

Lilacs

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IN
THIS
ISSUE:

Historic Lilac Exchange and
Early Blooms in Arizona, USA



Syringa vulgaris 'Lois Amee Utley'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'Zarya Kommunizma'
Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova; reprinted from *Lilacs DVD*
courtesy of Charles Holetich

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*Front Cover: Syringa × hyacinthiflora 'Mount Baker' blooming in Vail, Arizona
Photo credit Brad Bittorf*

Editor's Deadline for Spring Issue:

***** June 1*****

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President's Message

Dear Lilac Friends,

The month of March is here and spring is not far away. Only a few more days and voila officially it will be spring for us in the Northern Hemisphere. Winter is not going out without a fight. Snow, sleet, cold temperatures are still plaguing us. Usually by now we are beginning to warm up and the flowering trees and the bulbs are blooming. Yes a few early daffodils have opened up but nothing else as of yet. I know we are all anxious to see our lilacs in bloom and see all the flowering trees and shrubs that precede them. Brad Bradley, ILS Executive President, live in Arizona much farther south in the USA than many of us. His lilacs are flowering now. I assume the lilacs in California are doing the same.

Thinking Spring I attended the Philadelphia Flower Show in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA. Started in 1826 by the Philadelphia Horticulture Society it has become a spectacular event where everyone and anyone can experience spring. Held in the Philadelphia Convention Center it is an extraordinary event to attend. It will chase your winter blues. The horticulture displays took your breath away by their beauty and originality. The theme this year was Art and Horticulture or combined ARTICULTURE. Inspired by the painting of famous artists the displays were colorful, sensational, and pure artistry. Some were designed within gigantic frames. Others represented romantic landscapes while others were surrealistic. Lights effects transformed the landscape. Like by magic the trees turned blue, red or pink in a kadeliroscope of colors. I looked and looked among the forced shrubs to see a glimpse of a lilac but none, not a single one. This made me wonder how much it would cost to have a booth at the Philadelphia Flower Show. Well a 12x12 space cost \$4,500 end of the dream...

About 200 vendors were promoting their products. Interesting were the ratchet pruners, short and long handle that a company's agents were demonstrating. They made a perfect smooth cut with very little efforts. They are great for hands that are not so very strong. It took two days to make the round and see "everything". The most unusual was a company from state of Kansas who makes Palm Trees for patios, pool side and even interior of homes or office buildings. The trees are made from galvanized steel. Coconut shaped lights, they actually looked real, attach below the leaves. It is Impressive how realistic the trees looked. They come in heights of seven feet up to twelve feet. Palm Trees anyone? But of course the real plants were the stars of the show. The latest winter storm, aptly called Titan, hit our area and kept us in Philadelphia longer than plan but no complaint when just by crossing the street from the hotel you were entering the world of flowers.

May is International Lilac Month! Let's celebrate by registering for the ILS Convention May 1-3, 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Six members from Russia are coming. They look forward to meeting everyone. It is a big trip for them.

I hope all the lilacs will bloom in profusion. David Gressley has worked very diligently to plan the convention. Let's have a great turnout and celebrate International Lilac Month!

I hope you have renewed your membership so that you may continue to receive *Lilacs* and received the other benefits associated by being a member. Every member is important we want to keep you.

Have you looked at the ILS Web Page recently? The journals from 1989 and up are now digitalized and will be posted soon. Three years of the most recent journals will be posted on the member-only site. Joan Speirs has contacted the Arnold Arboretum's archivist about borrowing the earlier journals. She will soon receive them and continue with her project. Thank you to Joan for working so diligently and getting it done. Thank you to Cadance Wentz for managing the web site.

In the latest *Lilacs* Winter 2014 the article by Beryl Lee, The World's most Southerly Lilacs? Lilacs in New Zealand, was very interesting and appreciated. Mr. Lee is our only member from that country. I hope other members from far away and not so faraway places will write and share their lilac stories. Kent Millham, ILS Editor, is always looking for articles. The latest edition of *Rosa Mundi* the Journal of the Heritage Rose Foundation is a compilation of articles from rosarians from all the corners of the world. Some articles are about the old roses and others are about people who have love them in years past and those people who love them today. Together they give an overview of the history of the old roses. The same can be done with the lilacs. Lilacs certainly have a long history. They have been loved by many. We should not forget the pioneers who discover them, those who create new ones and those who continue to collect them and those of us who just simply love to grow them. Get out your pens and write!

Remember to vote for the Board of Directors 2014. You can do it by mail by sending your ballot to Nancy Latimer, Elections Chairman, or vote by internet by sending an e-mail to vote@internationallilacsociety. The instructions are in the last issue of *Lilacs*.

