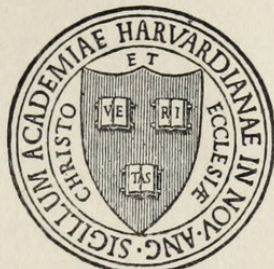


ARNOLD ARBORETUM

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Lilacs. Judging by the number of persons who visit the Arboretum when the Lilacs are in bloom, these are still more popular than any other group of shrubs here. The Lilac for the general public means the varieties of *Syringa vulgaris* which reached England from Constantinople in 1597. When it was first brought to the United States is unfortunately not known, and the earliest mention of it in American literature is the fact that it was sent by the Quaker Peter Collinson to John Bartram in Philadelphia in 1735. Washington, who probably obtained his plants from Bartram, planted it at Mount Vernon as early as 1785 and the descendants from these plants are still growing there, although Virginia is too far south for this shrub to really succeed there. There are plants on Bussey Hill in the Arboretum planted along one of the garden walks probably more than one hundred years ago. These plants flower well and are interesting as they represent the Lilac of old gardens as our ancestors enjoyed them before they were changed and sometimes improved by selection and hybridization by skilful gardeners in Europe and the United States. Until a few years ago it was believed that *Syringa vulgaris* was a native of western Asia but it has now been discovered growing apparently as a wild plant on the high mountains of Bulgaria. Plants raised from seeds collected in Bulgaria from these wild plants are growing in the Arboretum collection. The common Lilac is a cold country plant, and judging by the growth here the climate of Massachusetts even is not cold enough for them. Better plants can be seen in old gardens near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, than can be found near Boston, and the largest plants known to the Arboretum were growing a few years ago on

an island in Lake Superior where there were tree-like specimens thirty to forty feet high and nearly as much through their round-topped heads. Of the important varieties there are now two hundred named sorts in the Arboretum, a few of which have not flowered here yet. There are probably a larger number of these named varieties in the municipal parks of Rochester, New York, where a great deal of attention has been paid to the Lilac Collection. Many of these named varieties can hardly be distinguished from each other as they resemble each other too closely, and a selection of twenty or twenty-five varieties is all that is needed in any private collection to include everything that is best among these plants, both those with single and double, purple, red and white flowers. The Arboretum used to publish a list of the varieties which were considered here the most beautiful, but this plan is now given up for the selection of these plants depends on individual taste. They are all hardy, all have practically the same habit and foliage, and only differ in their flowers. 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 good stock for 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 recommended by many good growers of Lilacs but others still believe that the best plants are raised from cuttings which can be made from hard wood but better 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.

Syringa persica. 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 Linnæus 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. *Syringa Josikaea*, the second of the European Lilacs to reach American gardens is this Hun-



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