

VOLUME 47 • NUMBER 4 • FALL 2018

Lilacs

Quarterly Journal of the International Lilac Society

International
Syringa
2018

Leonard
Slater

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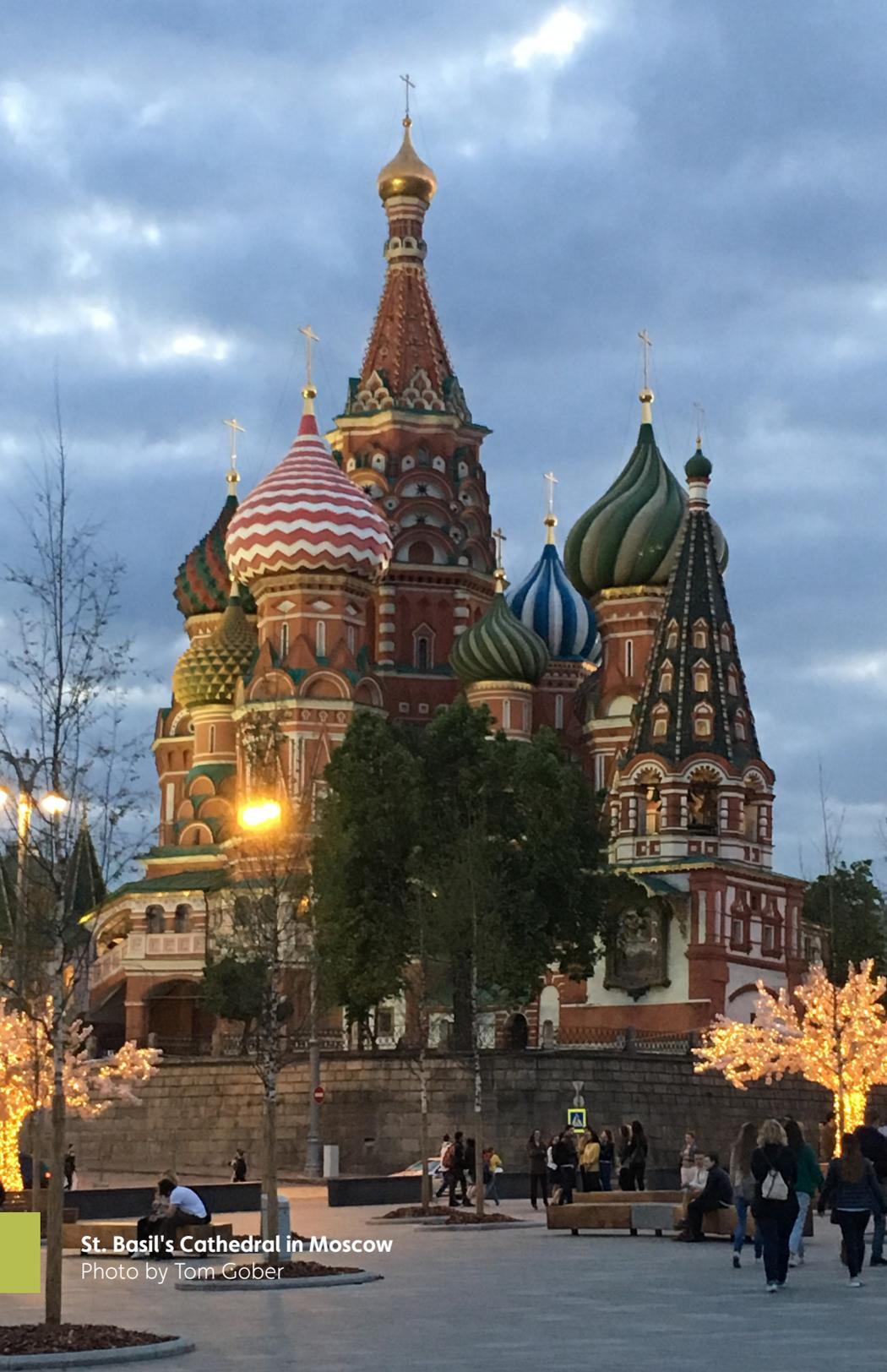
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St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow
Photo by Tom Gober

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lacs. Through exchange of knowledge, experience, and facts gained by members it
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Pushkin's Statue
Photo by Beryl Lee

EDITOR'S DEADLINE

FOR SPRING ISSUE:
FEBRUARY 20, 2019
[Please send photos + articles]

ON THE FRONT

View of Church of Spilled Blood
from Field of Mars
Photo by Tom Gober

ON THE BACK

Lilacs at Olga's Pavilion
Photo by Mark DeBard

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In Memoriam: Rudolf
("Rudy") Schaffer

*MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

As we are coming to a close in 2018, please remember to
renew your membership.

President's Message

Dear Syringa Friends,

In Northeast Ohio, USA, we had one of the most hot and humid summers on record. These two things are not a lilac's friend. It weakens the lilac, making it prone to diseases. It seems as though most of the USA dealt with this as well. Also, I read that much of Western Europe to Russia and Scandinavia had similar weather. And in my area, we had a moderate drought. October is also not yielding to the cooler temperatures. We are likely going to see more summers like this, according to the climatologists; this being the result of global warming.

But, now the fall season is upon the Northern Hemisphere (spring is upon the Southern Hemisphere- and lilacs are in bloom). Here, we are preparing our gardens for the winter dormancy period. I have always enjoyed the beauty of fall: the yellows, the oranges, the reds, the pinks, and the purples of the foliage. It's Mother Nature changing her wardrobe! However, when the leaves come to the ground is when the hard work begins: the raking and blowing of the fallen leaves into piles so they can be gathered for composting. Plus, the perennials need to be trimmed and cleaned, to prevent diseases. It's a battle to get it all done before the first snow arrives, and I usually lose that battle. And fall is the best time to plant our beloved lilac! This year, I have added about 30 lilacs to my collection.