I will see you at the convention don't miss that one. We can all experience the great city of Cleveland. I can't wait to see what David Gressley has in store for us. I look forward to being there with all of you. See you in Cleveland!

Mes amities,
Nicole Jordan, ILS president
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2014 International Lilac Society Convention Agenda

Thursday May 1

- ILS Board Meeting 9:00 am – 12:00
- Bus to The Holden Arboretum 12:30 – 3:30 pm
- Hospitality Suite 8:30 pm

Friday May 2

- Annual Meeting 8:00-9:00 am
- Bus tour of University Circle Cultural Gardens 9:30 – 11:00 am
- Bus to Cleveland Botanical Garden 11:30 – 3:30
- Lunch and Keynote Speaker 12:00 – 2:00 pm
- Tour of Botanical Gardens 2:00 – 3:30 pm
- Return to Hotel 4:00 pm
- Dinner at the Marriott 6:00 pm

Saturday May 2

- ILS Board meeting 7:30-8:30 am
- Bus to Lake View Cemetery 9:00 am
- Tours of Lake View Cemetery 9:30 – 11:30 am
- Lunch under the Tent 12:00 pm
- Lilac Auction 1:00 pm
- Return to Hotel 4:00 pm
- Dinner at Morton 6:30 pm

Scientists Love Lilacs Almost as Much as You Do

Theresa M. Crimmins¹ and Mark D. Schwartz²

¹National Coordinating Office, USA National Phenology Network

²Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

If you're reading this article, then chances are good that you're a member of the International Lilac Society...and if you're part of ILS, you probably don't need to be reminded about why lilacs are special! Lilacs are prized for their plentiful, colorful flowers and their fragrant, unforgettable scent. They are also easy to grow and long-lived. But there are even more reasons to value lilacs...they play a key role in helping scientists document how plants are responding to changing climate conditions. And you can be a part of this groundbreaking research...if that sounds interesting, read on!

Information on the timing of leaf-out and flowering in individual lilac plants across the country has been invaluable to researchers documenting the effects of a changing climate. The timing of seasonal life cycle events, such as leafing, flowering, and fruiting in plants, and migration and egg-laying in animals, is termed *phenology*. Leaf and flower phenology in lilacs, as in many plants, is triggered by a combination of warm spring temperatures following cold winter temperatures.

Why do we care about phenology?

Understanding the relationships between weather and plant phenology can be quite valuable to scientists, land managers, and decision makers. For example, understanding what weather conditions cue allergenic plants to release pollen can improve asthma and allergy alerts. Likewise, knowing what conditions trigger fruit drop and leaf fall can help municipalities prepare for clean-up efforts on downtown streets. Better understanding weather-phenology relationships can also help you to plan activities in your yard more effectively – like when to use pesticides or when to mow.

What role do lilacs play?

The effort to document lilac phenology spans seven decades. Across the United States and Canada, volunteers have meticulously observed the timing of these key life cycles on their plants and thereby contributed to one of the most valuable phenology datasets in existence. Several features make this set of observations particularly useful. Both the length of time that observations have been collected and the spatial extent of the observations are large, and both of these features are important to data analysts. But there is another key feature of these observations that make them even more valuable for documenting plant response to environmental change: many of the lilacs that have been observed are

cloned plants. Phenology observations are especially important when collected from cloned, or genetically identical, plants. This is because differences in leaf and flower timing among plants can be attributed to site-level differences, such as temperature, rainfall, or soil conditions, rather than genetic differences among the plants themselves.

Why are observations of lilac phenology so valuable?

The long-term set of observations collected on cloned lilacs has advanced climate change science in dramatic ways. Phenology has been recognized as one of the most important indicators of climate change. The spatial and temporal breadth of the cloned lilac data set has enabled researchers to clearly document that when lilacs first put on leaves and flowers is occurring nearly a week earlier now than in the 1950s and 1960s. Further, scientists have been able to calculate that these events are continuing to advance—at a rate of approximately one day per decade. Though an earlier spring may sound mighty nice to those of you that weathered the record-breaking temperatures and snowfall this past winter, it doesn't take too much calculation to realize that spring can't advance indefinitely. The implications for advancing spring leafing and flowering are great, and for the most part, unknown, though we can look to recent extreme events for some insight. The spring of 2012 was the earliest on record in much of the U.S., and the remarkably early temperatures were followed by freezing temperatures that decimated fruit crops in the Midwest.

Using the decades of phenology observations carefully collected on cloned lilacs by volunteers across the United States, researchers have been able to predict the transition into spring growth in a wide range of plants across temperate land areas of the Northern Hemisphere. And the take-home messages garnered from the lilac dataset have predictive value that extends even further. The observations have allowed scientists to recognize that lilacs flower earlier in years characterized by warmer and drier conditions, and that can help anticipate a more severe wildfire season in western states.

