



Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Spring 2016 Newsletter

Volume 28 No. 2

Small Lilacs at the Experimental Farm

By Joan Speirs and Maura Giuliani



'Red Pixie'

While the blooming lilacs in the Farm's Ornamental Gardens are an annual delight to the eye, many of us have small gardens, without room for a three-metre shrub. Botanists and nursery owners have responded to this reality with cultivars that make it possible to enjoy the pleasures of lilacs without giving up serious garden space. The information below details these developments and identifies examples in the Ornamental Gardens. Come take a look this spring. You may be inspired to include a lilac in your garden!

Many of the varieties of common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) and Villosae Group hybrids (which include Prestons) can reach large sizes, but there are exceptions, such as 'Prairie Petite' and 'Minuet', mentioned below.

In general, the species *S. meyeri* and several subspecies of *S. pubescens* are of small stature, have small leaves, single and delicate flowers, the ability to rebloom and may have fall colour. Hybridizers have been concentrating on crosses within these to develop varieties of small lilacs (hopefully less than two metres). We discuss several that can be seen in the Farm's collection.

At the South Entrance to Building 77

(The small building near the Explorer roses,
south of the Cereal Barn)

S. 'Red Pixie' resulted from a cross between *S. pubescens* subsp. *julianae* and perhaps *S. meyeri*. The abundant flowers are magenta fading to pale pink.

In the Rock Garden

S. vulgaris 'Prairie Petite' is a dwarf resulting from irradiated seed of unknown parentage. Bloom time is with the common lilac, starting mid-May. The purple-flowered panicles and leaves are normal in size for those of the common lilac varieties but the branch internodes are shorter, resulting in a compact globe. (See photo on page 11.)

S. meyeri 'Palibin' (sometimes referred to as dwarf Korean lilac) has delicate pink flowers borne in profusion starting late May, a second smaller blooming may occur in late summer. The leaves generally turn reddish bronze in fall. It is widely used in city of

Ottawa plantings in groups about buildings, where a low profile is desired, and as a low hedge. 'Palibin' is often grafted on a standard, a form popular as an accent garden plant; an example is in the Macoun Memorial Garden. A young 'Palibin' can be found in the lilac rows at WE 13b. (This location code is explained below under the Lilac Rows.)

S. 'Bailbelle', marketed as TINKERBELLE™, is a cross between *S. meyeri* 'Palibin' and *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* 'Superba'. It is one of five cultivars in the FAIRYTALE® series established from this cross. Its colour is magnificent with magenta buds contrasting with pink flowers, starting late May. There are multi flexible branches spreading like a vase from the base.

S. 'Penda', marketed as BLOOMERANG® PURPLE, is a cross between *S.* 'Josée' (a cross among *S. pubescens* subsp. *microphylla*, subsp. *patula*, and *S. meyeri*) and either *S.* 'Red Pixie' (itself a cross) or *S. pubescens* subsp. *julianae* 'George Eastman'. Flowers are purple and may have several summer bloomings starting in late May. This cultivar may be borderline hardy in the Ottawa area.

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President's Message

As you read this, spring is beginning but as I write, it's still very much winter. For those of us who are gardeners, it's the time of year when we page through seed catalogues, and think longingly about our gardens and what we will be planting this coming season. I think of gardening as a very optimistic endeavor, especially when it comes to planting something like perennials or trees. And I think those of us who volunteer at the Farm – in whatever capacity – share that sense of optimism.

As gardeners, we look forward to the arrival of spring when the plants we have planted and nurtured previously will begin to emerge and we can think about adding more. It often takes a certain amount of optimism that there will be space to add new plants to a garden already full of plants we love.

Our volunteers who work in the Farm's various gardens bring the same sense of delight that we have for our own gardens. As we begin the gardening



Judy Dodds

season, we are excited to get started and delighted to become reacquainted with the plants we will tend. We are glad to catch up with team members we have worked with before and not seen since last fall, and to meet new members of our teams. Our volunteers who work on events or in other capacities are also

delighted with the arrival of spring.

Winter is a quieter time for our events but as spring arrives we become busy again. We look forward to our Rare and Unusual Plant Sale, our Book Sale, our Victorian Tea, and our Art on the Farm. Those who help with these many events plan for and hope that we will have beautiful weather and that everyone who attends will have a good time and be glad they came. And they will.

It is wonderful that we have such an amazing group of volunteers. Our volunteers worked nearly 12,000 hours last year. About half of the hours were in the gardens, Arboretum and Merivale shelter-belt, and about half in other ways. We expect we will log even more hours this year. All of which helps make the Friends an important asset to the Farm we love.