I would like to ask our Regional Vice Presidents to create reports,



detailing the events that were held in their regions. These local regions should be one of our primary sites for getting the word out about our Society. According to our Founders, the VP's should be active in organizing membership events. A local presence can be a source of new members. And local functions can engage and retain members. It can be a source of information and plant exchanges. The Russians are an example to be followed.

My first project, which I am working on at this time, is the development of plant tags: which would be placed on all lilacs being sold. But first, we need to update the ILS logo. The plan is to have our logo on the plant tag and information about planting and care of the lilac with a listing of our website for further questions (and possibly a video showing how to plant lilacs). If you have any suggestions or comments, please email me.

This September, while in Columbus, Ohio, I had the opportunity to visit with Dr. Mark DeBard and his wife Linda. He showed me his unique garden of lilacs. It is built on a steep embankment, which is likely ideal for lilacs since they want a well-drained area to grow. This slope faces the back of his home: the spring display of flowers must be amazing. He has an impressive collection of lilacs, in which I believe he plans on hybridizing. He does not wish to use lilacs which are susceptible to powdery mildew. There are many varieties which display genetic resistance to this mildew. I also had the opportunity to view his lilac cutting system. He has had some success with *S. vulgaris*, but great luck with the *S. villosa* group. Not bad for a first timer! I wish him luck for future ventures.

Recently, I also had my first experience with European Hornets. I first posted pictures on the ILS Facebook page. I then went to the internet and found the insects. I want to thank everyone who posted on the Facebook page (another great source of information to members and others, alike). I found a spray to kill the existing hornets and purchased a systemic for next spring. The bad thing these hornets do is girdle the bark of the younger branches which can cause die back of the affected limbs. The good news is that there

is no sign of the hornets in the two weeks since I applied treatment. Now the colder weather is approaching, which should end this year's problem. However, the same article states that these hornets are now surviving the warmer winters of northern Ohio, USA.

Enough of the doom and gloom! Fall has been a wonderful season of color and cooler temperatures. I have been enjoying the bright colors of some of my lilacs, as they prepare for dormancy. It's a bittersweet time. But what gets me through the winter, is the anticipation of lilacs re-blooming in my garden this spring!

Thanks for reading,

Dr. Robert Zavodny
ILS President



Maxim Leshchinsky & Robert
Zavodny at Pavlovsk Park
Photo by Tom Gober

2019 ILS Convention and Annual Meeting

Save the Date: May 2 – 4, 2019 Des Moines, Iowa

Lilac enthusiasts are encouraged to join the International Lilac Society for the annual convention in Des Moines, Iowa, May 2 - 4, 2019.

There will be speakers from Iowa State University, the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden and others, sharing their information on lilacs, gardening and other plants.

The group will also be touring the 30-acre Ewing Lilac Arboretum, which was designed by John Wister. Reiman Gardens at Iowa State University. There will be a tour of the Better Homes and Gardens test gardens, Pappajohn Sculpture Park and the historic Woodland Cemetery. There are so many places to go and plants to see! Des Moines is very excited to have the group visit their Capital City.

More information to come.



Pappajohn Sculpture Park
Photo provided by Julie Hempel

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

International Lilac Society

Des Moines, Iowa

May 2-4, 2019

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Name(s) as you would like on Name Tag:

Please note special dietary needs: _____

Registration Fee: \$250.00 US

AFTER March 31, Registration Fee: \$290.00

Or

Youth Fee: \$200.00 US

AFTER March 31, Youth Fee: \$250.00

NO registrations will be accepted after April 30, 2019.

Registration includes: Thursday lectures & Hospitality Room; Friday & Sat tours, transportation & lunches; Awards and President's banquets.

Make checks payable to: International Lilac Society (ILS)

SEND REGISTRATION FEES TO:

Karen McCauley

325 West 82nd Street

Chaska, MN 55318

952.443.3703 mccauleytk@aol.com

NOTE: Payment by check preferred but Visa/MasterCard credit cards accepted

Credit Card # _____

Credit Card Expiration Date _____

Cancellation Penalty: No refunds after April 1, 2019

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

International Lilac Society Convention

Des Moines, Iowa

May 2-4, 2019

Hampton Inn & Suites
120 SW Water Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

515-244-1650

Hotel reservations must be made by April 1, 2019 by calling the above number (mention group code ILS) or through web page: https://hamptoninn.hilton.com/en/hp/groups/personalized/D/DSMWSHX-ILS-20190501/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG. Rooms need to be secured with a major credit card. Any special room arrangements must be made at the time of this call.

1 King or 2 Dbls \$129.00 (plus taxes)

Price will be honored from 4/30-5/5/19.

Group rate for pre & post-convention days (4/30 and 5/5) will be honored at ILS rate based on the availability of the hotel. Rate includes: Complimentary hot breakfast & Wi-Fi, fitness center, and business center. Hotel offers reduced overnight self-parking at the rate of \$15.00 per night per vehicle.

All room prices are guaranteed until April 1, 2019. After that date, rooms will be open to the public. Please mention ILS convention when making your reservation.

International Syringa 2018

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC & PRACTICAL CONFERENCE

Dedicated to 125th Anniversary of Leonid Kolesnikov -
outstanding Russian Lilac Hybridizer

—
by *Beryl Lee*

Lilacs are plants of nostalgia. It was May 2018 and this was to prove especially true for a small group of International Lilac Society (ILS) members. Some very special memories were about to be made. From all corners of the globe, we came - well 13 countries anyway* and descended on Moscow for a symposium to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of lilac hybridizer Leonid Kolesnikov. Over 10 days, this would be a conference to educate, delight and leave us with a deep appreciation of the place of lilacs in Russian culture.

