, Yoshihisa Morita, Junko Morita, Akari Murayama, Suzuki Mayuko, and Muneyuki Okada. Participants of the competition will be awarded special diplomas and prizes. As soon as the translations into English of the best haiku will be made, we will present them to the readers of “Lilacs”.

*A note from Tat’iana Polyakova:*

I would like to thank the Botanical Garden of Peter the Great, Yuri Kalugin, Oksana Chernyshova, Irina Sapozhkova, and Maxim Leshchinsky for the excellent organization of the Lilac Festival. Special thanks to Elke Haase, who brought a wonderful gift to the festival participants -- small lilac plants of several excellent cultivars. It’s hard to imagine how she managed to bring from Germany a huge, heavy suitcase filled with lilac bushes. We also thank Svetlana Fedorova and the Pavlovsk State Museum for a magnificent excursion to the Palace, built in the late 18th century. In the interior of the Palace we found lilacs on tapestries, furniture, carpets and curtains! Ten ILS members participated in the festival, developed the program of the festival and presented interesting reports. The ILS logo was printed on all Festival posters. We always welcome guests and expect that our colleagues from different countries will one day join us!

# Lilacs from Kazakhstan<sup>1</sup>

## The story of Mar'yam Galimovna Sagitova and Tadeush Vikent'evich Dzevitskiĭ as told by their daughter Milada Tadeushevna Dzevitskaya to Freek Vrugtman

---

The twentieth century brought turbulent times to Eastern Europe. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 spelled the end of the Russian Empire and the onset of the Civil War which lasted until 1921, the founding year of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), commonly referred to as the Soviet Union.

Amid these uncertain times, on 23 March 1918, Tadeush Vikent'evich Dzevitskiĭ was born in Uman, an industrial town of about 50,000 people, located at the railway line connecting Kiev and Odessa. Although the family survived the Ukrainian famines of 1921 - 1922, it was torn apart in 1929 when Tadeush's father, Vikentii Dzevitskiĭ was arrested and sent to the Gulag (acronym for the Main Administration of Corrective Labor Camps); he subsequently died in one of their camps. Tadeush's mother was sent to work on a farm where she died in an accident. After graduating from high school at age twenty, in 1938, Tadeush went to Kiev to study at the Kiev Institute of Agriculture. When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 the president of the Institute sent its brightest students to Alma-Ata, today's Almaty, in Kazakhstan. Tadeush and fellow students continued their studies at the Kazakh State Institute of Agriculture.

On the first of March 1923 Mar'yam Galimovna Sagitova was born in Tomsk, one of the oldest cities in Siberia and long-time cultural centre. Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, 1835 - 1920, best known for his travels to China and discoverer of *Syringa pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* var. *potaninii* was born and died in Tomsk. Mukhametgalim Sagitov, Mar'yam's father, owned a business in Tomsk, but in 1931 it was expropriated and he moved his family south to Kazakhstan, settling in Almaty. But even there he could not escape persecution; in 1937 he was arrested and executed. His wife died soon afterward. At the age of 14 Mar'yam was faced with the task of looking after her younger sister. While a high school student Mar'yam took courses in teaching and earned a living by instructing children in grades one to four. Following high school graduation she enrolled at the Kazakh State Institute of Agriculture. That is where she met Tadeush.

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<sup>1</sup>Contribution No. 224, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Kazakhstan is about one-third the size of the continental USA, with a population of about 18 million. Kazakhstan was not a single nation until it became a Soviet Republic in 1936. In 1991 Kazakhstan gained statehood, independent from the Soviet Union and the Russia Federation. Kazakhstan borders the Russian Federation in the North; China in the East; and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in the South. The capital is Astana, a relatively young city in the northern plains, where the seat of government was moved in 1997 from Almaty, the country's largest city located in the South, on the northern slopes of the Ili Alatau, part of the Northern Tian Shan mountain range. Almaty, formerly known as Alma-Ata, is the city where Tadeush Vikent'evich Dzevitski and Mar'yam Galimovna Sagitova married and settled down in 1942.