Want to be a part of the research?

The USA National Phenology Network is an organization dedicated to collecting, storing, and sharing plant and animal phenology observations and information to improve our understanding of the natural world and to support decision making. A primary activity of the USA National Phenology Network is maintaining *Nature's Notebook*, the plant and animal phenology observation program appropriate for participants of nearly all ages and skill levels. A key activity is encouraging the observation of lilac phenology.

Join us! You are welcomed to collect and submit observations of life cycle events on a common lilac in your yard (*Syringa vulgaris*; all cultivars welcome). You can also obtain one of the cloned lilacs through a commercial nursery. Cloned lilacs are available for purchase through Jung Seed Company during the planting season (late March through early June) at a cost of \$20 for two plants. Place

an order from their direct page (www.jungseed.com/dc.asp?c1=USA-NPN+Lilac&c=785) or call 1-800-247-5864. We invite you to make observations on your lilac and contribute to a historical data set 60 years in the making!

How to get started tracking phenology through Nature's Notebook

You will make repeated observations on the same individual plant(s) through time. You're encouraged to make observations at least once a week, but any frequency that works for you is welcomed. You will follow protocols that ask you to report "yes" or "no" answers to questions about your plant's leaf, flower, and fruit status. You can answer as many or as few of these questions as you'd like.

You can learn the specifics of how to get set up within *Nature's Notebook*, including creating your account online, registering your site, registering your plant(s), finding your observation protocols, and downloading data sheets at www.usanpn.org/nn/become-observer. If you are registering a cultivar of *Syringa vulgaris* and know your cultivar, you can specify this information in the "comments" field for the individual plant.

You are also invited to submit observations on common lilacs as well as nearly 700 other plants on our list, found at www.usanpn.org/nn/species_search.

Once you're set up, you can log observations using the *Nature's Notebook* Android or iPhone smartphone and tablet apps, if you prefer. These apps work both when you're within and outside of cell phone coverage. If you collect observations when you're outside of cell coverage, the data will be stored locally on your device, and automatically uploaded to the database once you move back into coverage. The apps are available through iTunes and the Google Play store.

Learn more about the history and key findings from the Cloned Plants Project of the USA National Phenology Network at www.usanpn.org/nn/cloned-plants.

Sad News for ILS

ILS is very sad to report the passing of MaryMae Meyers daughter, Kristine Renae Cilella, on March 28, 2014 at the age of 51. Her obituary may be found on the Steuerle Funeral Home website at www.steuerlefh.com.

Messages of condolence may be left in the guest book at this link:
<http://www.legacy.com/guestbook/batesville/guestbook.aspx?n=kristine-cilella&pid=170417397&FBNF=ShareGBAT#.Uzcn2mr-VU.facebook>

Four Cultivars Blooming at Once: Something I Never Expected to See in Southern Arizona

During the summer of 1999, I moved from the lilac haven of northeast Ohio to Tucson, Arizona. I loved Ohio and I am excited to be able to return for the 2014 ILS convention.

When I left Ohio, I thought I had seen my last lilac unless I traveled north at bloom time. (Actually, the climate in northern Arizona in places such as Flagstaff is quite hospitable to lilacs and there are many there.) But one thing about southern Arizona, we have many visitors and transplants from the north, so I started hearing rumors and tales about lilacs. Little stories that there might be lilacs around. And each spring I would hear a few more.

At first, there were false alarms, such as the purple and oh-so-fragrant blossoms of the Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*). Who could have thought that there were plants that smelled like grape candy?

I talked to my neighbor, a Colorado transplant, who nursed a tiny *Syringa vulgaris* in her back yard. Each year, it bloomed, slightly...somewhat pitifully. She was a good gardener but the plant was out of its element. It persisted but did not thrive. And yet, for her, this little "model" lilac reminded her of many times before, and of happy memories.

One day I went out for a stroll and saw a mirage. It must be a mirage—it looked like lilac blossoms growing from amidst the gravel. Steeling my courage, I rang the doorbell, and found that, yes, it was a lilac. The current owners got it when they bought the house; they did not plant it. However, the new owners were from Iowa and they knew what a lilac was, and yes, this was one. I photographed it and marveled at it. Years later, on a visit, Colin Chapman tentatively identified it as *Syringa x chinensis*.

I went for a bike ride the next spring and—whoa—there was another *chinensis*, about a mile from this one! I spoke to that homeowner as well. But he could not provide me much about its heritage, but confirmed that it bloomed each season. Had there been some sort of Johnny Appleseed equivalent in Arizona? Someone who brought seeds from France, or New Hampshire, or Nebraska, and planted them here?