The forum opened at Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU) with enthusiastic staff members leading group tours of Museum of Natural History. Presented with an overview spanning from earliest geological times to the present, and exhibits illustrating the evolution of the flora and fauna of today, we were given a context in which to place lilac growing in Russia.

Looking out the windows of the museum, the city sprawled beneath us. Luzhniki Stadium was easily recognizable in the distance. A few weeks on, it would become the centre of the sporting world. We descended 27 floors to congregate at the University's Botanic Gardens and yes, the lilacs were in peak bloom. A warm balmy evening, the heady syringa fragrance and a large group of folk united in their love of lilacs, set the tone for the coming days. We were promised a scientific and practical conference and as rays of the setting sun hit the towering university building, we were reminded what we were here for.

The next day it was straight to 'work'. The official welcome by Professor M.Kirpichnikov, Dean of Faculty of Biology MSU, was followed by greetings from Dr Vladimir Choob, Director of the



Lomonosov Moscow State
University Botanic Garden
Photo by Mark DeBard



Dr. Choob speaking
at Pavlovsk Park
Photo by Natalia Savenko



Painting provided by
Kolesnikov Family
Photo by Tom Gober

Botanical Garden, Nicole Jordon. President Emeritus and Robert Zavodny residing President ILS who delighted the home group with his speech in Russian. Formalities over, Tatiana Poliakova presented a movie illustrating Leonid Kolesnikov's dedication to lilacs and then it was into the first presentations – 44 in all, addressing the six themes around which the conference focused.

1. Lilacs – history and people
2. Lilac species and cultivars in collections and gardening
3. Modern directions of selection and hybridization of lilac
4. Peculiarities of lilac propagation
5. Cultivation and ways of protection against diseases and pests
6. Lilacs in education, enlightenment and art

One feature of the presentations that could not fail to impress, was the skill of the translators. All presentations were simultaneously interpreted by five translators - three from Russian into English and vice versa and two from Russian into Japanese and reverse. At times the language was technical and very specific but not once did they falter. This was indeed an awe-inspiring performance.

Complementing the discussions were visits to lilac collections in parks and gardens in both cities. It was apparent Kolesnikov's breeding program is held in high regard among horticulturists and the work of a dedicated group of enthusiasts has ensured his legacy lives on. Lilacs are evident anywhere there is space for a plant to



Tatiana at Moscow State University
Photo by Beryl Lee

I. Philatova, K.
Romanora, A. Aphonina,
& I. Okunera at MBG
Photo by Beryl Lee

When the conference moved to St Petersburg, The Botanical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences hosted the second round of lectures.

The scope of the presentations was breath-taking. Whether they focused on specific characteristics of the genus syringa, advances in propagation methods, approaches to combating pests and diseases, environmental constraints on growing lilacs or on establishing and maintaining lilac collections, it soon became evident that lilacs hold an important position in scientific research as well as in Russian culture.

grow – in front of famous buildings, in formal flower beds, in clusters in parks and in informal groupings in parklands.

Gardens Visited in Moscow

1) Lomonosov Moscow State University Botanic Garden - Situated on the University Campus, two long rows of lilacs ended at the registration marquee and the site of our first meal together. On one side were Russian bred varieties while on the other, varieties bred in other countries. After taking time to enjoy the lilacs, we were shown other sections of the garden with their many unusual specimen trees.



A. Rappoport, J Gonot, & C. Fouquet
Photo by Tom Gober



Traditional Russian Dancers
Photo by Tom Gober



Russian Lilac Group
Photo by Claire Fouquet



Dessert in Moscow
Photo by Claire Fouquet



Cordetta Valthausen
Photo by Mark DeBard

2) Main Botanic Garden of Russian Academy of Sciences – For many years, this garden showcased the best collection of lilacs in the USSR. A friend of Kolesnikov, N. Mikhailov curated the collection that contained the Russian breeder’s cultivars as well as lilacs from France, Germany, USA and Canada. In 1979, severe frosts resulted in the loss of most lilacs and although attempts were made to restore it, today it is a shadow of its former glory. Nevertheless, wandering through the old bushes, seeing and smelling what remains of the collection, it is easy to imagine how it once was.

Another dimension of the garden was the collections housed in the new glasshouses. The structure was sufficiently high to allow large trees to grow to full size while there was enough space and modern technology for samples of native plants from every imaginable country to thrive.

3) L.A.Kolesnikov Nursery Park - This garden left us in no doubt that lilacs really are part of the Russian psyche. From hoards of people waving balloons to white doves waiting to be released, from the bagged young lilacs to be planted to the ever increasing crowd, it was clear this was a celebration. And indeed it was. This was the site of Kolesnikov’s nursery and it was here that people had gathered to celebrate his anniversary.

When Kolesnikov’s opened his nursery in the early 1950s, he had two aims – production and breeding. Initially he took 2000 bushes to the site and using both his own and other varieties plus seedlings, he produced plants for green spaces around the city. In 1966 he took a further 3000 bushes from his personal garden. Unfortunately, soon afterwards the land was designated a construction zone. Part of the enterprise was closed. Some of the lilacs were replanted around the city but the best outcome was that the nursery area was made into a park.