As we go to print, we have learned of the death of Joan Speirs and Valerie Cousins. Both Joan and Valerie dedicated much of their time and love to the Farm and we will miss them both.

Message du président

Lors que je rédigeais ce message, nous n'étions pas sortis de l'hiver, et lorsque vous en ferez la lecture, le printemps viendra de faire son apparition. C'est le temps de l'année pour les jardiniers parmi nous de feuilleter des pages et des pages de catalogues de graines. Nous rêvons à nos jardins et imaginons les plantes que nous mettrons en terre au cours de la prochaine saison. Pour moi, le jardinage est une entreprise synonyme d'optimisme, surtout au moment de planter des arbres et des plantes vivaces. Je suis convaincue que les bénévoles de la Ferme engagés dans d'autres activités partagent tout à fait cet optimisme.

Jardiniers que nous sommes, nous attendons avec impatience la venue du printemps. En ce moment, les plantes que nous avons enfouies dans le sol avec tant de soins commenceront à pousser, et alors nous pourrions songer à en planter d'autres. Le seul fait d'imaginer qu'il y aura suffisamment d'espace pour de nouvelles plantes dans un jardin déjà bien

rempli dénote un brin d'optimisme.

Les bénévoles de la Ferme qui travaillent dans ses divers jardins dérivent un plaisir égal à celui d'œuvrer dans les leurs. Au début de la saison de jardinage, ils ont hâte d'entreprendre le travail et sont ravis de voir réapparaître les plantes qu'ils ont cultivées avec des soins attentifs. Ils sont heureux de retrouver les membres de leurs équipes de travail, qu'ils n'ont pas revus depuis l'automne dernier. En même temps, ils feront la connaissance de nouveaux collègues-jardiniers. Les bénévoles dédiés aux autres activités ou événements sont ravis eux aussi d'accueillir le printemps.

Durant l'hiver, les activités à la Ferme se font moins fréquentes, mais au retour de la saison printanière, elles reprennent de plus belle. Nous anticipons avec grande hâte la vente des plantes rares et exotiques, la vente de livres usagés, la tenue du thé victorien et l'exposition d'art dans le jardin. Les personnes qui aident à l'organisation de ces activités comptent sur une température clémente,

ainsi que sur la présence de participants qui s'amuseront ferme et seront heureux de s'être déplacés. Aucun doute là-dessus.

Tous ces bénévoles qui œuvrent à la Ferme, c'est tout simplement merveilleux! Ils ont consacré près de 12 000 heures de leur temps l'an dernier. Leur travail dans les jardins, l'Arboretum et le brise-vent a compté pour la moitié de ces heures; d'autres types de tâches ont compté pour l'autre moitié. Nous croyons bien ajouter un plus grand nombre d'heures cette année. Ce joyeux bourgeonnement d'activité contribue à faire des Amis un atout incomparable pour la Ferme que nous aimons.

Au moment de l'impression du bulletin, nous apprenions le décès de Joan Speirs et de Valerie Cousins. Valerie et Joan ont dévoué une grande partie de leur temps à la Ferme qu'elles aimaient. Elles nous manqueront énormément.

Judy Dodds

Small Lilacs at the Experimental Farm *(continued from Page 1)*

In the Lilac Rows

(The location in a row is given to aid in locating the plant. Rows are named EE, EW, WE, WW, from east to west, and numbers start at the north end. A map of the rows, and a list of their members, can be found on the website under Collections/Lilacs/Where to Find Them.)

S. pubescens subsp. *julianae* 'George Eastman' (EW 62) was named for the American inventor and philanthropist, founder of the Eastman Kodak Co. and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. It has exquisite flowers of pink to magenta.

S. pubescens subsp. *patula* 'Miss Kim' (EW 25, WW 18) has violet flowers, starting late May. It was named for any or all beautiful Misses Kim of Korea (Kim is a common family name in Korea). These are dense round shrubs with purplish fall foliage.

S. pubescens subsp. *patula* 'Cinderella' (EE 47) has pink flowers starting late May and generally has a second blooming in late summer. It is a shrub of many flexible stems.

S. (Villosae Group) 'Minuet' (EE 3, WE 48), a late-blooming lilac (starting in early June), has three *Villosae* series species in its make-up. The purple flowers may be found for a second blooming in late summer.

S. oblata subsp. *dilatata* (EE 6a, WW 6) was described in 1918 from a discovery in Korea. This is a delightful small plant with lilac-pink flowers which open in early May. It will likely be difficult to obtain commercially but it has been crossed with common lilac varieties to produce cultivars of *S. ×byacintbiflora* which are available and of a compact nature, but will likely exceed 2 m in height.