As I continued to observe, I also found lilacs at different places around town, including the northeast part of Tucson, the southeast part, the University of Arizona (now removed, unfortunately, but there are also some lilacs just north of there in a residential area), to the far northwest. There are also lilacs, I learned, in places to the southeast such as St. David, north of Willcox, AZ, and even at

Tombstone, AZ. Most of these were apparently *chinensis*, although there were also a few *laciniata* and others that could not be identified.

My own experiment in lilacs was without much success nor hope. I planted several, but an irrigation breakdown that was not immediately detected caused me to lose all but one. Each year, it would grow up from its roots, but each baking hot summer, its leaves would be burned and it would advance no further. I marveled in its heartiness. It was, appropriately, my 'Nadezhda,' or "hope."

In 2004, I moved to a new home, at a little higher elevation, and thus a cooler and wetter place as well. (Cooler, that is, if you consider 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 C) cooler than the 113 F (45 C) it might be at the same time in the city of Tucson.) I took my own survivor, 'Nadezhda,' with me, transplanted it, but alas, it did not survive the transplant.

Advice was solicited from those with some measure of success in growing lilacs in southern California. I was intent on obtaining some *syringa* x *hyacinthiflora* cultivars, which I ultimately did. Not all have survived, but some did, and once they received enhanced irrigation, they seemed to delight in the sun.

As I have written earlier, some aspects of lilac care are counterintuitive here. Rather than mounding around your lilac base, you dig a water-holding pit to conserve any moisture. Rather than planting in full or afternoon sun, you seek to provide them with some measure of shading. With such adaptations, and a successful irrigation system (which my wife Deb gets 100% of the credit for installing and maintaining!), selected lilacs are able to thrive here, in USDA Zone 8a.

The shading for my lilacs began with the side patio of the house. This provided the necessary situation for 'Lavender Lady' (*S. x hyacinthiflora*). The Lady eventually thrived, and has been significantly pruned several times already, or it would be far taller than my house, I believe. As 'Lavender Lady' grew, I was able to provide bouquets from it. One day at work, I noticed that part of one bouquet was lasting longer than the other part. When I looked at this stalk more closely, I felt both joy and stupidity, because this was a double flower rather than a single! My 'Nadezhda,' believed not to have survived the transplant to the new house, had quietly lived beneath 'Lavender Lady,' which provided shade for the little one until it was able, year later, to bloom! Even more remarkable is that 'Nadezhda' is a *S. vulgaris* cultivar, which has no business living here.

The collection here in Vail, AZ has also been enhanced by the specimen of 'Purple Haze' (*S. protolaciniata* x *S. oblata* subsp. *dilatata*) which I obtained from Jack Alexander at the 2006 Woodland, Washington ILS convention. The little container, which could easily be carried on board a jet, held something completely foreign to me. I recall vividly asking Jack, "Will this grow where I live?" He answered, "I don't know. Try it!" I did, and now 'Purple Haze' has become the local harbinger of spring, blooming as early as February. This season, it surprised me by sending forth more blossoms even after I thought it had finished,

and consequently, all four of the local lilacs are blooming together (March 21, 2014).

Oh, and that fourth cultivar debuted last season. But there is a bit of story even to that, since it is planted a small distance from the other cultivars. It was planted in the shade of a block wall nearby. But Deb, once more having more sense than me, reminded me that the block wall would radiate heat and possibly counter the shading benefits. So she extended more irrigation to it. ('Spokane', another cultivar planted near to it, did not survive.) Meanwhile, one day a bird must have dropped a seed of the palo verde tree nearby. The blue palo verde (*Cercidium floridum*) grew quickly in its home. (It is the Arizona state tree.) It provided shade for 'Mount Baker' (*S. x hyacinthiflora*), much as palo verdes often provide shade for, and serve as a "nurse tree" to saguaro cacti when they are very young. 'Mount Baker' is now old enough to bloom white and delight the local bees and moths.

So we now enjoy many colors, I, III-IV, and VII. Oops, for those who may not know, that is white, bluish-magenta, and purple. I'm thinking we need to get a 'California Rose' (V-pink)!

So during the season you all have your lilacs, you can be amused that we are roasting out here!

Brad Bittorf
Southwestern Regional Vice-President
Vail, Arizona



'Nadezhda' blooming in the warm climate
of Vail, Arizona, USA
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Syringa protolaciniata x *S. oblata* subsp. *dilatata* 'Purple Haze'
blooming in February in Vail, Arizona, USA
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Syringa x *hyacinthiflora* 'Lavender Lady'
blooming in February in Vail, Arizona, USA

The Japanese Tree Lilac: Miracle Tree or Invasive?