Records indicate that apart from 10 Kolesnikov and four French cultivars (*S.vulgaris* ‘Belle de Nancy’, *S.vulgaris* ‘Furst Bulow’, *S.vulgaris* ‘Buffon’ and *S.vulgaris* ‘Charles Joly’), all the other lilacs



N. Polyakova and I. Sapozhkova
Photo by Tatiana Polyakova



Peterhof
Photo by Tom Gøber



Kolesnikov Lilac Park
Photo by Mark DeBard



Pavlovsk Park
Photo by Tom Gøber



Vera Zykova
Photo by Tatiana Poliakova



Musicians in Kolesnikov Lilac Garden
Photo by Tatiana Poliakova

that remained were unnamed Kolesnikov seedlings
It is a credit to the endeavours of Tatyana Veremyova, Dmitry Dyatlenko and Tatiana Poliakova that the park presents as it does today. Revitalised with new paths, fences, navigational aids, fountains and lanterns plus plantings of young lilacs, this is a place for people to enjoy.

Not only were we treated to a wonderful array of lilacs in their full splendour but along with throngs of locals, we enjoyed the festivities. Musicians, singers and dancers provided entertainment while award winners in the children's art competition received their prizes. It was impressive to see the vast numbers of entries in the



Zaryadye Park in Moscow
Photo by Tom Gober



Botanical Institute of Russian
Academy of Sciences
Photo by Claire Fouquet

lilac themed competitions and also the variety of mediums used – painting, charcoals, felt-work, collage and quilling to mention a few.

Gardens in St Petersburg

4) Field of Mars War Memorial Park from The Church of Spilled Blood - We took a short walk to this delightful public park where people of all ages were enjoying a warm, late-spring evening. Family groups and friends sat under lilac bushes, children played and cameras clicked. The green space was a mass of lilacs, a place to relax and make memories, Although it was not on our schedule, the park was a happy addition to the itinerary.

5) Botanical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences – The St.

Petersburg lectures culminated with The Russian Committee of WWII Veterans awarding Elke Haase a medal for helping to organize lilac plantings in Treptow Park, Berlin. Veterans and concentration camp survivors along with 150 children from Moscow planted 68 white lilacs that were provided by Elke's company, 'Piccoplant'. Elke's work has been widely recognized throughout Europe and Russia.

A number of awards were also presented by ILS.

The garden at this institution is notable having been founded by Peter the Great to source medicinal plants for his army. Today it is

an important botanical research centre. The conference delegates visited three of the twenty two greenhouses open to the public. It was surprising to see healthy specimens from temperate and tropical climates growing bigger in their new habitat than in their native environments. That these plants have survived, is testament to the dedication of staff members and volunteers over many years. The glasshouses and the heating system suffered significant destruction during the war.

In the lilac collection were a number of Russian lilacs little known to the visiting participants. One treasure making its debut was similar to *S.vulgaris* 'Beauty of Moscow' but with deeper pink

tonings. We look forward to seeing more of *S. vulgaris* 'Beauty of St Petersburg.'

6) Pavlovsk - Pavlovsk was the venue for the second lilac festival. Catherine the Great presented the land to her son, Grand Duke Paul but it was his widow, Empress Maria Feodorovna, who was largely responsible for the extensive parklands where trees and lilacs lend a peaceful ambiance to the natural landscape. Lilac festivals are now part of Pavlovsk's annual calendar. Once again commemorative lilacs were planted(45 in total), musical interludes enjoyed and senses assaulted by the fine fragrances from the Perfumers' Guild. On completion of the formalities, we were taken to the Rose Pavilion where classes in painting and collage were waiting for those who wanted to try something new. For others, it was a time to sit back and watch a videoed compilation of lilac photographs, complemented by a very talented pianist on a grand piano. Experiencing Rachmaninoff played by a Russian on Russian soil is one of life's great pleasures. Truly magical!

7) Peterhof – While this palace and its gardens are top of the typical tourist agenda, we spent the morning in the grounds of the lesser known, Olga's Pavilion. The conference organizers were granted the rare honour of planting eight bushes of *S.vulgaris* 'Olya' (S.Aladin, V.Arkhangel'sky, T.Polyakova, 2011). The lilac named for the contemporary Russian breeder Olya Aldina, was an appropriate lilac for the garden of the Grand Duchess, with both sharing a form of the same name.

A short walk and we were in the upper gardens of the Great Palace. Blooming lilacs were integrated into the back of flower beds, clustered into groups and almost always, featured in every vista. The design of the extensive garden was a work of art but soon it was time to leave and join the crowds in the famous lower garden. This was the time for us to become tourists!

8) Tsarskoe Selo – In the town of Pushkin is the former residence and garden of the imperial family and visiting nobility. Although not built by her, the main person to leave their mark on this historic



Pavlovk Park
Photo by Tom Gober



Olga's Pavillion
Photo by Mark DeBard



Hongxia Cui Planting Commemorative
Lilacs at Pavlovsk Park
Photo by Tatiana Polyakova



Peterhof
Photo by Natalia Savenko

complex, was Catherine the Great. It was a privilege to walk through her private garden and see people working in the overgrown orchard with an avenue of lilacs in front of the greenhouses. This must have been how the garden was in the past. It was a cloudless day. The sounds of birds mingled with the faraway voices of a small group discussing the possible name of a particular lilac. For just a while, it seemed we were intruders in another time - an idyllic interlude.

As in other palace gardens, lilacs featured along the pathways, in flower beds and in parklands where the plantings became less formal the further they were from the buildings. Lilacs were an integral part of the landscape. It was as though lilacs provide the point at which the past and present meet.

With the visit to Tsarskoe Selo, the conference had come to an end. The wealth of presentations and visits to exquisite gardens ensured participants returned to their part of the world with fond memories of a special time spent with special people.