'Minuet'

The following two have remained small in the Ornamental Gardens:

S. ×byacintbiflora 'Mount Baker' (EE 5, WE 28) was named for Mount Baker in Washington State. It has white flowers that open by mid-May and a pleasing round shape.

S. ×byacintbiflora 'Maiden's Blush' (WW 79a) is an outstanding cultivar. The pink flowers are open by mid-May.

Maura Giuliani, a longtime member of the Friends' lilac team, is a frequent contributor to this newsletter, as was Joan Speirs, who died on March 13, 2016 (see below).

Photos by R. Hinchcliff

In Memory - Joan Speirs

Joan Speirs, who was the author or co-author of the three articles on lilacs in this issue of the newsletter, died on March 13 at the age of 86.

Joan obtained an Honours B.A. in Botany and Chemistry at Queen's University. For four years she worked in mycology at the Farm on a program identifying wood-destroying fungi found in Canada. She then moved to the field of human virology and cell culture, first with the Defence Research Board and later with Health and Welfare Canada in food microbiology research.

About a year after she joined the Friends of the Farm in 1999, George Vorauer, then Activities Director at the Friends, offered Joan the new job of coordinating a volunteer lilac team. The lilacs at the Farm became her passion. Thanks to her, the expert team she put together, and staff at the Gardens with whom she closely collaborated, the collection was rejuvenated and became one of the best in North America. She received an Outstanding Volunteer award from the Friends of the Farm in 2003.

Joan was an active member of the International Lilac Society, serving on the board of directors for several years. She hosted a successful 2009 Society convention in Ottawa, at which she was recognized for contributing to a scientific study of phytoplasma bacteria in lilacs and for educating the public through her *Lilacs at the Central Experimental Farm* pages on the Friends of the Farm's website.

As lilac team coordinator she was always appreciative of each member's efforts, and ready to give credit to others. She shared her knowledge and love of lilacs, giving many public tours of the collection. With her "lively and inquisitive nature" (see Sharon Saunders, page 10), her meticulous methods and her devotion to the plants, she was a true friend of the Farm's lilacs.



Joan Speirs giving a tour of the Preston lilacs.

Upcoming Events

For more information, visit www.friendsofthefarm.ca or call 613-230-3276.

Arboretum Tree Tour

- Sunday, April 24, 2 pm.
 - Flowering Trees: Blossoms and Pollination.
- (See page 9 for more information on this and other tree tours.)

Rare and Unusual Plant Sale

- Sunday, May 15, 9 am to 2 pm, rain or shine.
- New specialty growers and plant vendors are coming, and your favourites are back for your pleasure.
- Several Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton will be available with free advice and to help you with your gardening problems.
- Once again, the Friends offer plant "coat checking" facilities.
- Shop until you drop and volunteers will help you carry your treasures to your vehicles.
- Location: Parking lot beside K. W. Neatby Bldg. at Carling and Maple Drive, Lot #293, C.E.F. Follow the signs!
- Free parking on Maple Drive and in the Observatory parking lot.
- Free admission, however, donations to the Friends of the Farm gratefully accepted.

Lilac Tour

- Saturday, May 28, 2 pm.
- Enjoy a guided tour of the CEF lilac rows with the Friends of the Farm lilac team. Discover the many lilac varieties on display.
- Location: Macoun Garden, Ornamental Gardens.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.



Preston Lilac Tour

- Saturday, June 11, 2 pm.
- Take a guided tour of the Isabella Preston Heritage Lilac Collection with the Friends of the Farm lilac team.
- Preston bred lilacs at the CEF in the 1920s and produced the first Canada-hardy hybrids.
- Location: Near the Friends' shed at the Ornamental Gardens, southwest of the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Park at the Agriculture Museum lot and follow the signs.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.

Peony Tour

- Saturday, June 11, 9 am to noon.
- The Friends of the Farm peony team will offer guided tours of the CEF peony beds. Get tips on what would work best in your garden and ways to keep your peonies happily blooming.

- Location: The tour begins at the peony garden in the Ornamental Gardens, southwest of the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.

Book Sale

- Saturday, June 18 and Sunday, June 19, from 10 am to 4 pm.
- The best used book sale in Ottawa. It's a two-day sale for a reason!
- Location: Building 72, Arboretum, CEF. Take the east exit off the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Admission and parking are free at Building 72.

Bus Tour – Three Gardens in Four Days

- July 12 - 15. SOLD OUT
- Includes visits to Domaine Joly de Lotbinière, the Reford Gardens, and the New Brunswick Botanical Garden near Edmunston.