Tadeush entered the Kiev Agricultural Institute, Faculty of Electrification of Agricultural Production in 1938, but was evacuated in 1941 with other fourth-year students to the Kazakh State Agricultural Institute, Faculty of Electrification of Agriculture, in Alma-Ata. In the same year he met Mar'yam, a new arrival at the Institute. Concurrent to his studies he worked as foreman of Special Project and Assembly Management No. 47 of Glavelektromontazh of Narkomstroy of USSR. Times were difficult; Alma-Ata became a haven for evacuees from the Soviet Union and for hundreds of thousands of wounded soldiers. At the railway station people had to be redirected and supplies had to be distributed with the assistance of volunteers drawn from schools and colleges. Mar'yam was one of them. Although there was no famine, food was rationed at Alma-Ata; Mar'yam and her younger sister would gather fruit in collective-farm gardens and receive a bowl of soup for it. They carried it home, giving it to their little nephew whose father (mother's cousin) was called up for

military service, working as an army reporter and photographer, and whose mother had abandoned him. Tadeush took a liking to Mar'yam; he admired her personality and will power; he supported her as best as he could; in time their friendship develops into love; they got married in 1942. Tadeush shared Mar'yam's difficulties of daily life -- education at the Agricultural Institute, care of a younger sister and the nephew, care of a garden which, together with the house, Mar'yam inherited from her parents. This garden not only had a variety of fruit and berry plants, but all along the front of the house there were lilac bushes. There Mar'yam saw lilac flowers, smelled their fragrance and retained the love of lilacs for the rest of her life.

Mar'yam graduated from the Kazakh State Institute of Agriculture in 1945, the year that also saw the end of the Great Patriotic War, known in the West as World War II. That spring soldiers returning from the war were greeted with bouquets of lilacs. For the next three years Mar'yam taught biology in high school. With the support of her husband Tadeush she enrolled for postgraduate studies at VASKHNIL (V.I. Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science) in 1948, defending her dissertation in 1952, obtaining the equivalent of a master's degree. Although the idea of developing better lilac selections had been on her mind for years, it was not until joining the Kazakh Teacher Training Institute of Abay, and being appointed leader of the lilac breeding project, that her ideas became reality.

During summer vacation in 1954, Mar'yam travelled with a group of students to the city of Michurinsk, Tambov Oblast. Originally known as Kozlov, the town was renamed Michurinsk in 1932 in honour of the biologist Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin (1855 - 1935) who developed a genetic research station in the region. The group met with Maria Ivanovna Michurina, the daughter of Ivan Michurin, who gave them a guided tour and told them about her father's achievements in breeding better cultivars of tree fruits and berries, and about the genetic theories of Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov (1887 - 1943). At the Main Botanical Garden of N.V. Tsitsin in Moscow they met horticulturist Ivan Ivanovich Shtan'ko (1904-1991) who introduced the group to the *Syringa* breeding and selection work that had ongoing since the founding of the Botanical Garden in 1945. Shtan'ko provided Mar'yam with propagules of some of the cultivars and species from his lilac collection. On the return trip from this very successful excursion Mar'yam developed a nasty case of food poisoning, a viral hepatitis infection that would stay with her for the rest of her life.

Life in a totalitarian state can be difficult. In spite of the fact that his wife was a graduate student in Almaty, Tadeush was assigned a job in

northern Kazakhstan and ordered to move there with his family. Tadeush refused; blacklisted by party officials, he was unable to find work for almost a year. Finally his persistence in corresponding with government agencies payed off. In spite of all obstacles -- after all, he was the son of an enemy of the state -- he became chief engineer with Kazelektromontazh in 1950, and deputy manager in 1973. Despite his demanding job Tadeush found time to be with his family and assist Mar'yam with her lilac work. Together they selected and marked the best inflorescences, collected seeds from them, cared for the seedlings, and looked forward to the first bloom. Together they performed the first controlled cross pollination -- old fashioned genetics, ignoring but concerned about the followers of T. Lysenko and his theories. The limited space around their house became occupied by their lilac collection and the nursery of hybrid progeny.

All seemed to be going well until suddenly, in 1969, the houses along their street were ordered to be demolished, making room for new city developments. Space for the lilacs had to be found on short notice. Mar'yam approached the rector of the Pedagogical Institute where she was employed. Knowing about the progress of the lilac project, and recognizing her performance as a lecturer -- she would provide lectures in both official languages, Kazakh and Russian -- he offered her space for a lilac garden at the Agrobiological Station of the Institute. The move went without incidents, but not everyone turned out to be as cooperative as the rector of the Institute.

The party secretary of the faculty resented Mar'yam and Tadeush. In spite of being the daughter of an enemy of the state, Mar'yam not only had managed to get an education and present a dissertation, she also had managed to get permission to continue her lilac work, together with her husband, at the Institute. He made life difficult by scheduling Mar'yam for public lectures in Russian and demanding that the lecturer devote not less than one third of the time to political matters. There also was resentment from academic professionals. Mar'yam, an associate professor, and Tadeush, an engineer, were not considered to be academics. Their work could not be published in academic periodicals; also, to publish articles about one's work required consent from the party secretary.