In my many years of working with streetscaping, there is the constant problem of finding the right tree to plant along a city's streets. When we have plenty of room and no utility wires we plant big trees that will develop into large shade trees to cool a street and give it majesty. No one in the current generation remembers the canopy titan elms. I remember as a boy in my home town the last of the elms being cut down. The last large stand of elms was on the mall at the University of Maine, where I went to school. But even after herculean efforts to save them they too were cut down and replaced with sugar maples, the next best thing, although much inferior to the elms in stature.

Jump ahead to today's task of ensuring a hospitable and environmentally sensitive treeing of an urban landscape. In the older cities of the northeast we do not have the luxury of planned development and have to constantly consider how we will make the old streets and neighborhoods fit into today's needs. We have more pollution now than ever, we have greater variety in our weather patterns and lots of salt to make the roads safe for ever more traffic on streets built for horses. We also have the ever present utility pole that bears not only the electric wires but TV, phone and internet cables. Along our main corridor street into the city there are 23 wire lines on the poles in the green space between the sidewalk and the street.

Recently I assisted the City of St Albans with a grant for our local electric utility company to cut down over twenty very old shade trees that had been butchered by the many years of utility pruning until the trees were no longer safe. The electric company offered to cut down the trees and replace them with trees we call in the industry "under-wire" trees: those trees that will not grow tall enough to interfere with the utility wires. We are all too familiar I am sure with the many crab apple and red bud trees, but by far the most popular tree has been the Japanese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata* ssp *reticulata*).

I first met the Japanese tree lilac at a nursery probably 15 years ago. The nurseryman had purchased the tree (balled and burlaped) and had it the entire season and couldn't sell it. My wife decided to purchase it at a great discount and had it delivered to our house. To that point the only tree lilac I had seen was the 50 year old behemoths at Shelburne Museum. It became a welcome addition to our landscape and the talk of the neighborhood when it bloomed around the fourth of July. After attending several conferences on street trees I soon became aware of the versatility of this tree and its many uses. Within a few years we started to see more and more of the trees along the sides of streets. Finally, on a rebuilt stretch of road from Burlington to Shelburne, the State of Vermont planted 300 tree lilacs among the 1300 trees that it planted.

So why the popularity of the tree lilac? First its size, it is easily kept to under 20 feet, sometimes even 15 feet; it has the most salt tolerance of any street tree. Along the stretch of highway I mentioned above after 5 years all the tree lilacs are healthy and growing, almost all the others have died and been replaced at least once. Of course there is also its beauty, it has a very pleasant dark green leaf and a very showy display of flowers at a time very little else is flowering; it transplants easily and has few disease issues. What's not to love!

But recently there has been talk in state agriculture departments and urban forestry boards about whether or not the tree lilac is "invasive". The term "invasive" is used for exotic (foreign) plants that have established themselves and overrun or displaced the local flora. We are certainly familiar with Chinese honeysuckle, burning bush and European buckthorn, but the tree lilac? It really doesn't have any of the characteristics that the aforementioned plants have so why the worry? Overplanting. Pure and simple we are planting far too many tree lilacs. Remember the elm? Monocultures are the best way to ensure eventual destruction of a species. One should also note that the Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) has been in American horticulture for over 200 years and until it was chosen to replace the American elm in almost every city in America, it was never considered invasive. It has been declared invasive in 17 states and it will probably be banned altogether in a few years, which is a shame, as the Norway in the right mix was a very valuable street tree and ornamental. I hope we can save the tree lilac from the same fate.

Some nurseries now devote half of all there lilac production to the tree lilac and for many it is their most popular tree, period. The tree lilac is also a favorite of industrial landscapers (along with 'Miss Kim'). Recently there has been much work on tree lilac select seedlings and hybridization to bring out many new cultivars. (To date the increasingly popular Chinese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata ssp pekinesis*) has not been chosen as a street tree due to it exfoliating bark.) I use the tree lilac in my street tree mixes, but I work at adding as many different genera and species as are available. The tree board in Vermont has decided for now that the tree lilac is not invasive but is advising to increase the mix of genera and species when planting underwire trees and to ensure distance between plantings of the tree lilac. The newest recommendation from the municipal arborist association is that no more than 5% of and one species, 10% of any one genera and 20% or any one family be planted in a street tree mix. This is a good protection for the tree lilac and disease control as a whole. Think diversity, diversity, diversity.

