



# George Landis Arboretum

## NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by the Friends of the Arboretum

Volume 1, Number 3

July, August, September 1982

### THE ARBORETUM'S NEW LILACS

This summer the Arboretum registered six new lilac cultivars, of Russian parentage, with the Royal Botanic Gardens of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, which is the international registrar for new lilac varieties.

In 1964 the Arboretum obtained from the Alma-Ata Botanic Garden of the USSR seeds of two Russian cultivars, 'The Cheat' and 'Caprice'. After the usual vagaries of mice damage in the nursery and other woes, the seedlings began to blossom in 1974.

'The Cheat' was one of the hybrids developed by L. A. Kolesnikov, most famous of the Russian breeders. I have never seen it in flower, but there is a description of it in the Russian book on lilacs by Gromov. I have seen some of Kolesnikov's hybrids, and one, 'Glory of Moscow', I consider the most beautiful lilac I have ever seen. 'The Cheat' is described as a large panicle double purple lilac with a bluish cast to the center of the florets. It was named 'The Cheat' because in the USSR test gardens its color varied somewhat from year to year. None of our seedlings have shown this eccentricity.

We have been able to find no information about 'Caprice'. It probably is a double pink-fading-to-blue variety, perhaps with 'Belle de Nancy' in its ancestry.

All of 'The Cheat' seedlings had great vigor, with heavy stems and firm dark green heavy leaves. In flower they impressed at once by the large size of the panicles and florets and their brilliant color, deep red-purple in bud, dark purple when open with a bluish cast to the short inner petals of the double florets. Presumably 'Charles Joly' is in their ancestry, for some of the seedlings show the two-division upright panicle of that variety. After six years of evaluation, we finally selected what we considered the three best for registration. 'George Landis' is a vigorous upright bush, blossoming late and always heavily, with for the most part the two-division panicle of 'Charles Joly', but the average panicle much larger than those of 'Charles Joly'. So far it has never suckered.

'Van Loveland' is a slightly more spreading bush, blossoming early, not quite so dark purple, with a completely differently shaped panicle, many branchlets, the whole huge panicle nearly as wide as tall. It suckers slightly.

'Esperance' has been slower growing. It is still a fairly small upright bush but its huge upright panicles are the largest of those of any of the seedlings, and its color as brilliant as any.

The nearest to these three among the older French hybrids is 'Paul Thirion'.



There was one single among the lot of seedlings, and although we have not registered it, it is an impressive lilac, about the color of 'Mrs. W.E. Marshall', but with much larger panicles and florets.

The seedlings of 'Caprice' were in the first years slightly tender, but once well rooted and in the field, they have been perfectly hardy. They have thinner branch structure and very light green leaves. Some are single, some semi-double. At first they seemed to be over-shadowed by 'The Cheat' seedlings, but over the test years their luxuriance of blossom has been so impressive that we have come to look at them now with great respect.

Of these we have registered three, 'Mohawk', 'Catskill', and 'Schoharie'.

'Mohawk' has been the slowest grower, but this may be because of its yearly wealth of bloom, to which it gives so much vigor. This past spring the bush was completely covered with flowers, one of the top sights in the lilac collection. It is single, purplish-pink in bud, opening to violet, and as it fades turns to a clear blue similar to the color of 'President Lincoln'. So far it has not suckered.

'Catskill' has been the most vigorous of the 'Caprice' seedlings. It is a wide-spreading, medium tall bush, with large panicles of small florets, reddish-purple in bud, opening to light pink-purple, all this against very light green leaves. It suckers.

'Schoharie' lies in color between the pink of 'Catskill' and the blue of 'Mohawk'. It is semi-double, with 6-7 petals. It, too, is a heavy bloomer, and does not sucker.

In the last three years we have been propagating a few young plants of each of these varieties, which we have sold at our annual Rare Plant Sale. We do not yet have enough for general distribution, but we will be glad to furnish cuttings of any of them to institutions at the time of year desired. - Fred Lape, Director

## RHODODENDRON CULTURE IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

An individual new to the Friends of the Landis Arboretum expressed surprise that rhododendrons can be grown successfully in this section of N.Y. State. We asked Richard Southwick, who is experienced and expert in the field, to describe rhododendron culture as it applies to this area.

(If readers wish to have a particular question answered or a particular subject covered in these pages, please contact the editor.)

-----

Rhododendrons can be successfully cultured in and around the capital district with little difficulty if a few cultural conditions are provided.

James Wells, a well-known rhododendron propagator and nurseryman, offered the following suggestions to his customers:

"Selection of Site: Avoid a planting position which provides any extreme. A very exposed position, very windy or hot and dry should be avoided. Light dappled shade from nearby evergreen or deciduous trees is excellent. With these limitations Rhododendrons can be planted almost everywhere.