The community, the citizens of Almaty, loved lilacs; there were lilacs growing everywhere in the city, in public parks, on private properties, but most of all on the cemeteries. The hybridizing and selecting work proceeded well during those years and a number of cultivars underwent testing. Mar'yam and Tadeush would commute to their lilac garden by public transport. A potting shed built in their garden provided storage for

tools and plant records and sheltered working space. In their three-room apartment there were bookcases in the bedroom and the living room. Mar'yam kept up to date with the literature of her profession, Nikolai Vavilov, Ivan Michurin, Kliment Timiryazev, Leonid Kolesnikov's printed work, and articles by the originators of lilac cultivars at the Almaty Main Botanical Garden, Valentina Rubanik, Boris Dyagilev, and Zinaida Parshina. In relative security they carried on with their work there for just over twenty years.

Disaster struck in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The government had lost control; black marketing and real estate fraud flourished. The chainlink fence enclosing the lilac garden was demolished and stolen; the potting shed together with their tools and plant records was burned down; many lilac bushes were destroyed, uprooted or stolen. Mar'yam and Tadeush never recovered from the shock of seeing their life's work destroyed. Tadeush and Mar'yam died in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

A quarter century has passed since Kazakhstan gained statehood; life has stabilised and normalized. Thanks to the foresight, dedicated work of writing articles, arranging lilac shows and lobbying governments in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, the Lilac has become the symbol of Victory of the Great Patriotic War. During the past few years thousands of lilacs have been planted as memorials.

What has happened to the lilac cultivars developed by Mar'yam Galimovna Sagitova and Tadeush Vikent'evich Dzevitskiï, with some assistance from their daughter Milada Tadeushevna Dzevitskaya, is uncertain. A few named and tested varietal denominations (cultivars) were registered in 1991 with the State Register of Selected Achievements in USSR; plants of each selection were sent to Moscow for evaluation, but no followup was ever received. Eleven named and tested cultivars were registered in 1994 with the State Register of Selected Achievements in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Reference to some of the named cultivars have appeared in a few places and publications but accurate documentation is mostly absent. To date none of the cultivars appear to have turned up in North America. What information exists is in the files of the International Lilac Registrar at Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ontario, Canada. All known cultivar names and associated information have been incorporated in the International Register and Checklist of Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*. They can be located by searching the Register for "Sagitova", the name of the senior originator.

# The Southern Lilac Project

## The Making of a National Lilac Collection in New Zealand

by Beryl Lee

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It's raining today. It's raining heavily and if I had any doubt that my property is low lying, the ankle deep water in which the lilacs are doggedly trying to grow, proves what I have long known – this coastal area of southern New Zealand, does not provide the preferred growing conditions for lilacs.

It was this realisation that ultimately became the reason 'The Southern Lilac Project' was born. But, as with any story, let's start at the beginning.

It took eleven years and three moves around the garden before my first two lilacs bloomed. During the time they struggled, windbreaks were erected and other shrubs were planted and flourished providing shelter from the strong southerly wind. As seasons came and went, the two original lilacs, *Syringa vulgaris* 'Charles Joly' and *Syringa hyacinthiflora* 'Purple Heart' were joined by others and I began to appreciate the differences between cultivars. It was in my own garden that I first saw two different lilacs growing side by side and noticed features that made one different to another. A few more were added to the garden and soon the lilac patch began to grow.

Initially I collected suckers from people I knew. There was no labelling apart from each lilac's source and no thought of what would become of the scores of young plants I would eventually come to own. Every year at bloom time, I visited plant nurseries to try and match their named varieties with my 'unknowns'. After a few seasons, it became apparent that many of these unnamed cultivars were no longer commercially available.

The closing of several well-regarded plant nurseries was the first indication professional lilac knowledge might soon be lost. Another concern was that almost as fast as I was finding beautiful established bushes, they were being cut down to make room for new housing developments. The serious lilac adventure had begun.