Many folk were involved in making the conference the success it was. The organization of the symposium's executive committee was exemplary. Nothing was left to chance and everyone's needs were catered for. Who will forget the banqueting, the toasting, the singing, the dancing and the friendships forged in the name of lilacs? Thank you all.

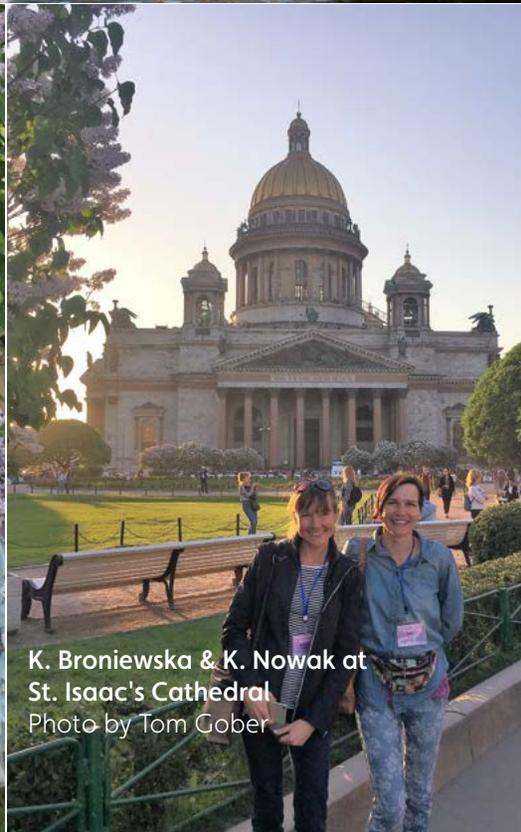
Mention must be made of our interpreters who were available at all times. Katya, Alexander, Inna, Anastasia and Anna, thank you and Maxim too. Special thanks to Tatiana for all her networking before and after the conference and also for answering the numerous questions I had when writing this article. Finally, whoever was working with the 'weather gods', deserves a gold star! It was perfect!

Спасибо

*Countries Represented:- Russia, Finland, Moldova Republic, France, Germany, Canada, United States of America, Belarus, Japan, China, Ukraine, Poland, New Zealand!!



Beryl Lee and Russian Child
at Kolesnikov Lilac Garden
Photo by Tatiana Polikova



K. Broniewska & K. Nowak at
St. Isaac's Cathedral
Photo by Tom Gober

Leonard (Len) Kelvey Slater (1916-1982): A Backward Glance

by Lynne Gregory, née Slater¹

Early visions of the lilac field remain vibrant in my memory. Activity at our home in Agincourt centered around the garden with an emphasis on the lilac field. All the family worked in the garden but my father's passion was his lilacs.

My father was born in 1916, a first generation Canadian of immigrant British parents. He started gardening at an early age and with his father's help developed his interest and talents in the garden. Life was difficult at times, establishing settlement in Scarborough, Ontario, and supporting his mother and siblings after his father's return to England. While his family took precedence, his interest in plants especially lilacs never died. The propagation and development of a better quality lilac became Len's passion. Growing them, cross breeding them and seeking to follow his vision. Circumstances did not allow much time for leisure. Over his lifetime his solace became gardening. Nature always played a role in his life, enjoying hunting, fishing, and harvesting the forest for food. He was a woodworker, astronomer and avid reader with an intelligent imagination. Always thinking forward "out of the box".

Len and his wife Irene (née Dart, 1920-2003) eventually made their home in Agincourt, Ontario, Canada. They had two daughters. The Agincourt property was an orchard and garden. As a teenager and milk delivery boy he had met the Patersons and appreciated their garden. The original lilac bush came from their garden. A lifelong employee of Canadian National Railways (CN) he also started a landscaping business growing plants and flowers for sale. He made many contacts in the village and renewed a strong relationship with Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Paterson whose encouragement had fostered Len's passion with lilacs. The Paterson's support and transfer of knowledge helped enable the development of the Slater Lilacs. And so the long process of development, fertilization and propagation began.



Leonard Kelvy Slater
Photo provided by Lynne Gregory



Irene Slater with 'Lynne'
Photo provided by Lynne Gregory



'Agincourt Beauty'
Photo provided by
Lynne Gregory



'Slater's Elegance'
Photo provided by
Lynne Gregory

Using cross pollination of specific plants to produce a desired bloom takes five to six years. Of the many seedlings grown to the point of blooming about 90% will be unremarkable, 8% passable and maybe 2% exceptional. The 90%, the unremarkable, would all be acceptable and desired in the market place. They would be dug up and sold through a local nursery as Slaters Lilacs. The character and color of the lilac field changed year to year. It took Leonard 35 years to produce *Syringa vulgaris* 'Agincourt Beauty' ('Frank Paterson' × 'Dr Brethour'). It won him an Award of Merit from the International Lilac Society (ILS) in 1973 for outstanding work.

During my childhood "Mrs. TA" Paterson² was evident. Her husband had passed many years before and I have no memories of him. I do remember her, she was an eccentric individual. Progressive before the women's rights movement was well established. My sister and I loved these visits. Visiting her was an experience. The contrast in the fragrance of lilacs and the house was dramatic. The first thing of note at the house was the parrot, and it really did say "Polly want a cracker" and many other things as well. Most notable to me was "Shut the door, shut the door". The organ was next, but I was not allowed to touch this. The house was very full of "stuff"; we would have tea here, very weak and clear. There was always talking between father and Mrs. TA about lilacs. After tea, it would be time to enjoy a walk in her wonderful, fragrant lilac garden.