Preparing the Soil: Rhododendrons require an acid soil, plenty of humus and good drainage. These three things are essential. Most soils in this area are naturally acid. If you are not certain have it tested or ask for advice on how best to make it so. Humus should be added in the form of Michigan type peat so that the planting mixture is at least 50% peat and 50% top soil. If drainage is in doubt do not plant the plant in the soil at all but set it on top of the soil and cover the



ball with ample quantities of suitable planting medium - soil peat mixture. If the soil is well drained, a hole should be prepared which is twice as wide as the plant ball and twice as deep. Throw away the subsoil and replace with Michigan type peat. Mix well and set the plant in this mixture so that the ball is covered with about 1" of new soil, certainly no more. Deep planting can be disastrous. Water in well. Do not use any fertilizer when planting.

**Mulching:** Immediately after planting is complete, an area about 2 ft. wide around the plant should be covered with a mulch of any coarse humus material such as pine bark, wood chips or pine needles 2" deep. Peat moss is not a good mulch.

**Fertilizing:** No fertilizer should be given until the plant has rerooted. This usually requires at least 6 weeks. Fertilize them in very small quantities. Never a lot at any one time. A 10-10-10 dry fertilizer at the rate of one level tablespoon per plant can be applied at monthly intervals. If you prefer a good soluble fertilizer, one such as Rapid Grow can be used. Apply as directed once every three weeks. Fertilizing should commence as soon as the ground is free of frost and continue until the ground freezes in late autumn. Do not over-fertilize.

**Subsequent Care:** All plants will respond to additional protection through the winter. A few ever-green branches stuck into the ground around the plant in late October or early November will greatly improve the quality of the plant the following spring. All dead flowers should be removed immediately after they have faded, and this is the correct time to prune the plant in order to maintain a pleasing and compact shape. Do not wait until the plant has grown out of shape so that you have to prune drastically."

In addition, I would suggest fall watering just before the ground freezes if fall rains are late.

Some of the more easily cultured plants for beginners are: PJM, a very early bloomer, fast grower and very hardy; 'Purple Gem', a dwarf plant and very floriferous; Catawba seedlings or hybrids commonly sold by local nurseries and garden centers. - Richard Southwick

## IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Ralph Plauth of Altamont, a longtime supporter of the Landis Arboretum, died recently. Mr. Plauth was especially interested in the Arboretum's azalea and rhododendron collection. Friends of Mr. Plauth who wished to remember him in a special way were asked by the family to make a contribution to the George Landis Arboretum. The Trustees and Friends of the Arboretum are deeply grateful.



## NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

### STEERING COMMITTEE

Two subcommittees of the Friends Steering Committee met recently, one committee to develop a simple organizational structure for the Friends of the Arboretum, and the other committee to develop specific fund raising projects for the Friends organization.

Pending approval by the Trustees of the Landis Arboretum, an organizational structure will be recommended, and a meeting date for all Friends of the Arboretum will be announced in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter.



The Friends Steering Committee has recommended, pending Trustee approval, that the Friends designate and arrange a barn cleanup day as its first project, followed by an auction sale of specific items from the barn. Proceeds from the auction would go in part to the Arboretum directly, and in part to the Friends to help finance projects designed to generate further financial and volunteer support for the Arboretum.

In order to supplement sale items from the barn, the Friends Steering Committee suggests that some readers of this Newsletter may have related items (old hand tools, garden tools, field tools, tack, crocks, etc.) that they might wish to donate for auction for the benefit of the Arboretum.

The initial long range goals recommended by the subcommittee include financial support of this Newsletter and renovation of the barn, which is so much of the fabric of Oak Nose Farm, the site of the Arboretum, the renovation of which would provide a reception and meeting center for the Arboretum.

LOOK FOR A FLYER SOON WITH FURTHER INFORMATION, AND WITH DATES FOR BARN CLEANUP AND THE BARN SALE.



## HUMANITY

(Reprinted from GARDEN OF TREES AND SHRUBS, Fred Lape, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1965.)

"Certainly any member of an arboretum's personnel who likes humanity as well as he likes plants will find among the arboretum's public the more likable portion of humanity. Many individual visitors here have become my friends, and many of whom I have met only once have left an enduring memory of their visit. I recall three ladies,

past middle age and not afraid of walking, who on a wet May morning during the early years of the arboretum, went around and came back with wet feet, but pleased. One of them said, "I'd like to see that beech section when the trees have grown up. They're so beautiful even when young." She knew she would never see it, nor would I, but the dream of those grown trees was in both of our minds.

