

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BULLETIN

OF

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Philadelphus. In 1811 English gardeners cultivated only two species of *Philadelphus* and twelve years later botanists recognized only eleven species. There are now established in the Arboretum some thirty species and a large number of varieties and hybrids. All these plants, popularly called Syringas, are easy to manage, demand no special care, and suffer less from the attacks of insects than most trees and shrubs. They flower freely year after year, their flowers are often very fragrant, and in rich well-drained soil the plants live for many years. Some of the species can grow under the shade of overhanging trees, and flower in such situations more freely than almost any other shrub. The beauty of these plants is found in their white flowers; the fruit, which is a dry capsule, has as little beauty as that of a Lilac. There is nothing distinct or particularly interesting in the habit of the plants of any of the species, and the leaves fall in autumn without brilliant coloring. As flowering plants not many shrubs, however, surpass them in beauty, and their value is increased by the length of the flowering season which extends in the Arboretum during fully six weeks. Some of the species hybridize freely and several of the handsomest of these plants are hybrids. One of the first of these hybrids to attract attention was raised in France before 1870 by Monsieur A. Billard; it is known as *Philadelphus insignis* and sometimes is called Souvenir de Billard. It is one of the handsomest of the large-growing Syringas, and the last or nearly the last to bloom in the Arboretum, for the flowers will not be open for another fortnight. A hybrid probably between *P. grandiflorus* of the Appalachian Mountain region with a species from our northwest coast appeared in the Arboretum a few years ago and has been named *P. splendens*; it is a large and vigorous

shrub with unusually large flowers, and during the past week has been one of the handsomest *Syringas* in the collection; the flowers are without perfume. *Philadelphus maximus*, a supposed hybrid between *P. latifolius* from the southeastern United States, and *P. tomentosus* from the Himalayas, grows to a larger size than any of the other *Syringas*. It is not rare in old Massachusetts gardens in which plants from twenty to thirty feet high can occasionally be seen. The crossing about thirty years ago in France by Lemoine of *P. coronarius* with *P. microphyllus* produced an entirely new race of *Syringas* which has proved to be one of the best additions to garden shrubs that has ever been made. The first plant obtained by this cross is called *Philadelphus Lemoinei*; it is a perfectly hardy shrub four or five feet high and broad, with slender stems which bend from the weight of countless flowers; these are intermediate in size between those of the two parents and retain the fragrance of *P. microphyllus*. There are at least a dozen distinct forms of this hybrid made by Lemoine, varying considerably in the size of the plants and of the flowers, and in the time of flowering. One of the handsomest, perhaps, is called *Candélabre*; this is a very dwarf plant with flowers larger than those of either of its parents and an inch and a half wide, with petals notched on the margins, and without the perfume of its parents. Other distinct forms equally hardy and beautiful are *Avalanche*, *Boule d'Argent*, *Bouquet Blanc*, *Erectus*, *Fantasie*, *Gerbe de Neige* and *Mont Blanc*. The Mock Orange of old gardens, *Philadelphus coronarius*, a native of southeastern Europe and the Caucasus, was cultivated in England in 1596 and was probably one of the first shrubs brought to America by the English settlers. It is a shapely hardy shrub able to bear a good deal of neglect and abuse, and chiefly valuable for the fragrance of the flowers which are smaller than those of many other species and faintly tinged with yellow. Several forms of this plant are in the collection. None of them, however, are of particular beauty or interest, and one of them with double solitary flowers is as ugly as it is possible for a *Syringa* to be. Among the species none is perhaps more interesting than the Rocky Mountain *P. microphyllus*, one of the parents of the Lemoine hybrids. It is a compact shrub three or four feet high and broad with leaves not more than half an inch long and smaller flowers than those of any other *Philadelphus* in cultivation and rather less than three-quarters of an inch in diameter; their fragrance is not surpassed by that of any plant in the collection. The most beautiful of the species of recent introduction, *P. purpurascens*, is a native of western China, where it was discovered by Wilson. It is a shrub with long arching branches, from which rise numerous branchlets spreading at broad angles and from four to six inches long; these bear the flowers on drooping stalks from near the base to the apex and give to the plant when it flowers a different appearance from that of any of the other species. The flowers have a strong pungent and delightful odor and are an inch and a half in diameter with a purple calyx and pure white petals which do not spread like those of many of the species but form a bell-shaped corolla. It is the handsomest of the Old World species, and an addition to garden plants of first importance. It is interesting that the handsomest of the American species, *P. indorus*, was one of the first *Syringas* cultivated in Europe where it arrived about the middle of the eighteenth

century. It is a large shrub with arching branches, and large, solitary, pure white, cup-shaped, scentless flowers. This beautiful plant is not now very often seen in gardens. It is impossible in this bulletin even to mention all the species, varieties and hybrids of *Philadelphus* in the collection which is now one of the most complete in the Arboretum. It will well repay a careful study by persons interested in handsome garden shrubs and in the effects of hybridization, natural or intended, in this genus.

A new Chinese Rose. From the seeds of a Rose collected by Wilson in western China a new species of the *Moschata* Group has been raised. It is now flowering in the Arboretum for the third year and is to be named *Rosa Helenae*; it is a vigorous and perfectly hardy shrub with slender, arching stems furnished sparingly with short red spines, and five or six feet high, light green cheerful foliage, and terminal and axillary many-flowered clusters of pure white, delicately fragrant flowers an inch and a half in diameter and borne on short erect branchlets. It is a plant which will be prized by persons realizing that among the wild Roses are some of the most beautiful of all flowering plants and who find a place for them in their gardens.

***Magnolia macrophylla*.** This is the last of the *Magnolias* in the collection to flower. It is a medium-sized tree with wide-spreading branches, and is distinguished by the fact that of all trees which grow beyond the tropics it has the largest leaves and the largest flowers. The leaves are silvery white on the lower surface, from twenty to thirty inches long and from eight to nine inches wide, and the cup-shaped, creamy-white, fragrant flowers are often a foot in diameter. An inhabitant of the south where it is widely distributed from North Carolina to western Louisiana, this *Magnolia* is perfectly hardy in New England, but unless it is planted in sheltered positions the trees often become disfigured by the wind which tears the large delicate leaves.

***Magnolia glauca*.** Less showy than *Magnolia macrophylla*, this is a more valuable plant for general cultivation. Often a large tree in the south, at the north *Magnolia glauca* is never more than a small tree, or more often a large shrub. The leaves are dark green and very lustrous on the upper surface and silvery white on the lower surface; the flowers are small, cup-shaped, creamy white and delightfully fragrant, and continue to open in succession from the middle of June until August. In all North America there is not a more delightful shrub to plant in the garden, or one that will give larger returns in beauty and fragrance; yet it is difficult to find it in any quantity in American nurseries, and it is unknown to most American planters of this generation. A hybrid, *M. major*, often called *M. Thompsoniana*, between *M. glauca* and *M. tripetala*, another American species, has the general appearance of *M. glauca* but has larger leaves and larger fragrant flowers. It is with the American *Magnolias* on the right-hand side of the Jamaica Plain Gate and is now in flower.

***Hydrangea petiolaris*.** The so-called Climbing *Hydrangea* was introduced into the United States from Japan in 1876 by the Arboretum and is now often seen in Massachusetts gardens. It is usually allowed to climb up the trunks of trees, and it is perhaps not well known that this *Hydrangea* is an excellent plant for covering brick and stone walls,



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