Jeff Young
Vermont Extension MasterGardener



Syringa reticulata subsp. *reticulata*
Photo Credit Bruce Peart and Margaret Walton
reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa reticulata subsp. *reticulata*
Photo Credit Bruce Peart and Margaret Walton
reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich

The Peter Bowen Lilacs

We have a lot of old lilac stands in New Hampshire. Nearly every old house has one or more lurking about the property and some are prominently displayed in the front yard. We also have a lot of abandoned cellar holes, and many of them also have lilacs in the area, though the house may be long gone. I have located what I propose may be one of the oldest lilac stands in North America, at the abandoned home site of a frontier settler named Peter Bowen, in Franklin, New Hampshire

Recently I obtained a copy of the "History of Franklin" (New Hampshire, USA) by Alice Shepard. It covers the period from settlement, about 1740, through 1910, and was edited by my friend and long-time attorney, Stanley Robinson. In the first part of the book, the story is told of the Stevenstown Fort, built to protect early settlers, located on the Merrimack River, in what is today Franklin, New Hampshire. This fort is located just south of the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnepesaukee Rivers, the headwaters of the Merrimack.

The Stevenstown Fort was the northernmost outpost on the Eastern Frontier at this time. When France and England began contending for control of North America, French and Indian raiding parties from the St. Francis settlement in Canada descended on the English colonists, making it impossible to farm or expand the colony. The danger was everywhere; many families left, and those who stayed were killed or kidnapped and taken to Canada, where they were sold as slaves to the French. Settlers no longer enjoyed a pastoral farm life on the frontier. Now, their lives and livelihood were at risk every day.

Because of the ongoing hostilities to settlers, a military garrison was assigned to the fort for their protection, and volunteers reported for duty on the frontier. One of the volunteers was Major Robert Rogers, an experienced scout and land surveyor, and founder of Rogers Rangers, famous for their exploits during the French and Indian War in New England and New York. The 1937 historical novel by Kenneth Roberts, "Northwest Passage", tells the story of Roger's Rangers during this time. In 1940 the novel was made into a movie, starring Spencer Tracy, and into a television series in 1958 and 1959 starring Buddy Ebsen. Their base of operations was the Stevenstown Fort, and later, Fort at Number Four in Charlestown, NH, on the Connecticut River. Another of these volunteers was a man named Peter Bowen.

The military volunteers who took up the challenge to defend the frontier were not signing up for regular duty. The fort was isolated, days or weeks away from civilization, reinforcements and supplies. There were no churches, no grocery stores, no doctors, and no books. Heat and light came only from fire, from fuel supplied by the individual. They were completely on their own, save for the limited protection found at the fort, and once beyond the pale, anything could happen. Starvation and disease were at the door of every cabin, and the raiding

parties made it all the more dangerous. It is through this filter that we must look at Peter Bowen.

Peter Bowen first came to the area as a volunteer for Rogers Rangers. He had lost an eye in a previous engagement, and was known among his peers as a daredevil fighter. Consider that for a group of men engaged in such activities, all of whom might be thought of as daredevils, then and now, to call a man a "daredevil", was quite a distinction to carry.

In those days, even officers were not full time employees of the military. A typical enlistment was for six months, usually during good weather, or for a specific raid. Budgets were a concern then as now. When they were not fighting, volunteers returned immediately to civilian life, building a cabin and clearing land. In Peter Bowen's case, he built a log cabin in 1748 on a lot south of the fort, but within eyesight of it, known as the Intervale Lot number one, the southernmost lot. This lot was part of the 300 acres assigned to the fort, land that would later become the home of Daniel Webster, and where Daniel Webster's family invented the Webster Plow.

In 1753, two Indians from the St. Francis tribe, who were known by the settlers and the soldiers to engage in kidnapping and scalping, appeared on horseback at his cabin door. They were hungry and thirsty, so he fed them and satiated their thirst. Once full, they demanded whiskey, which they consumed in great quantity. Mr. Bowen suspected that their intentions were not honorable, so while they were drunk, he unloaded their muskets. The next day, the Indians chose to accompany Mr. Bowen on a journey south along the river, along what is today US Route 3. Upon reaching a brook that crossed the trail, the Indians demanded the party stop and get a drink of water. When dismounted, they raised their rifles, pointed them at Bowen, and pulled the triggers. The rifles did not fire, and Bowen attacked the surprised Indians, killing both of them with a knife. With the help of his friend Henry Morrill, he buried the bodies near the bridge, known to this day as Indian Bridge.

It wasn't long before the bodies were discovered, and word got back to the St. Francis tribe, who lodged a complaint with Royal Provincial Governor Benning Wentworth in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, of the Wentworth Lilacs fame. He issued a warrant for the arrest of Peter Bowen and Henry Morrill for murder, and the two were arrested and taken to the Portsmouth jail to be tried. On the night before their trial, a mob of 100 men from the Stevenstown area appeared in Portsmouth and broke them out of jail. Accounts differ; some say the jailer was tarred and feathered. This was an act of criminal behavior, but more significantly, constituted an act of insurrection against the Crown, decades before the American Revolution.