For three years, my daily walk took me on different streets around the city while my road trips saw me on 'roads less travelled'. I searched for the familiar heart-shaped leaves and gradually built up a list of addresses where I saw lilacs growing in the yard. Spring and bloom time ushered in the next phase. Armed with the lilac journal opened at my name on the

membership page, (I needed to prove I was genuine), the door knocking began. Without exception, every home-owner was happy to allow me access to their lilacs with some even anticipating my annual visit. Of course my collection continued to grow but what should I do with all the lilacs? I had no idea. One thing I did know though was that some hardy suckers came from parent bushes that had since been cut down. The task of collecting was rapidly becoming a rescue and conserve operation.

Identification of unknown lilacs became an issue. To solve this puzzle, it was logical to find out what lilacs had been introduced into the country and to begin a data base.

Biosecurity in New Zealand being extremely strict, vigorously controlled and well documented has meant no recent cultivars have found their way to our shores. By searching old plant catalogues and newspaper advertisements, it appears the last lilacs to come in were G W Clarke's 'Sweetheart' (*S. ×hyacinthiflora*) 1953 and Havemeyer's 'Glory' (*S. ×hyacinthiflora*) 1954. Discovering the earliest introductions has been more difficult.

The first mention comes in an 1842 letter to a local plantsman from Sir William Hooker, director of Kew Gardens, London. In it he indicates that amongst other trees and shrubs, 'a plant or two of lilacs' was sent to New Zealand in return for a shipment of native plants. Early records also show that by the 1920s a few Lemoine cultivars were available. I found no specific reference to *S. vulgaris* 'Lucie Baltet', *S. vulgaris* 'Marie Legeraye' or *S. vulgaris* 'Clara Cochet,' but they have been included on the data base as possibilities. It seems they were available in Australia with whom New Zealand had an open trading policy at the time.

The remaining lilacs on the database have earned their place by being listed for sale in at least one plant catalogue or advertisement. To date there are 45 cultivars listed as definites, 3 as possibles and a few others including *S. vulgaris* 'Lilarosa' and *S. vulgaris* 'Macrostachya' which are worth investigating further. The number of species is also increasing.

With the collecting process well established and a database in place, the winter months has provided valuable time to work through the information. My labelling system had improved with all the 'unknowns' assigned a number, year and the location of parent plant. Florets and thyrses were photographed against graph paper and alongside a similar named lilac if one was available, or others of the same colour. I wrote up descriptions and comparisons and compiled a list of possibilities to go with each of the unknown's profile.



Fiala's lilac encyclopaedia and the recent CD book have provided invaluable descriptive information although size and colour comparisons are problematic. My own knowledge was (and remains) rudimentary but my observation skills have improved, thanks in part to all the wonderful lilac collections I visited during the 2015 and 2016 ILS Conventions and visits to Kew and other gardens in England, USA, Canada, and Denmark. I returned home with photos and visual memories of some lilacs that have helped in assigning names to some 'unknowns'.

Up until this point, all the work I was doing with lilacs was purely for my own enjoyment. I knew no one else who loved lilacs as I did, much less anyone who would be interested in what I was putting together. That all changed two seasons ago when I was searching the internet to see if there was any mention of *S. vulgaris* 'Karl Hoffman'. A fictionalised account of the life of Hulda Klager given to me by ILS member Myrna Walberg, revealed a Dr Carl Hoffman had been the Klager family doctor. From this it is possible to surmise that *S. vulgaris* 'Karl Hoffman' is one of her cultivars. But if indeed, this unregistered lilac is one of hers, how did it come to be in my garden?

On this particular web search, and for the first time in many years, *S. vulgaris* 'Karl Hoffman' did appear on my computer screen and what's more, was being offered for sale at a family nursery a few hours' drive from me. A meeting was duly arranged.

Denis Hughes is the force behind 'Blue Mountain Nursery' and apart from being a font of plant knowledge, he is also a highly respected breeder of rhododendrons and azaleas. He suggested the database needed a living collection to complement it and to get it up and running, he would help. He volunteered to propagate all the lilacs – a wonderful offer as many of the original plants had no suckers.



Right: Denis Hughes and his unnamed azalea.  
Photo credit: Beryl Lee



PHOTO CREDIT: BERYL LEE

2016 cuttings



PHOTO CREDIT: BERYL LEE

2016 lilacs ready for sale



PHOTO CREDIT: BERYL LEE

*Azalea 'Pavlova' bred by Denis Hughes & Rosa 'Ispahan'*

This brings us to spring 2016 during which Denis and I spent two days collecting cuttings from private gardens. No longer in the first flush of youth, Denis still climbed retaining walls, clambered over fences and squeezed into gaps barely large enough for a rabbit. It is because of his enthusiasm, energy and help that there are now hundreds of lilacs, both named and otherwise, being coaxed into new life in his nursery.