"And there was another visitor, a lady also past middle age, with a loud voice and a determined stride. She arrived with two gentlemen, left the parking lot, and strode toward the flower gardens. I still keep a vegetable garden, and, I confess, do not keep it well. She made her first sally down the middle of it, identifying the vegetables for her escorts: "Broccoli...corn...cauliflower...dill." Nothing pleased her. The corn was poor, she said. It was. The broccoli had been let go to flower. She had seen better squash. The lettuce had gone to seed. The gladioli along the edge of the vegetable garden were at the end of their blooming. "Too tall and lanky," she called out. Then she came to the dahlias, which were in full flower. She liked dahlias, and these made her pause. She went among them inspecting the individual flowers, calling them by name, and I could tell that she was thawing. By the time she reached the annual gardens, which were in good shape, she was well thawed, and she led her two males through them, scattering identifications and words of praise, with still a few words of distaste. Finally they all came to the lawn, where I was working at a table. I invited them to sit down, and they did, and she talked, decisive in all her speech, but widely traveled and knowing plants well. Now I could see the flinty humor in her eyes. She departed after a while, leaving me pleased with her, and I hope she too was pleased with me. I like to think of her now with her vigorous stride, going around the world to other gardens, putting the careless and mediocre in its place, and giving full credit to the deserving, like the traveling English ladies of the nineteenth century."



## FRIENDS OF THE GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM

1982-83

Nicholas Argyros	Byron and Margaret Hipple
Dr. and Mrs. David Baldwin	Mrs. John Hogan
Fred and Marilyn Barnes	James and Gloria Hunter
Mrs. William Barnet	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hurst
Muriel and Louis Barron	Joan Johnson
Jane Barton	Velma Jones
Wayne and Ann B'Rells	Mrs. William Jordan
Harold Bieber	Carol Kirk
Margaret Biener	Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence Kolb
Josephine Biondo	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Laing
Constance and Hector Blair	Fred Lape
Gary Bogart	Mrs. R.J. Lapham
John Bousman	Richard and Margaret Law
Merrill and Henry Bousman	Gilliam Lindt
William Boyce	Katherine Lippitt
Stanley and Dorothea Brown	Jesus Lopez
Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Burns	Maynard Loux
John Bush, Jr.	Dr. Currie D. Marr
J. Canning	Eleanor McHugh
Audrey and Donald Christman	Margaret Meier
Robert Clark	Edyth Meserand
Thomas Clarke	Martin and Betsy Meyer
Carmine Clemente	Kenyon Miers
Nelson Collamer	George Mileski
Forest Corbin	Charles Monthie
John and Louise Daniels	Dr. and Mrs. Frank Moore
Agnes DeKay	Dale Morgan
Charles and Ruth Estey	Philip Mudge
Ada Felch	Evelyn Murray
Fran and Herman Finkbeiner	Linda Myers
Mary Ann Finley	Dorothy Naple
Paul Fleishman	Virginia Oliver
Mr. and Mrs. J. Perry Fraser	Robert and Joyce Overholtzer
Deborah Friedman	Elizabeth Plauth
Mr. and Mrs. James Gage	Mary and Joseph Pokorny
Arthur Garland	Earl Pudney
Doris Gdula	Ronald Pulliam
Dr. Alfred Gilbert	Clara Radtke
Eleanor Gochanour	Marietta Rapaso
Mr. and Mrs. Ephraim Goodman	Carinne Rasmussen
Linda Greenwald	Dr. and Mrs. Robert Raymond
Norma Griffeth	Shirley Redington
George Habetler	Margaret Reilly
Richard and Patricia Halsey	Norma Rhodes
Janet and Philip Hawkes	Sayla Ruscitto
Mrs. John Hecox	Mrs. Robert Russell, Jr.



Ditte Sayers  
John Schaffer  
Gwendolyn and Foster Scott  
Max Shaul  
Barbara Shields  
Virginia Shite  
Marie Shore  
Richard Southwick, Sr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sponable  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Stewart  
Carl Taeubner  
Betsy Thompson  
Margaret and Frederick Tubbs  
Sidney Urbach  
Mary Van Oosten  
Hugo and Grace Von Linden  
Frank and Ina Vrugtman  
Frederick Watts, Jr.  
Mrs. A.B. Wellborn  
Mary and W.F. Westendorp  
John White  
Stuart White  
Carol Wock  
Frederick Wood  
L. and D. Wood  
Charles Wooley

American Rock Garden Society, Adirondack Chapter  
AT&T Long Lines, Cultural Matching Gifts Program  
Caduceus Garden Club  
Central National Bank, Canajoharie  
Country Garden Club  
Dana Natural History Society  
D.A.R., Hannakrois Chapter  
Dutch Valley Garden Club  
Gardeners Workshop  
Guilderland Garden Club  
Hugh Plat Garden Club  
Indian Creek Garden Club  
Indoor Light Gardening Society, Hudson-Mohawk Chapter  
~~Lionel~~ Power Technologies, Inc.  
Louise Beebe Wilder Garden Club  
Monday Garden Group  
Niskayuna Garden Club  
Sterling Insurance Company  
West Hill Garden Club

The listing is current to August 25, 1982. If you find an error, an addition or correction, notify the editor.