History does not record what became of Mr. Bowen. He was never heard from again, or at least the record does not show it if he was. In 1754, his neighbors picked up his abandoned cabin and moved it across the road, to use as an out-

building. The cellar hole remains, really just a rectangular placement of foundation stones on the ground. Mrs. Shepard's book records, and it can be seen today, that Bowen's cabin foundation is marked by a wild and unkempt stand of lilacs which have overgrown the site, and are slowly being choked out by the growth of trees on the periphery.

More research is being conducted by the author to verify components of the claim, but it can be stated with some degree of confidence that the Peter Bowen site is home to some of the oldest lilacs in North America. It is not logical to think that anyone would plant lilacs at an abandoned cellar hole in the intervening time from 1753 to the present. Since that time, no structure has been built on or near the site. It is located to the side of the old road, within the State right of way, precluding any building construction. In the 1930's, a new State road was laid out, to straighten the curves. The new road is located about 50 feet to the east of the cellar hole, placing it in the right of way of the new road as well. In the 1880's, a railroad was built to the east of the site and the roads. To think that this historical site narrowly missed being bulldozed, first by the expansion of the old road, then the railroad, and finally the new US Route 3, is a marvel. To think that the lilacs have also survived is an additional marvel. Further research may determine if this is truly the case.

If Bowen planted the lilacs, how did he acquire them? His was one of the first settlements in the area. It is not likely that he got them from his military neighbors. He was from Kingston, New Hampshire and familiar with Portsmouth; distrust of the Crown was deeply embedded with the settlers. Did this one-eyed daredevil sneak onto the grounds of the home of the Governor who would later arrest him and dig some up? It is a plausible source; Bowen was not afraid.

It is surprising to think that a man so accustomed to the savagery and deprivations of the Eastern frontier was also a lilac lover. We may never know all the truth surrounding the story. However, we do know that there are lilacs growing at a site connected with the earliest frontier settlement of New Hampshire and New England, and that might be enough.

John Bentley
March 2014

Important Errata from Winter Lilacs 2014

-“Method Modifications for DNA Extraction in Lilacs” was published without naming the author. The author is:

*Elena Lyakh, PhD, Senior Scientist, Laboratory of Dendrology,
Central Siberian Botanical Garden, 630090 Novosibirsk, Siberia, Russian
Federation.syringa_l@rambler.ru*

-The bio for Frank Moro on page 9 said he was helping the curator of botanical gardens of North Korea. It should have said South Korea.

(advertisement)

Exciting Lilac News!

We are happy to announce the availability of a new Lilac book on DVD, by Zelimir Borzan and Charles Holetich. This will be an important addition to the library of every lilac enthusiast.

Zelimir Borzan and Charles Holetich compiled this DVD, which includes over 2600 lilac photos from their own anthology, in addition to 19 contributors from China, Russia, Netherlands, Hungary, USA, and Canada. Depicted here are 950 different lilac cultivars, species, and botanical varieties, in most cases by 3 photos (a close-up, group inflorescences, and the whole bush.) The long term intention is for this to be a continuous project, to expand and improve upon, and periodically issue an augmented version. (Revenue from this DVD will be used in part to print a Lilac Book with 800 photos initially in the Croatian language.) The text version of the book can be seen in the Croatian segment of this DVD.

This DVD is subdivided into the following chapters: Introduction, Taxonomy, Species, Cultivars and References. Beneath each photo, beside the cultivar name, one will find the group affiliation, name of a hybridizer or the introducer, year of introduction, basic floret structure and color, and the code of the photographer, whose complete postal address or the e-mail address is provided in the Introduction.

Copies of the DVD are available through: John Bentley, P.O. Box 269, Salisbury, NH 03268, USA, 603-783-6779 cell, 603-648-2676 home, (fortbentley@gmail.com), for USA requests;

Charles Holetich, 265-5th Concession Road East, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H1 Canada, (choletich@gmail.com), for Canadian requests; and

Zelimir Borzan, Hrastova 43, 10040 Zagreb, Croatia (zelimir.borzan@zg.t-com.hr), for requests from Europe, Asia and Australia.