Victorian Tea

- Sunday, August 7, from 2 to 4 pm. (Will be cancelled in event of rain.)
- Classic tea served under the trees of the Arboretum.
- Bring a patio chair and listen to live music.
- Enter the best hat contest and don period costume (male and female) contests. Dress in full Victorian garb (optional).
- Location: Building 72, CEF Arboretum. Take the east exit off the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Admission and parking free; tickets for formal tea \$10.



Art on the Farm

- Saturday, August 13, from 10 to 4 pm. Rain date: August 14.
- Artists working in various mediums will display and sell their original works under the trees of the Central Experimental Farm.
- Location: Arboretum, around Building 72, east of the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Free admission.

Annual General Meeting

- Wednesday, September 21, at 7 pm.
- Location: K. W. Neatby Building, Salons A & B, Carling & Maple Drive.
- Free admission.

Ideas and Tips from Master Gardeners

Here are the 2016 talks by Master Gardeners, to be held from 7 to 9 pm in Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm. You can sign up for individual talks or the entire series. Individual talks: \$12 members of the Friends, \$15 others. Series of four talks: \$40 members, \$50 others.

April 5 – Yes, You Can Grow Vegetables! by Esther Bryan

Come and learn how you and your family can plan, plant and care for a vegetable garden. Practical advice will be shared by Esther, who gardens with her children growing nutritious produce.

April 19 – Herbs in Your Garden - Easy, Nutritious and Delicious by Nancy McDonald

Annual and perennial herbs are great additions to your garden and your kitchen! You can also grow some herbs indoors to add zing to your winter culinary delights. Planting, harvesting, uses and preserving ideas for your herb bounty will be presented.

May 3 – Plant Guilds: Taking Companion Planting to the Next Level by Rebecca Last

Plant guilds are a relatively new concept that has emerged from the permaculture movement. Where companion planting aims to ensure that plants growing close together do not compete with each other, plant guilds are modelled on ecosystem principles and attempt to create a low maintenance community of plants that is self-sustaining.

This talk will provide an introduction to the concept of gardens as mini-ecosystems, describe the main ecological functions of plants, and outline ways in which urban gardeners can work towards creating sustainable, low impact gardens that are abundantly productive.

May 17 – All the Dirt on Container Gardening

by Catherine Disley Engler
Want to create dazzling containers? Come, be inspired and learn how to choose the best plants for your location. Why certain soil is better than others. Leave knowing how to combine lush leaves and fabulous flowers to create show-stopping, four season containers.

Betty Jean O'Riordan: A Volunteer for All Seasons

By Mary Ann Smythe

By most standards Betty Jean O'Riordan has led a nomadic life. From her family home in Red Deer, Alberta, Betty Jean's travels have taken her to Sri Lanka, Iran, England, Hungary, Poland, Syria, Italy, Sweden, Costa Rica, and, finally, home to roost in Ottawa.

She left Red Deer in 1974 to begin her career as a secretary for Foreign Affairs. On her third overseas posting in London, England, she met Stephen, her late husband, and so their globe trotting began. "Each posting was different," Betty Jean explains, especially with two children eventually in tow. A favourite was the posting to Italy, where the whole family volunteered at Canada House—the meeting point for Canadian athletes and their families—during the Turin Winter Olympics in 2006. She also has vivid memories of streets in Budapest, Hungary, jam-packed with East Germans just before the Berlin wall came down. "There was a huge exodus of East Germans, with people camping in city parks."

In 2008, after years of living abroad, Betty Jean returned to Ottawa to the house in the Glebe that she and Stephen had purchased in 1983 to "have a home base." By spring 2009, she was looking for something interesting to do. An advertisement for the Friends of the Farm in the community newspaper looking for volunteers to help in the office caught her eye. "As an 'old' secretary, it seemed to be a good match with my former career path." Seven years later, Betty Jean has built an impressive resume as a Friends' volunteer. She's a familiar face in the office, in the basement of Building 72 sorting books, at events, and in the perennial beds at the Ornamental Gardens. By Betty Jean's own accounting, she has lent a helping hand at every Friends' event. "When you work in the office, you get very involved in the organization. You know what's going on and you know what needs to be done." For Betty Jean that means showing up and helping out.

On her day in the office, Betty Jean does whatever is required (and always with a smile) —from answering phones to stuffing envelopes to data entry. From October to April, the leisure reader spends Wednesday mornings sorting books for the June book sale. And when the ground is ready to work, she joins her team mates in the perennial beds. Betty Jean admits to finding pleasure in weeding. "I'm not interested in garden design. I enjoy weeding so the perennial team suits me fine. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it."