This was where the idea of breeding a lilac that was smaller in stature grew. Traditionally, in Canada many lilacs were on large acreages providing for privacy and windbreaks. Housing developments now had smaller lots and large bushes were not practical. My father thought a smaller French Hybrid cultivar would be a good addition to the breeding program.

The 'Agincourt Beauty' was thus bred with great thought, not only for its beauty but to enhance the gardens of smaller properties. Qualities that included a smaller bush, more tree like, a very dark purple color, exceedingly large florets and large thyrses of flowers. These were the qualities of 'Agincourt Beauty' when it was

introduced to the world.

During his work of hybridizing and propagation, more than one exceptional lilac appeared and was fostered. A very beautiful white with similar characteristics as 'Agincourt Beauty' (origin) was developed. The floret is large for a white, and the color very pure; it was named 'Slater's Elegance'.

The third one identified, 'Mrs. Irene Slater', was a similar structure as 'Agincourt Beauty' and was my mother's favorite color a "real lilac mauve" she would say.

The last of the Slater four was a double pink, 'Lynne', same structure but double florets, very full and compact, the pink color having many shades from bud to full bloom.

As the years passed and Len's physical activity in the garden decreased so did the size of the lilac field. Sheridan Nurseries had become a supporter of the propagation of both 'Agincourt Beauty' and 'Slater's Elegance', producing quantities for the market. There were several other nurseries in Canada, USA, and Russia also producing these two lilacs. 'Agincourt Beauty' was established in gardens throughout Canada and the US, Kew Gardens in the UK, and even in Lithuania. In Canada at this time, 2018, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, and The Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Ontario, do not have any surviving plants. They are all, to my knowledge, in the gardens of friends and family.

In 1966 my father's health deteriorated and this changed his direction with his garden. Most of his orchard and lilac field was sold and many of his plants were transported and planted at his property in Orrville, Ontario; the new lilac field proved to be an ideal location for these very hardy plants. He did some traveling during these years and was able to see his 'Agincourt Beauty' in Kew Gardens, UK.

He was still developing and growing plants from seeds successfully,



'Lynne'

Photo provided by
Lynne Gregory



'Irene'

Photo provided by
Lynne Gregory

but this was for personal enjoyment and not the market. The hobby that became a business had become a hobby again.

Shortly after my father's death in 1982 my mother sold the property in Agincourt and the movement of the remaining family lilacs began. Many moved to Stouffville with my mother, and also Orrville. Some were sent to British Columbia where I lived at the time and then back to Ontario to the Ottawa area where many are today.

My husband and I moved to Parry Sound taking some lilacs to our garden there, and some to the Parry Sound Tower Hill Heritage Garden. These lilacs are extremely hardy and now old, and yet still the most beautiful I have ever seen. I agree with my father's statement that 'Agincourt Beauty' has the largest florets of all known lilac cultivars.

Hybridizing to produce these new lilacs was my father's passion, definitely a labour of love. He was very selective with plant pollination as he took over the bee's job. He could be seen out in the field with a paint brush and mom's old nylon stockings. Everything labelled and mother always making notes.

For my father, propagation was done by scions with four buds grafted on *Syringa villosa* seedling rootstock in Canada, and on ash (*Fraxinus*) in the US. Today methods are different for propagation, and micropropagation is the usual choice. The French Hybrid lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) using modern day methods is known for its difficulty of reproduction.

The Slater Collection has not done well. Sheridan Nurseries who received the US Plant Patent documents from my parents discontinued propagating these cultivars; other nurseries have mislabeled the plants they propagate. We have personally tried the air graft method with little success.

In the past at the Scarborough, Ontario, Town Centre the gardens along the driveway were planted with Slater's French Hybrid cultivars. Today they are absent. There is a small memorial garden

on Logan Avenue in Agincourt. Agincourt can be very proud of its natives in the hybridizing of French Lilacs, *Syringa vulgaris*; 'Agincourt Beauty', 'Dr Brethour', 'Frank Paterson', 'Lynne', 'Mrs Irene Slater', 'Slater's Elegance'. All named and registered with the ICRA Syringa, Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Ontario³.

Hopefully in the future the 'Agincourt Beauty' can be revived and propagated for distribution again. It is the corner stone of the Slater Lilacs and would be credit to the passion of Leonard Slater for his lifelong love of lilacs.

1. Mrs Lynne Gregory, 18 Limbert Road, McDougall, Ontario P2A 2W9.
2. Originator of *Syringa vulgaris* 'Dr Brethour', 'Frank Paterson' and other cultivars.
3. 'Agincourt Beauty', US Plant Patent № 3694, May 15, 1975. 'Dr Brethour', cultivar name registered, ICRA Syringa, 1963. 'Frank Paterson', US Plant Patent № 2076, August 1, 1961. 'Lynne', cultivar name registered, ICRA Syringa, 2017 (awaiting publication). 'Mrs Irene Slater', cultivar name registered, ICRA Syringa, 2002 (awaiting publication). 'Slater's Elegance', US Plant Patent № 3695, May 15, 1975.



Slater's Lilacs
Photo provided by
Lynne Gregory

Newest Selections of Belarussian Lilac Cultivars

Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus

by *Natalia Makedonskaya, Curator of the Lilac Collection*
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The work of creating a collection of lilacs in the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (Minsk) was started in 1933. The most active development of the collection was between 1959 and 1987. By 1990, most of the specimens had been collected, including 154 non-Russian hybrids, plus 18 late-blooming Preston hybrids and 16 Belarussian selections, hybridized by NA. Smolsky and V.F. Bibikova in 1964 (?). Currently, the collection contains 287 taxa and continues to develop not only with non-Russian cultivars, but also with new cultivars developed by the Botanical Garden

Under the State Program for the creation of new Belarussian cultivars of ornamental plants, lilac seeds were obtained from open pollination of collection cultivars and were planted in 1996. From 2000-2017, 1000 seedlings were evaluated, and 20 prospective cultivars of common lilacs were selected. They differ not only in terms of flowering, but also in the variety of colors, shapes, flower sizes, inflorescences and fragrance.

