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Lilacs. The word Lilac as most persons understand it means the plant with purple or with white flowers of old-fashioned gardens, and this Lilac, the *Syringa vulgaris* of botanists, and its numerous varieties are the most popular shrubs which can be grown in northern gardens, and the flowers of no other plant bring so many visitors to the Arboretum. This Lilac reached western Europe at the end of the sixteenth century by way of Constantinople and Vienna; and until a few years ago Persia was believed to be its native country, now, however, it is known to be a native of the mountain valleys of Bulgaria. It is not known when this plant first reached America, for there is no authentic record of it in this country before 1785 when Washington planted it at Mt. Vernon. It probably came much earlier for the colonists often brought favorite plants with them from their English homes. The wild form of *Syringa vulgaris* was raised from seeds sent to the Arboretum from Bulgaria in 1896. The flowers are purple and resemble those of the purple Lilac of old gardens but the flower-clusters are narrower with less crowded flowers. There is no record of the date of the first appearance of the white-flowered form which was first described in 1623. In the Arboretum can be seen good examples of the Lilacs of old New England gardens on the eastern slope and near the summit of Bussey Hill where two long rows of them were planted more than a century ago on each side of one of Mr. Benjamin Bussey's garden walks.

The improvement of the garden Lilac dates only from 1843 when a nurseryman at Liege in Belgium raised a plant with small double flowers. Nothing is now known of the origin of this plant but as it was called *Syringa vulgaris azurea plena* it was probably a seedling of the

common Lilac and not a hybrid. By fertilizing the flowers of *Syringa vulgaris azurea plena* with the pollen of varieties of the common Lilac, Lemoine produced the first important double-flowered Lilac, *S. Lemoinei* and others, and by again crossing these with forms of the common Lilac the double-flowered Lilacs of recent years have been made. By the crossing of varieties and by careful selection the flowers of the common Lilac have been gradually changed in size and in color in the last thirty years, but unfortunately the flowers of many modern Lilacs have lost a good deal of the fragrance of the old-fashioned Lilac, which, once enjoyed, is never forgotten. There are too many varieties of the common Lilac now cultivated. Some of them with different names given to seedlings in different nurseries and often in different countries are identical, and others are so much alike that they can only be distinguished by close comparison. It is important to cultivate them all in the Arboretum for study and comparison, but in a private garden everything that is best in the forms of *Syringa vulgaris* can be found in not over a dozen of the single-flowered and a dozen of the double-flowered forms. The Arboretum does not undertake to name the twenty-four best varieties. The selection must be left to the person who is going to plant them for no two persons agree about Lilac-flowers. There are already between one hundred and sixty and one hundred and seventy named varieties of this Lilac in the Arboretum collection. The flowers are fast opening, and the best way for persons living in the neighborhood of Boston to make their selection is to study the Arboretum collection, and make notes on the color and size of the flowers and the size and shape of the flower-clusters.

In planting Lilacs it must be remembered that plants on their own roots are superior to those which have been grafted on other varieties of the common Lilac, for Lilacs produce many root-suckers. These often grow vigorously, so that a person who buys a fine named variety may in a few years find that the suckers from the root on which it was grafted have overpowered and killed his named variety, or that he has a bush producing on different branches flowers of his original purchase and of the stock. Nurserymen also use the Privet as a stock on which to graft Lilacs. This is a better stock than the Lilac for if it produces suckers they are easily recognized and can be removed, and if the grafted plants are set deep Lilac roots are soon produced. Privet-stock is strongly advocated by many good growers of Lilacs but others still believe that the best plants are raised from cuttings which can be made in winter from hard wood, but best from the soft wood taken in late June or early July. No one should ever buy a Lilac plant grafted on the root of another Lilac.

The Persian Lilac, the *Syringa persica* of botanists, was known in England as early as 1658. This is a beautiful, hardy plant with slender, drooping, wide-spreading branches, narrower leaves than those of the common Lilac, and small fragrant, lavender-colored flowers in short compact clusters. There is a variety with white flowers and another with laciniately lobed leaves. For many years it was universally believed that because Linnaeus had named it *Syringa persica* this plant was a native of Persia or of some country adjacent to Persia. Meyer, collecting in China for the Department of Agriculture of the United

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