At first glance, it may appear that she has abandoned her nomadic life. But not so. A frequent question at the Friends'



Mary Ann Smythe

office is: "Where is Betty Jean off to now?" Every three months, she visits her mother in Red Deer, with side trips to see her sisters and son Brian, who also live in Alberta. Her daughter Sarah works for Parks Canada in Inuvik and that's opened up new travel adventures—a visit to the Inuvik Sunrise Festival to welcome the return of daylight after a month-long hiatus, a fly-in, catered camping trip to Iwavik National Park after she joined the thrilled spectators at the Northern Games in Inuvik. Then there's the tour to China several years ago, as well as short jaunts to Cuba and Mexico for winter getaways. Betty Jean has recently become involved in researching family genealogy and now that she's gone as far as she can online, there are several field trips in the works to track down family connections.

After all the travel, it's back to Ottawa and the house that provides the feeling of permanence, as does the Friends of the Farm, adds Betty Jean. "It [the Friends] is an anchor in my life." She appreciates the Friends' inherent flexibility and that it doesn't hold volunteers to a set commitment. "Many organizations ask that you make a six-month or year-long commitment. That wouldn't work for me. I have even resisted taking on a specific task here because I don't make commitments that I can't keep. I have found my niche and that's what keeps me here. I work with an interesting group of people and I enjoy both the things I do and people I come in contact with."

Mary Ann Smythe is a freelance writer/editor and active volunteer with the Friends.

Newly Named Lilacs From Franktown, Lilac Capital of Ontario

By Joan Speirs

Lilacs were carried to Franktown, Ontario, by settlers in the early 1800s and planted around many farm houses. In the intervening years, those lilacs spread readily by suckers and seeds, particularly where land was not cultivated. So remarkable was that lilac growth that a lilac festival has been held annually in Franktown since 1995.

In 2007, several members of the Lilac Team, Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, examined the lilacs in Franktown on a 25-acre site (Park Lot -1), on the south side of Church St., between Lilac Lane and Highway 15. This area was thick with naturalized lilacs of many colour variations of *Syringa vulgaris*, the Common Lilac, native to the Balkan states in Europe. Suckering was so intense in many areas that other plant species were mostly excluded. Conditions here are obviously agreeable to *S. vulgaris*, with full sun and well-drained sandy loam on sandstone rock.

Of great interest were a few young lilacs with double florets (rather than single with four petals, as in nature). These had started from seeds, probably the result of natural hybridization with a cultivated double-flowered lilac from a neighbouring park lot. (Double-flowered lilacs were not introduced until the mid 1800s with the discovery and use for propagation of a naturally mutated lilac.) With permission, over the next two years we moved four of the doubles, two with white flowers and two with pink-lilac to the nursery of the Central Experimental Farm. These were small, less than a metre in height and estimated to be about four years old. In addition, softwood cuttings were taken of a bluish-coloured double, too encased in rock to move.

These plants have grown to attractive, relatively



Photos by R. Hincheliff

Franktown lilac 'Dixie'

slow-growing, compact, hardy shrubs. In all cases florets are double and hose-in-hose, with two or three corollas in a floret giving up to 14 petals if the stamens are converted to petals.

The preferred pink-lilac has been named 'Dixie' for Dixina (Pierce) McLellan. Dixina and her parents owned this property for many years. The name was chosen by Cora Nolan – she and her husband are the present owners. I have named one of the white lilacs 'Franktown' and the bluish-coloured lilac, obtained by a cutting, 'Beckwith' for the township.

Propagation of these three new cultivars is underway and registration is anticipated in the future. A 'Dixie' and a 'Franktown' have recently been planted in the Lilac Rows in the Ornamental Gardens.



'Franktown'



'Beckwith'

Franktown was designated 'Lilac Capital of Ontario' in 1998. The town issued a five-dollar Municipal Trade Token (featuring lilac florets and buds), which sold out within three days and is now a collector's item.

In 2009 the International Lilac Society, at an annual meeting in Ottawa, presented the President's Award to the Town of Franktown for "protecting the extraordinary collection of lilacs introduced by Scottish and English settlers."

Dr. Felicitas J. Svejda

By Richard Hinchcliff

Dr. Felicitas J. Svejda, originator of the Explorer roses, died in Ottawa on January 18, 2016, aged 95. She was known around the world for her roses. Canada has lost a national treasure.

Svejda was born in Vienna where in 1948 she earned a doctorate in botany at the State University for Agriculture and Forestry. After working on the breeding of cereals in Sweden, she came to Canada in 1954 to a position in the cereal division of Agriculture Canada at the Central Experimental Farm.

In 1961, in a new ornamental plant research institute at the Farm, she was asked to breed roses. In particular, she was to seek winter hardy and everblooming roses for Canadian conditions. "I knew nothing about roses," she wrote later. "This was a blessing because I had no preconceived notion."