The final major task before a national lilac collection becomes a reality is to secure a block of land on which to display the lilacs. Finding a location where they grow well is paramount. This implies an inland site with the associated hot, dry summers and cold winters, not the tidal, windy conditions prevalent here on the coast. The towns that satisfy this requirement already have a robust tourist infrastructure so a lilac collection would add to their competing oeuvres. Ideally the collection will be on public land with the associated benefit of having council staff maintain the collection – an important consideration when thinking to the future.

And now to the present, which finds me waiting to hear from small botanic garden. A formal proposal for a block of land has been submitted, the team leader is enthusiastic but time will reveal the verdict.

As I write this article, here in New Zealand the lilac season is drawing to a close. One last head of ‘Sensation’ sits at my elbow while outside the clear green of the lilac leaves is replacing the faded colour palette of blooms now spent. A small lake has formed around the lilacs. I hope this story ends with my lilacs growing strong and tall in a new home where they have dry feet and where the summers are hot and the winters cold.

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- 3) Kilpatrick, Jane, 2012. ‘Where Lilacs Still Bloom’. Water Books
- 4) Letter from Sir William Hooker to John Edgerley quoted from Lyttleton Times, 2 July 1865

## Lilac Cultivars on Register

*These lilacs have been available to the New Zealand public:*

Alice Eastwood	Michel Buchner
Alphonse Lavallée	Miss Ellen Willmott
Ambassadeur	Mme A(ntoine) Buchner
Andenken an Ludwig Späth	Mme Florent Stepman
Belle de Nancy	Mrs Edward Harding
Blue Hyacinth	Olivier de Serres
Charles Joly	Paul Thirion
Charles X	Pink Spray
Clarke's Giant	Primrose
Condorcet	Purple Glory
Congo	Purple Heart
Cora Brandt	Purple Splendour
Edith Cavell	Rhum Von Horstenstein
Esther Staley	Sensation
General Pershing	Souviner d'Alice Harding
Glory	Sweetheart
Jan van Tol	Sunset
Jeanne D'Arc	President Grevy
Karl Hoffman	Princesse Clementine
Katherine Havemeyer	Lucie Baltet (not recorded in NZ)
Lamartine	Clara Cochet (not recorded in NZ)
Madame Lemoine	Marie Legraye (not recorded in NZ)
Madame F Morel	
Marc Micheli	
Maréchal Foch	
Missimo	

# Lilac Walks, Bluebird Trails—A Great Combination

By Barry Brucklacher

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## Our Lilac Walk

On our farm in northcentral Pennsylvania my wife and I have walking paths in our fields and woods, and our favorite and most traveled are bordered by lilacs—what we call our lilac walk. When we moved here almost fifty years ago there was a large overgrown purple lilac near the site of the original farmhouse, which was not unusual because almost every old farmstead in our area has such a lilac, and often an apple tree. Over the years we dug many suckers from that lilac and planted them in various places around the farm, and in time we added a few other lilac varieties when we found them at local garden centers. In May 2005, however, what is now our lilac walk began just as I retired with my discovery of the International Lilac Society. The ILS's annual convention that year was being held in Boston, Massachusetts, and as I had become accustomed to driving there for various conferences and research related to my job, it didn't take much—with the freedom of retirement upon me—to head off to the convention. Although I wasn't preregistered I was



PHOTO CREDIT: BARRY BRUCKLACHER

These two nest boxes are on a hillside to the south of our house. By pairing the boxes, I'm hoping that the Tree Swallows will use one box. Different species of native birds usually don't mind nesting close together. Tree Swallows are aerial feeders so they don't compete with ground-feeding bluebirds, and there is evidence that Tree Swallows will guard both boxes against wrens.

welcomed warmly when I showed up. Looking back, as a walk-in person off the street I was even a little beyond “First Timer” designation. In the next three days I met many friendly people who knew a lot about lilacs and who were happy to share what they knew, and I returned home with a car full of lilacs. Our lilac walk was underway.