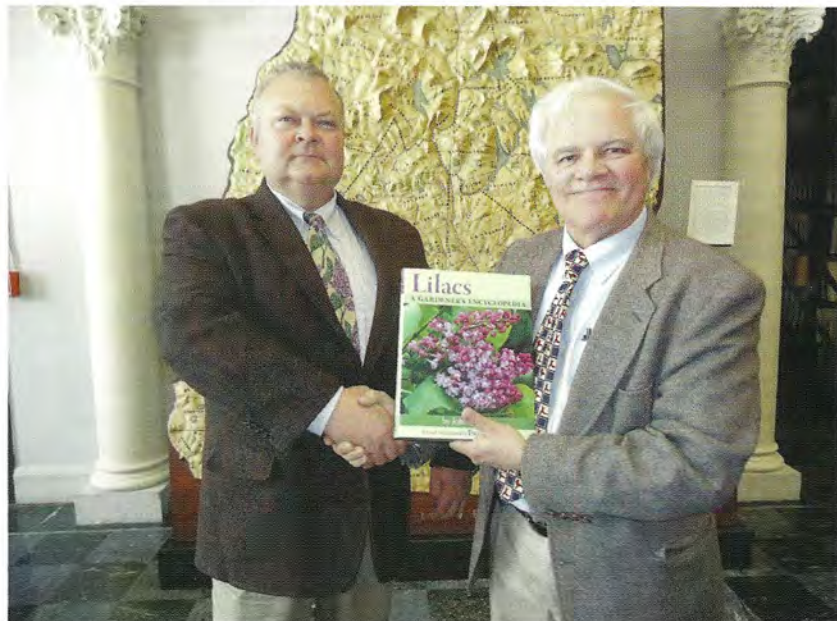
The cost of each DVD is US \$25, (less than one penny per photo!) or CA \$26, or €18. Packaging and mailing is included in the price. While in USA or Canada personal cheques may be accepted, the bank issued money order endorsed to the name of the area distributor as listed above is desirable. In Europe, Asia or Australia the bank money order is required. For organization of bank payment transaction via SWIFT, contact the regional distributor.

If you have on hand a missing photo of a close-up, group of inflorescences or a whole bush, please mail them to Charles Holetich, 265-5th Concession Road East, Waterdown, Ontario L0R 2H1, Canada, or in case of a small amount, e-mail them to choletich@gmail.com.



New England Chapter ILS News

ILS Board Member John Bentley (left) presents a copy of *Lilacs: A Gardener's Encyclopedia*, and a copy of the new landmark Lilac DVD by Charles Holetich and Zelimir Borzan to Michael York, New Hampshire State Librarian. The publications will be added to the library's collection. Copies of the DVD will be made available to libraries throughout the NH State Library's network. The purple lilac is the New Hampshire state flower.



Robert Hoepfl Registers 3 New Lilacs

Bob Hoepfl, former Superintendent of Horticulture for Monroe County Parks, and former ILS President, has just sent the paperwork to register three of his FC hybrids.

FC 20 will be named '**Highland Park**', and is a floriferous single blue lilac. FC 15 will be named '**Marcie Merlot**', and is a single purple with lighter highlights near the outer edge of the petals. It also tends to be a dwarf, rounded shrub.

FC 07 will be named '**Tuesday**', and is a full, purplish-violet double with inward curving petals.

Historic Trade of Lilacs between Highland Park and Moscow Botanical Garden

Tatiana Poliakova, ILS Vice-President of Russia and Asia, has helped bring about an exchange of lilacs between 2 renowned arboreta that have excellent lilac collections. The shipment of lilac scions arrived in fine shape; wrapped in bubble-wrap and saran. Soon, I will be shipping a box of cultivars from Highland Botanical Park to Moscow Botanical Garden containing their wish list from our collection.

Many of the cultivars from Russia I have never seen before, and it will augment the quality of the collection at HBP. It will be a number of years, of course, before they are out in the arboretum, since first they have to be grafted, and then grown on to a suitable size before planting. As all plant lovers know, the anticipation of the flowers to come is a lot of the joy of growing plants.

Many thanks to Tatiana for sharing cultivars from her garden and cuttings from Moscow Botanical Garden, and I look forward to seeing her again this spring when she comes to Highland Botanical Park.

*Kent Millham
Highland Botanical Park
March 2014*



Kent Millham opening package of scions from Russia;
seasonal spring display of Lamberton Conservatory
at Highland Botanical Park in background
Photo Credit Madeline DiPaola

**Photos of Some Lilacs Donated to
Highland Botanical Park**



Synga vulgaris 'Rus'

Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova

reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Sumerki'

Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova

reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Kremlevskie Kuranty'
Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova
reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Kruzhev'nitsa'
Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova
reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Pavlinka'

Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova

reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Utro Rossii'

Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova

reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich

**Photos of Some Lilacs donated to
Moscow Botanical Garden**



Syringa vulgaris BURGUNDY QUEEN® 'LECburg'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'Mauve Mist'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'Independence'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'Margaret Fenicchia'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'My Favorite'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa x hyacinthiflora 'Nokomis'
Photo Credit Kent Millham

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Syringa vulgaris 'Mauve Mist'
Photo Credit Kent Millham



Syringa vulgaris 'Ogni Donbassa'
Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova; reprinted from *Lilac DVD*
courtesy of Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Pavlinka'; one of lilac scions given to Highland Botanical Park
Photo Credit Tatiana Poliakova; reprinted from *Lilacs DVD* courtesy of Charles Holetich