By the time she retired in the mid 1980s, Dr. Svejda had hybridized a



Dr. Svejda with her 'John Cabot' Explorer rose

George Vorauer, courtesy of National-Roses-Canada



Explorer rose 'Nicolas'

series of roses that would withstand the extremes of temperature from coast to coast in Canada. Her introductions were respected in all circumpolar countries.

She named the first rose she released 'Martin Frobisher', the first in her series named after our early explorers. Others included 'Champlain', 'Henry Hudson', and 'William Baffin'. Her 'John Cabot' rose received an award of merit from the Royal National Rose Society in England in 1985.

York University in Toronto awarded her a degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa* in 2000. Her recollections were published in 2008 in a book entitled *The Canadian Explorer Roses* published by National-Roses-Canada.

We are so fortunate in Ottawa to have a garden of Dr. Svejda's wonderful roses. The Explorer Rose Garden is a feature at the Ornamental Gardens, a tribute to her success here at the Farm, and a popular attraction for the thousands of visitors to the Gardens each year. Dr. Svejda was present at its official opening 10 years ago.

Volunteers with the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, and in particular the team led by Cyril Benson and Kitty Langill who help the professional staff of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada maintain and enhance the Explorer Rose Garden, are privileged to be involved with the Garden. We will cherish the roses that much more with the passing of Dr. Svejda.

Tenth Annual Book Sale – June 18-19, 2016

By Jeannine Lewis

Preparation for the annual Friends of the Farm Book Sale is in full swing. At the October drop-off, 160 generous donors brought boxes and bags of books to Building 72. Throughout the fall and winter months, volunteers sorted and alphabetized over 15,000 books.

Five teams of sorters (see photos) have completed the alphabetization of the fiction, and have “fine tuned” the fifteen categories of non-fiction to help customers in June find the books they want and need.

Packing, moving and stacking boxes of books is hard work. But the volunteers enjoy socializing, interesting discussions, and that “Look what I found!” moment. Some of the workers have been sorting books for the Friends since the first sale in 2007.

There will be many treasures to be found at the June sale, and at bargain prices—only \$2.00 for the hardback and trade paperback (the larger format soft cover), and \$1.00 for pocketbooks and children’s books.

Many of the latest best sellers are available, as well as dozens of “vintage” books, some over 100 years old. There are books galore: garden, art, history, biography, and much more. This is an event not to be missed!

Kudos to the volunteers who spend hundreds of hours making this one of the biggest fund-raising events for the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm.

Jeannine Lewis and Kate Hadden are the coordinators for the Friends of the Farm book sale. Missing from the photos are Linda Horricks and Barbara Dempsey.



Photos by Jeannine Lewis

Izabel Dabrowski, Jeannine Lewis, Carole McColgan, Bob Barron



Kate Hadden, Betty Jean O’Riordan



Anne Darley, Polly Ann Sobier



Paul Dick, Dave Roeske, Diana Roeske



Josephine Stanic, Airi Trant, Linda McLaren

In Memory - Valerie Cousins

The Central Experimental Farm lost a true friend when Valerie Cousins passed away on March 20, aged 67. A lifetime member of the Friends of the Farm, Valerie served for nine years on the board of the Friends and as president for two.

Valerie received a B.A. with honours from Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, and a Masters in Education from McGill University. She was a communications consultant with over 30 years experience in corporate communications, editing, speechwriting, and marketing communications strategy and implementation.

She was co-owner of the publishing company, Sanderling Press, and as managing editor helped to bring to market the beautiful book *Vimy: Canada's Memorial to a Generation*. For this achievement, Valerie was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal. These medals honoured significant contributions and achievements by Canadians during 2012.

Under her presidency of the Friends, the Merivale Shelterbelt project was launched. She spearheaded the Friends' project to publish *For the Love of Trees: A Guide to the Trees of Ottawa's Central Canadian Experimental Farm Arboretum*, a best-seller, which has raised awareness of the Arboretum and funds for the Friends.

Valerie was a lifelong Unitarian Universalist, serving for several years as a lay chaplain for the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. She also founded and managed Classic Silk, a professional vocal jazz ensemble. The group performed for a variety of audiences for six years to 2001.

She was always learning and was working on a Fine Arts degree in creative writing until recently. She wrote stories, was working on a novel and painted. Her joy in life and artistic expression came together in whatever she did. And she shared what she learned, brimming with enthusiasm.

Valerie was ready and willing to step up at any time to support the Friends and to promote and defend the Farm. She will be dearly missed.