Over time my lilac walk has grown and aged. I’ve aged along with the lilacs and I’m continually looking for ways to be more efficient with things like string trimming and mowing and pruning. Max Peterson warned me once in a phone conversation to be careful about heedlessly accumulating too many plants. He said it might become a “maintenance monster.” His warning worried me but Roger Coggeshall and Evie King at Syringa Plus settled me down with the advice to be calm and not to let the lilac walk become so much work that it killed the pleasure of having the lilacs. Roger and Evie’s advice has become my *modus operandi* for maintaining our lilac walk. I use a string trimmer a few times a year to keep a circle of grass cleared around each lilac, my wife uses a tractor to keep walking trails mowed, and after frosts in October kill native plants like Brown-Eyed Susan, Queen Anne’s lace, alfalfa, asters, clover, and other wild flowers that have prettified the taller grass, I use a brush hog and a walk-behind flail mower to mow as much as I can. We certainly don’t have the beautifully maintained appearance of a Highland Park, but this maintenance schedule is doable for us.

### **Our Bluebird Trail**

As much as we have enjoyed our lilac walk it’s become better and more interesting after I added nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds. We now have 10-12 nest boxes intermingled with the lilacs. Because there isn’t a rigid definition, we call this series of boxes a bluebird trail. We space the boxes about 300 feet apart (bluebirds are territorial) and we keep the boxes relatively far away from our house and barns. Three competitors for nest sites are House Wrens, House Sparrows, and European Starlings, and of these, the House Sparrow is the bluebird’s most vicious enemy. Because House Sparrows thrive around buildings, placing nest boxes intended for bluebirds too close to buildings has potential for disaster.

In addition to the above, we place our boxes in sunny areas, we keep them 50-200 feet from heavily wooded areas (the habitat of the House Wren), and we face boxes toward areas with low or sparse ground cover (bluebirds forage on the ground). Sun, grassland, sparse ground cover: note how similar a bluebird trail’s requirements match with requirements for lilacs—a bluebird trail and a lilac walk complement each other extremely well.



PHOTO CREDIT: BARRY BRUCKLACHER

Sixteen lilacs on this hillside are Ken Berdeen cultivars, plants I'm especially pleased to have in my collection.

By March or even earlier in our area male bluebirds return before the females and check out the nest boxes, usually leaving a few pieces of grass or pine straw in a box to lay claim to it. Females build nests with dry grass or pine needles, usually laying four to five eggs, a single pale-blue egg each day, and often have two broods. Only the female incubates the eggs—she loses inner down feathers on her lower abdomen creating a brood patch that allows heat to transfer from her body to the eggs. She incubates for about fourteen days. After hatching, the young birds spend another 15-18 days in the nest. Monitoring boxes is important but we don't open boxes after nestlings are 12-13 days old because it could result in the birds leaving the box before they're able to fly well. Once they do fly from the box, fledglings head for the nearest perch. Because our nest boxes are surrounded by lilacs, finding a suitable perch isn't difficult. Parents help feed their young for a few weeks but in four to five weeks the young become independent of their parents.

Eastern Bluebirds are beautiful and interesting animals. Like lilacs, after cold winter months they are welcome signs of spring. I encourage anyone to mount a bluebird nest box near lilacs. My wife and I have gotten much pleasure from having the company of bluebirds in our lilac walk. Warm May sunshine, fragrant and beautiful lilacs, the delightful song of bluebirds as they fly near us: simple and delightful gifts of nature.



# Lilacs and Climate Change

By Darryl Greene

All lilac lovers and like gardeners look forward to Spring and the first blooms of the season. Whether it's a lilac you're hoping will bloom for the first time, or looking forward to your old favorites, you just can't wait. Maybe you're even hoping Spring will come early so that the anticipation is not so great! Here in the Hudson Valley, NY, that is exactly what happened, and it was the worst lilac year I can remember. The Fall and Winter were very mild, and lilacs began to open in mid-March. Great, early lilac blooms and early Spring. No- the April 1st weekend was about to get ugly. A week of drastic temperature changes



PHOTO CREDIT: DARRYL GREENE

was now giving us sub-freezing temperatures, ice, snow, and high winds. This made for limp or frozen blooms, incorrect bloom colors on the ones that survived, and in some cases death of the entire shrub. To add insult to injury, it was also hot and dry starting early May through the summer, with little rain, leaving many lilacs scorched and wilted by June. Quite dreadful for lilac lovers in our area. And guess what? As I write this in November, 'Wedgewood Blue' is opening with four blooms on it! Although they will not fully open, it is a reminder that our climate is definitely changing and was not just an unusual year.

The hope of this article is to help folks pick the right lilac for their gardens, as climate change poses a threat to some cultivars that are not able to withstand the extreme in temperatures, rain, and sun. However, there are some that survived and were showy and healthy through the growing season. I will mention these particular lilacs that did well here (zone 4b-5) despite the extremes. As a gardener and nurseryman, (Lavender Lady Lilac Nursery), I pay close attention to all plants and shrubs, in the ground or in containers. What's good for one lilac is not always good for others, especially now as the summers have been hotter and drier.