## NEW

The new structure on the Landis Arboretum grounds is a 20' x 30' concrete block building built to provide fireproof housing for the Arboretum library and herbarium. The finished building will have a 5,000 volume capacity, space for Arboretum herbarium cases, and for two tables for the use of the director and researchers. The building, which provides needed security for Arboretum volumes, was made possible largely by donations from Fred Lape, Director, Robert Clark, and Mabel Harkenss in memory of Bernard Harkness.

Two green and white 36" x 90" signs erected by N.Y.S. Department of Transportation now direct both east- and westbound travelers from Route 20 to the George Landis Arboretum.



## BITS AND PIECES

Do remember the Potluck Picnic, 2-4 p.m., Sunday, September 12 at the Landis Arboretum - and bring a friend or two. Friends who attended the June picnic enjoyed the event so much that we're doing it again. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert, and celebrate the last bit of summer by dining at the Landis Arboretum.



Please sign the visitor's register EACH time you visit the Arboretum. A clear indication of the number of visitors to the Arboretum is particularly helpful supporting material for grant applications and other fund raising endeavors.



Hal Bieber of the Telephone Pioneers of America needs a bit of volunteer help to prepare the Arboretum for winter. If you can give him a hand on the second or third weekends of October to put up protective deer fences around trees and shrubs, telephone Hal on 869-9397.



"Through the Year at the Landis Arboretum," is available as a 30-slide presentation with an 18 minute taped narrative, or as an 80-slide, in-person presentation by Margaret Law, Arboretum Trustee. Organizations wishing to use one of these slide presentations as a program may phone Mrs. Richard Law, 463-5256. There is no charge for use of the program.



## PLANTS THAT MERIT ATTENTION

The Horticultural Committee of The Garden Club of America announced the initiation of a project which will identify worthwhile species and cultivars of trees, shrubs and ground covers that are not generally available for landscape use. The program, which responds to the need for greater diversity in plant materials, focuses not only on aesthetics but also on tolerance to increasing environmental stresses. Regional adaptability is a major consideration of the program.

Nurseries, botanical institutions and individuals who know of such plants are urged to join in the project and share their knowledge with others. The project will produce a manual of Plants that Merit Attention. This Manual will bring to the attention of growers, designers and consumers, an expanded list of superior plants that are particularly suited to specific environmental conditions. Anyone wishing to suggest plants for this project should contact: Mrs. Edward King Poor III, 595 Cedar Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093.



\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* If you have forgotten to renew \*  
 \* your membership in the George Landis \*  
 \* Arboretum, make your check payable \*  
 \* to George Landis Arboretum, and mail \*  
 \* it to the arboretum in Esperance, NY \*  
 \* 12066. You may be a Friend for \$10- \*  
 \* 25, a Sponsor for \$25-50, a Suppor- \*  
 \* ting Member for \$50-100, or a Patron \*  
 \* for \$100 or more - and it is tax \*  
 \* deductible. Do it now. We appre- \*  
 \* ciate your support. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## DISTINCT BLOSSOMING TIMES OF POTENTILLA FRUTICOSA VARIETIES

The Arboretum has had several clones of *Potentilla fruticosa*, the bush Cinquefoil with yellow flowers. All of the ones purchased from nurseries or received from other arboretums blossom in May and then infrequently throughout the summer. But one plant, collected about 1952 in the east section of the Berkshires of Massachusetts, growing in large quantities in an open field and seemingly native, has consistently blossomed only in August. It is a vigorous bush, about a yard high, and spreading, and at its blossoming time is covered with flowers. I have never seen published a description of a variety of *Potentilla fruticosa* the blossoming of which is limited to only this period of late summer, and would be glad to have any information about similar plants. - Fred Lape

Publishing deadlines are the first of February, May, August, and November. You may write or phone me at the address below.

Fran Finkbeiner, Editor  
 River View at Sugar Hill  
 RD 2, Box 322  
 Rexford, NY 12148  
 (518) 371-9145



GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM  
 Lape Road  
 P.O. Box 242  
 Esperance, NY 12066

Non-Profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Esperance, NY  
 Permit No. 6