Currently, some of the more promising lilac hybrids are registered in accordance with international standards in the "State Inspection for the Testing and Protection of Plant Varieties" of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk.

Description of the Modern Belarussian Lilac Cultivars

➤ **'Minskaya Krasavica'; 'Минская Красавица'** (Russian for 'Minsk Beauty')

This is a multi-stemmed spreading shrub. After 10 years, its height reaches 260 cm (8.5 ft). Leaves are the typical heart-shape with a pointed tip and slightly glossy green. Inflorescences are



N. Makedonskaya
Photo by N. Makedonskaya

numerous and lush, with two to five apical panicles, widely pyramidal in shape. Buds are elongated dark pink (39D RHS 2015 Color Chart). Florets are single, 2-2.5 cm (3/4-1 in) in diameter, pale pink (36D), and with age fade to a uniform pale yellow shade (11D). Petals are flat to concave at the beginning of flowering, but by the end of flowering curl back like propellers (reflexed). The fragrance is strong and pleasant. Blooming is in early mid-season, with the beginning of flowering about May 16-20, lasting 14-18 days. Flowering is reliably annual, producing up to 150 panicles per shrub. There is no reblooming. Winter hardiness and drought resistance are high. It is inclined to a sprawling upright form.

heart-shaped with a pointed tip and slightly glossy green. Inflorescences are very dense with 2-3 apical panicles of widely pyramidal shape. Buds are round and dark pink (48D RHS 2015 Colour Chart). Florets are double, lacelike and small, with an open center and are light pink (49C), but by the end of flowering are pale pink. The petals are flat concave but become reflexed by the end of flowering. The fragrance is strong and pleasant. Blooming is mid-season, with the beginning of flowering May 18-22, lasting 14-16 days. Flowering is reliably annual, producing up to 100 panicles per shrub. There is no reblooming. Winter hardiness and drought resistance are high. It is inclined to a sprawling upright form.



'Minskaya Krasavica'
Photo by N. Makedonskaya



'Rokoko'
Photo by N. Makedonskaya

The lilac cultivar 'Minskaya Krasavica' has been named for the women living in Minsk. Whatever fate brings, Minsk women never despair and always hope for the best. The name of this cultivar was chosen as a result of similar remarkable qualities - a combination of the cheerful appearance of magnificent light pink abundant inflorescences along with unpretentiousness and reliability.

The lilac cultivar 'Rokoko' seems to be permeated with sensuality and romanticism resembling the Rococo style, which is distinguished by such features as elegance, delicacy and pretentiousness with a predominance of gentle, pastel tones. The floret shape resembles a relief ornamentation, rather small and thin, with decorative bindings and curly flourishes.

> **'Rokoko'; 'Рокoko' (Russian for 'Rococo')**

This is a multi-stemmed shrub with a medium thick, spreading crown. After 10 years its height is 250 cm (8 ft). Leaves are

> **'Fialka Monmartra'; Фиалка Монмартра (Russian for 'Violet of Montmartre')**

This is a few-stemmed small barrel-shaped shrub with a compressed crown of medium thickness. Reaches 270cm (9 ft)

in height by 10 years. Leaves are heart-shaped with pointed tips and slightly glossy green. Inflorescences narrow, pyramidal, and densely clustered, with 1-2 branching apical panicles. Buds are elongated and dark reddish purple (70B RHS 2015 Color Chart). Flowers are single and deep purplish pink (70C) with blurred purple edges. The floret is a regular symmetrical shape with keeled, boat-like petals and a dark cross-shaped center, contrasted by brightly visible golden stamens. The fragrance is strong and pleasant. Blooming is mid to late season, with the beginning of flowering on May 20-24, lasting 14-16 days. Flowering is reliably annual, producing up to 50

2-3 apical panicles. Buds are elongated dark pink (39C RHS 2015 Color Chart). Florets are semi-double light pink (38D), aging to pale pink (27C). Inflorescences, in addition to being semi-double with a closed center, have both single and multipetaled florets with an open center. Petals are flat to cupped. The fragrance is strong and pleasant. Blooming is in the early mid-season, with the beginning of flowering May 14-18, lasting 14-16 days. Flowering is reliably annual, with up to 150 panicles per shrub. There is no reblooming. Actively renewed by suckers (offshoots). Winter hardiness and drought resistance are high. It is inclined to a sprawling upright form.



'Falka Monmartre'
Photo by N. Makedonskaya

panicles per shrub. There is no reblooming. Winter hardiness and drought resistance are high. The shrub produces very few suckers (offshoots). This lilac has been named for the Violet of Montmartre, the famous operetta by Emmerich Kalman. The cultivar's floret color resembles a violet, and the overall appearance is of an easily remembered melody.

> **'Knyaginya Irina'; 'КНЯГИНЯ Ирина'** (Russian for 'Princess Irina of Warsaw')

This is a multi-stemmed shrub with an oval shape with a height of 250 cm (8 ft) after 10 years and a spreading crown of medium thickness. Leaves are heart-shaped with pointed tips slightly glossy green. Inflorescences are pyramidal form and sparse, with



'Knyaginya Irina'
Photo by N. Makedonskaya

This cultivar is named in honor of the Russian benefactress Irina Paskevich-Erivansky, the fairest princess of Warsaw. She was the last mistress of the Gomel Palace and garden complex, a unique heritage of two outstanding military and public figures of the Russian empire Rumyantsev and Paskevich. Princess Irina was famous for her charity: she built and maintained shelters for the poor, hospitals, and schools, and paid for the education of gifted children, providing them with education for many professional occupations.