Like it or not, climate change is here to stay unless drastic measures are taken. Ask any farmer, gardener or phenologist. The farmer and gardener keep a close eye on the weather, especially if it is their livelihood. The phenologist studies the timing of biological occurrences as they pertain

to climate, such as the opening of the magnolia trees or the migration of birds. These events are timed by temperature, and of recent, are happening sooner. In fact, researchers have been observing *Syringa × chinensis* ‘Red Rothomagensis’, along with two other woody ornamentals, as instruments to tell the arrival of Spring. Cornell University research has indicated the bloom season for this lilac is 4-5 days earlier since observations made beginning in 1965. A few days doesn’t seem like much, but a hundred years from now, will the early and mid-season blooming lilacs be able to adapt to the changing climate that they may be in?



Keep in mind too that climate patterns are different everywhere, and some areas did not have the same experience as we did. But that could change anytime, and for those that are seeing the changes, it is time to not only consider the best and heartiest, but to control the amount of sun by getting morning sun mainly, up to 2pm in afternoon and no more. The afternoon sun is too hot and leaves will scorch and fall off, or just stay wilted and brown and look unsightly. And during periods of dry spells (2 weeks or more of no rain), all lilacs should get a thorough watering to prevent onset of dormancy. I’m sure this is what happened to ‘Wedgewood’ and ‘Congo’, established lilacs in the ground, and that’s why they are blooming right now. And I might note that it was only a short dormancy period, as I keep things watered to the best of my ability always. These two cultivars looked great with mostly green leaves until one day they just started wilting and slowly dropping off. Within 2-3 weeks new leaves formed (small and light green), and since it was warm again this Fall, the new growth it just got this year with flower buds on them opened. The blooms will not continue to maturity though because temperatures are not right.

Unfortunately, I don’t see a lot of lilacs thriving under the conditions I mentioned earlier. You could get lucky if your lilacs bloom in early April, and weather in your area holds off on freezing temperatures until bloom time is over, but plant damage or loss of an entire shrub is possible.

We lost every single late blooming ‘Miss Canada’ in containers, all the way up to a 20 gallon 4 year plant. *S. ×h.* ‘Dark Night’, also a large established container plant, died. The already warm roots quickly froze in the containers and that was it. Many lilacs, in ground and containers, suffered burned leaves on April Fools Day weekend that turned brown

and fell off. These particular ones did not get a new set of leaves or even new Spring growth until July and August. Some growth will not yield flowers for next year as it appears short and thin with very small terminal buds.

So, in conclusion, if your growing season looked like ours did, you will want to only plant the strongest of lilacs And plant them accordingly. For folks with established collections, I'm sure you already have many hardy ones that can survive a bit of weather extremes. This will always yield some blooms, even if some do not. For the smaller garden or limited growing areas, you want something that will be dependable so that you can count on having blooms in Spring. The following lilacs, as observed over the past year here in southern NY, are the fittest to accept the changing climate. And truthfully, these lilacs should be observed under the same conditions repeatedly to attest to their hardiness, but it may not happen for some time again. When it does, you bet I will be keeping track and reporting in!

The following lilacs get the highest rating for strong blooms despite freezing after bud opening, high, continuous heat waves, little water and drought-like conditions, strong new growth with plump buds, and overall pictures of health:

- S. vulgaris* 'Sensation'
- S. vulgaris* 'Andeken an Ludwig Spaeth'
- S. vulgaris* 'Pres. Grevy'
- S. vulgaris* 'Paul Thirion'
- Syringa* × *hyacinthiflora* 'Lavender Lady'
- Syringa* × *hyacinthiflora* 'Declaration'
- S. vulgaris* 'Edward J. Gardner'
- S. vulgaris* 'Bella de Nancy'
- S. vulgaris* 'Albert F. Holden'
- S. pubescens* subsp. *patula* 'Miss Kim'
- S. villosae* Group 'Agnes Smith'
- S. villosae* Group 'Donald Wyman'
- S. vulgaris* 'JFK'
- S.* 'Red Pixie'
- S.* 'Tinkerbelle'

Happy gardening!

# Starting a Lilac Garden

By Mark L. DeBard, MD

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Over the last two years, I have had the serendipitous experience of starting a new urban lilac garden. It has been difficult. How this could be made easier and more purposeful for others?

