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

States, found in 1915 quantities of a Lilac covering hillsides in Kansu. Plants raised from seeds of this Lilac have flowered and proved identical with the lobed leaf form of *Syringa persica* and as the plants have grown stronger they produce branches with the entire leaves of the type of the species. Since 1915 the Arboretum has also received dried specimens of this Lilac collected in Kansu. As a specimen of a wild plant from Persia is not to be found in the large European herbaria, there is every reason to believe that the Persian Lilac is a Chinese plant, brought from China to western Asia and Europe just as the Peach and other Chinese plants found their way westward.

Fifty years ago the species of *Syringa* known in this country were *Syringa vulgaris*, *S. persica*, the Hungarian *S. Josikaea*, the Himalayan *S. Emodii*, and the Chinese *S. oblata* and *S. amurensis*, and two hybrids. Now there are twenty-seven species growing here with a few varieties and nearly all the known hybrids. In addition to these are a few species or perhaps forms which have been described by botanists but not yet introduced into cultivation. Of the twenty-seven species now in this country, twenty-two have been introduced by the Arboretum. Among these Arboretum introductions there are several beautiful and important garden plants. Among them for many persons the best is

***Syringa pubescens*.** This is a tall shrub with erect stems, small leaves and broad clusters of small, pale mauve flowers with a long slender corolla-tube. For their fragrance which is more pungent and delightful than that of the flower of any other Lilac, *Syringa pubescens* should find a place in every northern garden. Plants in the United States have failed to produce seeds and as this species has proved unusually difficult to increase by cuttings, it has remained one of the rarest Lilacs in American gardens. It can, of course, be increased by grafting and sooner or later fertile seeds will be found on some of the large plants growing in the Arboretum. *Syringa pubescens* has been growing in the Arboretum since 1883 where it was raised from seeds sent here by Dr. Bretschneider from Peking.

Syringa villosa is another first rate garden plant for which the United States is also indebted to Dr. Bretschneider. It is a large, round-topped bush from ten to twelve feet tall and wide, with large, broad, elliptic to oblong leaves, bright green and dull on the upper surface and pale below, a broad or narrow cluster of flesh colored or nearly white flowers which have the rather disagreeable odor of those of the Privet. In spite of this drawback *S. villosa* is a good garden plant; the habit is excellent; it flowers freely every year and the flowers do not open until those of most other Lilacs have faded.

Syringa Sweginzowii is a native of northwestern China and came to the Arboretum by the way of St. Petersburg. It is a narrow shrub with slender erect branches, narrow leaves and long narrow clusters of slightly fragrant flowers, flesh-colored in the bud and becoming white after opening, with a long slender corolla tube. The relationship of this Lilac which flowers profusely every year, is with *S. pubescens* but it is a smaller plant blooming ten or twelve days later and the flowers are much less fragrant. As it grows in the Arboretum, *S. Sweginzowii* is one of the handsomest of the Lilacs of recent introduction.

1923. "The Persian Lilac." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 9(5), 18–19. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.321335>.

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