> **'Metel'-Zavirukha'; 'МетельЗавируха'** (the Russian and Belarus words for 'Blizzard' or 'Snowstorm')

This is a multi-stemmed shrub with a spreading crown of medium thickness, attaining a height of 250 cm (8 ft) by 10 years. Leaves are heart-shaped with pointed tips and are slightly glossy and dark green. Inflorescences are light, widely pyramidal and branching, with 1-2 drooping apical delicate panicles. Buds are elongated light yellowish green (2C RHS 2015 Color Chart). Flowers are single white with a long tube. The fragrance is strong and pleasant. Blooming is mid to late season, beginning May 20-24, lasting 14-16 days. Flowering is abundant and reliably annual, producing up to 100 panicles per shrub. There is no reblooming. Winter hardiness and drought resistance are high. It is inclined to a sprawling upright form. The cultivar name suggests a light shroud of snow, as its open drooping inflorescences look like the shrub is in a whirling snowstorm, so it was named 'Metel-Zaviruha' ('Snowstorm').

References

Ac. No. 0005186 (Belarus) on a lilac variety Minsk beauty / author Macedonian N.V. Declared. No. 2013910 with a priority date of December 16, 2013, by the order of the State Inspectorate for Testing and Protection of Plant Varieties No. 145 of December 31, 2015.



'Metel'-Zaviruha'
Photo by N. Makedonskaya

In Memoriam

RUDOLF ("RUDY") SCHAFFER

August 20, 1923 — September 1, 2018

—
by Elisabeth Hegi, edited by
Tom Gober

Rudy was born in Konolfingen, and grew up in the nearby village of Schlosswil. In a family of six, he was the third and youngest son, and brother to a twin sister. At the age of 16, he became a landscape gardening apprentice in Aarberg, and later graduated from horticultural school in Oeschberg. He had various gardening jobs at hotels and parks in Cantons Bern and Vaud.



Much to his mother's dismay, Rudy had wanderlust and wanted to travel the world. In 1949, he spent a year in Sala, Sweden as a practitioner assistant in greenhouse cultivation. While there, he helped to develop a hybrid of flower species. From Sweden, he went to Fredrikstad, Norway, where he worked in a large cut flower nursery. At this point, Rudy was getting immigration papers ready to travel to the United States.

In October of 1951, Rudy set sail via ocean liner to New York with \$50 to his name. A fellow passenger, an American gentleman, struck up a conversation with him. Rudy shared his hopes and dreams upon working and living in the US. This gentleman was impressed with Rudy's enthusiasm and positive outlook and, upon disembarking from the ship, gave Rudy \$50. Rudy was overwhelmed with this man's generosity and good wishes for "making it" in the US. From this encounter, Rudy's first impression of the US was one of great opportunity, appreciation and hope for

success. He felt sincerely welcomed by his newly adopted home. With \$100 in his pocket, Rudy headed for Milwaukee, WI to work for the man who had sponsored him from Switzerland.

This job involved working in a large landscape business, primarily in greenhouses. He stayed there for two years, but with dreams of warm weather and year-round outdoor landscaping opportunities, he was drawn to Southern California. In 1953, he drove to Los Angeles, where he would spend the next 50 years.

Rudy, a hard-working go-getter, started his own business—Sierra Landscaping—based primarily in the Pasadena area. In 1954, seeking out connections to his homeland, he joined a “Swiss Colony”, a regional LA Swiss Club, eventually becoming part of the United Swiss Societies of Southern California. The same year, he joined the Pasadena Horticultural Society, for which he was an active member for 49 years.

Rudy sang in “Harmonie”, the Swiss Singing Society. The choir performed at various Swiss events and singing festivals. In the 1950’s, Harmonie took part in a Sangerfest in Salt Lake City, UT. There, Rudy met Elisabeth (“Bethli” or “Betty”) Beck, originally from Luzern, now living in San Francisco. The couple married in April 1958. Sadly, 19 years later in 1977, Betty died of leukemia.

Rudy worked as an independent landscaper from 1954 — 2000. He had some high profile customers like comedian Bob Hope and two generations of the Clougherty family — owners of Farmer John, the meat packing company. He was conscientious and well-respected as a landscaper and businessman.

As a longtime member and volunteer curator at Descanso Gardens, Rudy took on the task of rejuvenating the lilac garden after it had more or less been abandoned. He instructed some loyal volunteers in the planting and care of the lilacs, so that the lilacs would continue to thrive when he moved from the area. Rudy was a member of the International Lilac Society since 1995 and attended

all the annual conventions in the US and Canada. Rudy was instrumental in Descanso hosting the 2003 ILS Convention. When asked if lilacs were his favorite flower, Rudy would smile and say, “My favorite flower is the one that I’m looking at, at the moment.”

Rudy enjoyed hiking, skiing, taking road trips, working in his garden and traveling to Switzerland every couple of years. Approaching retirement, he bought property in San Jacinto, near Hemet, in Riverside County. Initially his weekend retreat, San Jacinto became his permanent home, where he loved the San Jacinto Mountains and Valley.

A proud American, Rudy was known for his positive attitude and winning smile. He developed many friendships from various walks of life. His generosity and enthusiasm were reminiscent of the fellow passenger he had met on the ocean liner over a half-century earlier. Rudy had indeed paid it forward.





'Primrose'
Photo by Tom Gober

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