Gardening and Other Opportunities

Come and enjoy at close quarters our very special Ottawa greenspace. Join the Friends of the Farm's volunteer teams this year in the Ornamental Gardens, Arboretum and Merivale Shelterbelt. Young or old, skilled or unskilled, there are opportunities for all.

Gardening begins in early May so get your forms in. To obtain a volunteer form, please visit our website at www.friendsofthefarm.ca/volunteer.htm or call the office at 613-230-3276.

We are also seeking a volunteer who has worked with WordPress to help update the Friends' website. If you have some familiarity with it and the time to share your knowledge, please contact us at volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca. We are also looking for help with event coordination, event sign management, directing traffic, cashiering, sale organizing, and photography.

Please contact us at volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca. We hope to see you at the Farm!



The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is a volunteer organization committed to the maintenance and protection of the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Membership for the Friends of the Farm costs \$30 per year for an individual, \$50 per year for a family, \$25 for seniors/students. Payment by PayPal available on website. Membership fees support the many projects of the Friends of the Farm.

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm publish the Newsletter (ISSN 1702 2762) four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). All members receive the newsletter and it is sent by regular mail or e-mail. Editor: Richard Hinchcliff. Assistant Editor: Barbara Woodward. Design & Printing: Nancy Poirier Printing. Contributors: Maura Giuliani, Jeannine Lewis, Sharon Saunders, Mary Ann Smythe, Joan Speirs. Translator: Lise Anne James.

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 Charitable Number 118913565RR0001

Dear Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

-I took my retirement in January 2016. I worked at the Farm for over 35 years as a student, casual, seasonal and indeterminate employee. I worked in buildings 12, 20, 21, 50, 72, 77, 106 and a few others that have been demolished since 1980.

In 1980 I won a competition to replace a worker for four months. I was offered the weekend watering job for the winter—big money at \$6.36 an hour. I thought I'd struck it rich; a dream job for a student in the horticulture program at Algonquin.

I worked with the Friends in the Gardens and the Arboretum from their inception—and have many fond memories. I am especially grateful to Joan Speirs for persuading me to buy back my pensionable years; also for her lively and inquisitive nature, she was a force to be reckoned with.

In 2004, I won the position of Lead Hand in the Ornamental Gardens and was allowed to design the beds in the gardens and the circular centerpiece bed at our headquarters on the farm. My first year as designer I relied on the same old look of the past; the annual beds in the gardens are rectangular of varying length.

The feature design that year was the circular bed at Sir John Carling celebrating the summer Olympics in Greece. The circle bed was 67 feet across, radius of 33 feet and 3,421 square feet. This bed would be planted with over 3000 transplants. The Olympic flag or symbol is represented by five interlocking rings and the mascot of the hosting country, in this instance a laurel leaf



A detail from one of Sharon's designs with annual grass *Pennisetum rupelianum* and, in left foreground, the blue *Salvia patens*

crown, and the year to accompany the rings. The design was a success. We used the rings again for the 2008 Beijing Olympics featuring the Running Man mascot.

Over the past 11 years, the gardens have evolved in terms of design and use of colour, mixing plants to create an overall vista—making small beds look like one long, unified border as an example. Colour themes, unconscious or deliberate have been the keynote aspect in the gardens' design.

I was in luck the day I stopped by the unemployment center (old name) that fateful day in late March 1980.

Thanks to the efforts and dedication of the green teams, the future of the gardens will be in good hands.

Thank you for all the shared times we have spent together.
Sharon Saunders
Lead Hand, Ornamental Gardens, 2004-2015

NEW MEMBER REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____
 PROVINCE: _____
 TELEPHONE #: _____
 FAX #: _____
 E-MAIL: _____

INTEREST IN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

YES NO

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

FAMILY	\$50/year
ADULT	\$30/year
SENIOR/STUDENT	\$25/year
BASIC CORPORATE	\$250/year
NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION	\$25/year
INDIVIDUAL LIFE	\$600
SENIOR COUPLE LIFE	\$650
DONATION	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Please make cheque or money order payable to: "Friends of the Farm." A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for all donations of \$10 or more. Payment by PayPal is available on website.
 We are located at Building 72 in the Arboretum. You can visit us or mail this part of the form with your payment to:
FRIENDS OF THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM
Building 72, Central Experimental Farm
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C6
 Telephone: 613-230-3276
 Fax: 613-230-1238
 Email: info@friendsofthefarm.ca
 Website: www.friendsofthefarm.ca
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Guided Tree Tours in the Arboretum

The following are the first four guided tree tours in the Arboretum this year. Although the tours are free and open to the public, please register in advance at info@friendsofthefarm.ca or call 613-230-3276. Donations to the Friends of the Farm will be kindly accepted during the tour. See www.friendsofthefarm.ca for more information and for information on subsequent tours.