For me, it started with a new home five years ago, bought at the tail end of my 40-year career as an emergency physician. The backyard was a weed and wildflower-covered steep slate and soil steep slope with a southern sun exposure. It had been tree covered 10 years ago, but was cleared to widen a nearby road, with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees since planted at its north top.

My initial plan was to let it regrow into forest. The volunteer pears, locusts, and cottonwoods started doing a good job of that (the last of them come out this fall). But then I decided to plant a lower flat portion of the upper third of it in grass for kids and dogs. I needed to anchor the upper steeper slope where I couldn't cut grass. So I pulled the weeds and planted some lilacs. Suddenly I had a dozen lilacs doing well. I realized I knew their names, but not which ones were which. Then I realized that the entire weedy slope would be amenable to lilacs.



Middle Hill with lilacs and crownvetch

Thus began the campaign, which is nearly half done, though by no means fully grown. I did it the hard way. I bought the Lilacs Gardener's Encyclopedia and read it cover to cover. I figured out the color system (and eventually even bought the RHS Color Charts). I began to understand the Syringa species, and thought it would be nice to get samples of most of them. I began to figure out the singles vs doubles, the blooming seasons and pruning, the diseases and resistance to them. I realized I needed to give most of them some room, and settled on digging holes 7 feet apart in staggered rows. I knew they needed lots of sun and not much water, but still needed to be watered in our hot dry Ohio summers until they were established. I started ordering from online nurseries that specialized in lilacs. I realized I needed to label them, which turned into an experiment of its own. And I started a secondary campaign to eradicate the thistle and thorny weeds on the slope and replace them with crownvetch, leaving the other half in dense wildflowers (for now) and just trimming them around the lilac bushes and holes.

Now I have 37 lilacs planted and 30 labelled, with about 15 more coming this fall. I have the holes dug and room for a total of 80 plants, almost all unique cultivars. I'm planning to spend next May visiting lilac gardens in the eastern US and Canada and attending the ILS meeting next year. But it would have been so much easier if I had had a simple reference for accomplishing this project. The Encyclopedia is not for beginners.

It would be nice to compile a small pamphlet (along with a single page cheat sheet) telling home gardeners how to do this, perhaps divided into lilac gardens for people with large or small spaces. It could give guidance on appropriate soil and exposures, size of plants and distances to plant apart, proper labelling, and a brief introduction to lilac history and species and the colors and major cultivars. Perhaps it could even replace or supplement an issue of the ILS's Journal, and be distributed online to people all over the world. It would help to encourage the establishment of more lilac gardens by ordinary people. It might even encourage retail nurseries to add more cultivars from the wholesalers. The best way to do this is for the ILS to agree on and to publicize a list of the top 50 favored cultivars for the use of retailers and gardeners. What do you think? Feel free to write me with your thoughts at: [MLDeBard@gmail.com](mailto:MLDeBard@gmail.com).

Meanwhile, take a look at my initial steep weedy slope, the remaining biggest part before the weeds grew this spring, and the start of some of the lilac plantings. I hope to have a beautiful transformation to show you in the next few years.

# INTERNATIONAL LILAC REGISTER ON THE WEB

Two ways to access the Register:

· Short link to International Lilac Register: <https://goo.gl/tYfqQu>

If the link does not work, please contact:  
[lilacreg@rbg.ca](mailto:lilacreg@rbg.ca) or [lilaceditor@gmail.com](mailto:lilaceditor@gmail.com)

-or-

- Access the ILS Homepage
- Click on: Names & Registrar
- Click on: Click here for the International Lilac Register and Appendices



**Made in the USA**

**100% Stainless Steel**

**Plant Markers**

[www.kincaidgardens.com](http://www.kincaidgardens.com)

[info1@kincaidgardens.com](mailto:info1@kincaidgardens.com)

**Call us 816-324-4931**

**Discounts Available**  
**for Lilac Societies and**  
**Members**

**Kincaid**  
plant markers  
Made for a lifetime of gardening.

The advertisement features a blue rounded rectangle containing text and a small image of a silver plant marker. The marker has a flat top with a small hole and two thin vertical rods extending downwards. The text is arranged vertically, starting with 'Made in the USA' and ending with the Kincaid logo and tagline.

## CORRECTION

Želimir Borzan's email address was omitted from the ILS member list in the Winter 2017 issue. He may be contacted at [zelimir.borzan@zg.t-com.hr](mailto:zelimir.borzan@zg.t-com.hr).

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