Now is Lilac time in the Arboretum. On a sloping bank on the left hand side of Bussey Hill Road, entering from the Forest Hills Gate, several hundreds of Lilac bushes are putting forth their blossoms. Of the twenty-eight recognized species of Lilac twenty may be seen growing there and with them about 150 named varieties that have originated in gardens. There also may be seen the parents of the Common Lilac with the improved varieties which have resulted from the skill of plant breeders in France, in Germany, and in this country. The Lilac is the favorite flowering shrub of the people of this part of America and every year they flock in thousands to the feast of blossom the Arboretum affords. Perfect hardiness, suitability to the climate, abundant blossoms, and pleasing fragrance are the attributes of this most excellent plant. The flowers may be single or double, pure white or varying in color from pale lilac-purple and almost pink to rich shades of purplish crimson; in some they are nearly blue. The shades grade imperceptibly into one another and the English language is not rich enough to define the color tones exactly. Neither do the different color charts help much since without having one in hand to match the blossoms the terms employed are meaningless. The flowers, hundreds together, are borne in more or less upright thyrsoid panicles each often a foot or more tall, and in a well-flowered bush every shoot terminates in a cluster. Forms of the Common Lilac are exceedingly numerous and every year sees them added to, although it is doubtful if many are real improvements on existing sorts. In no flower does personal taste play a more important part and the only way to make a satisfactory selection is for those interested to visit the collection and jot down the names of the sorts that most appeal to them.

Lilacs are of simple culture but they demand a rich, well-drained soil. The so-called French hybrids, which are selections and seminal variants of the Common Lilac, in particular will not flourish in a situation where the roots are waterlogged during the winter months. Good air and root drainage are essential; they love a rich loamy soil and enjoy lime. If the latter be naturally absent, it can be added in the

View This Item Online: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/217000
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322032
Permalink: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/322032

Holding Institution
Harvard University Botany Libraries

Sponsored by
BHL-SIL-FEDLINK

Copyright & Reuse
Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.
Rights Holder: Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University
License: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Rights: https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions

This document was created from content at the Biodiversity Heritage Library, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org.