April 24 - Flowering Trees: Blossoms and Pollination, with Robert Glendinning and Eric Jones

The tour will focus on showy tree flowers like the magnolias but there is much to be learned about all trees in bloom. Climate change is also affecting the flowering and leafing-out of trees. Come and enjoy the colour as you learn about the trees. The tour will start at 2:00 at Building 72 in the Arboretum. *Note: the date may change depending on flower timing. Stay tuned to the website.*

May 22 - Birds and the Urban Forest, with Owen Clarkin and Arthur Goldsmith

Birds and trees are inextricably connected. Trees provide habitat structure and food for many species of birds, while birds may act as agents for seed dispersal and can greatly influence the relationship of trees with their insect and fungal pests. Come for a guided tour of the Dominion Arboretum during the busy spring birding season, and learn more about Ottawa's birds, trees, and their relationships with each other.

June 26 - How Trees get Started, by Robert Glendinning and Eric Jones

This tour is about seeds, grafts and other propagation techniques.

July 17 - Oaks and Conifers, Universally Fascinating, by Owen Clarkin and Eric Jones

(Check the website later for more information on these and subsequent tours.)

Two Small Lilacs



'Prairie Petite'



'Maiden's Blush'

Photos by R. Hinchcliff

Pruning Lilacs ... (continued from Page 12)

foot above ground in early spring. This may stimulate new shoot development. This potential cure does sacrifice bloom for several years but is often successful.

Villosae Group Lilacs

The late lilacs tolerate wetter, somewhat heavier soil and may appreciate extra water in dry seasons. If you were to prune immediately after the first bloom, you would be deprived of the pleasure of seeing them flower again! Unlike the French hybrids,

these plants form flower buds on the new, spring growth, and pruning late in the season does not deter flower bud formation.

Late lilacs tend to form fewer, thicker stems, with new growth out of these frequently crossing and twisting. They often grow vigorously and do need regular pruning to keep under control (unless space is no problem). Because it is often difficult to remove single stems to the ground, pruning to reduce height usually requires cutting back individual branches to a suitable side shoot or node.

Pruning Lilacs ... Do I Really Have To?

By Maura Giuliani and Joan Speirs

Lilacs are wonderfully resilient. We've all seen old farm properties with lilacs still in bloom near long-abandoned houses. But have you noticed how tall those lilacs can get?

If your lilac is a relatively new one, regular pruning each year will keep it healthy and at the desirable height and shape for your garden. Perhaps the most important element to keep in mind when pruning is the type of lilac you are dealing with.

Most of the small hybrids - like 'Palibin', 'Miss Kim', the Fairytale series, etc. - require little or no pruning apart from removal of dead or damaged branches. Tree lilacs are also generally left to their own devices.

Most other lilacs on the market fall into one of two categories:

- **French hybrids**, which are varieties of *S. vulgaris* (common lilac) and *×hyacinthiflora*. Bloom is once a year; May in Ottawa.
 - **Villosae Group**, which include Prestons and are also known as late lilacs. These bloom in June and often again to a lesser extent in late summer.
- Deadheading of spent blossoms for either type is more cosmetic than necessary and will not affect the following season's bloom.

But these plants have different growth patterns and require different pruning approaches.



Typical French hybrid growth pattern

French Hybrids

French hybrids thrive in a well-drained light soil and are remarkably drought-resistant. Most grow into multi-stemmed shrubs. These are easily controlled by *pruning right after bloom* each season by removing any dead wood and stems larger than 2" in diameter, if there are smaller healthy branches to take their place. (Flower buds for next spring's bloom are formed during mid-summer.)

Where you have extra-long but healthy branches, trim them back to a side shoot or closest node. If a branch is sticking out at an awkward angle, trim it back. As the bush matures, you may need to thin out branches in the centre to ensure good air circulation.

And old, overgrown French hybrids *can* be rehabilitated. It just requires more drastic measures. One traditional approach is a three-year plan. In the first year, up to 1/3 of the plant can be removed at ground level, starting with the largest stems (especially those over 2") from the centre. All dead branches should come out first, and any that are diseased or misshapen. The second year you can remove half of the remaining old branches and thin new growth to allow ventilation in the centre. In the third year the remaining old wood can be taken out, and further thinning done, if necessary. The advantage in the three-year approach is that you will still have blooms every spring as the plant is renewed. If an old plant is suckering well, some of these suckers may be encouraged to take over as old growth is removed.

A truly drastic (but time-honoured) approach involves cutting all stems to a



Typical Villosae Group growth pattern