

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

November 30, 1956

The fourth session of the Sixth Annual Meeting convened at 1:50 p.m. President Scanlon presiding.

PRESIDENT SCANLON: The program this afternoon is a panel discussion on the "Propagation of Hybrid Lilacs by Cuttings and Other Methods." There are five speakers on the panel. Questions will be deferred until all of the speakers have finished, then your questions can be directed to any of the panel members.

The first speaker is John Sjulin, of the Inter-State Nurseries, Hamburg, Iowa.

Mr. Sjulin presented his talk entitled "Propagation of Hybrid Lilacs by Cuttings." (Applause).

PROPAGATION OF HYBRID LILACS FROM CUTTINGS

JOHN J. SJULIN
Inter-State Nurseries
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It is our opinion that Lilacs grown on their own roots are superior to lilacs which are budded or grafted on some other rootstock. We believe they grow into better plants and also the troubles which are experienced from incompatibility and hardness of rootstocks are eliminated.

However, our early attempts to root lilacs from cuttings were unsuccessful, then about ten years ago we learned from Mr. Albert Swanson, now deceased, but at that time head propagator for the Mount Arbor Nurseries, that the time of taking lilac cuttings was the main reason for his success in rooting. This suggestion from Mr. Swanson, plus much work and observation by our propagator, Mr. Charles Woodworth, has brought us more success in rooting lilacs. I would like to say at this point, that we are not always entirely successful in rooting lilac cuttings. Some varieties, such as Firmament and Pres. Falliers, absolutely refuse to root for us.

Our procedure for rooting lilacs is this: we construct cold frames in the usual manner, except they are twelve inches deeper in the ground than our ordinary frames. The frames run in an East-West direction and they are built of wood. We consider it very important that the frames be constructed of wood because it allows the sash to fit tighter on the frame. Mr. Woodworth considers this seal between sash and frame to be fully as important as proper timing in taking the cuttings. In fact, we put several layers of creped saturated kraft paper over the top edge of the frame for the sash to set down on in order to make even a better seal. The total depth of our frames on the inside is seventeen inches on the South edge with the frames being two inches higher on the North edge. The frames are above the level of the ground only

five inches on the South and seven inches on the North. Therefore, even with five inches of sand in the frame, our five to six inch cuttings are below the level of the ground. We believe this results in an air condition which is necessary for rooting lilacs.

Our rooting medium is three parts sand and two parts vermiculite. We use a total of five inches of rooting medium. We do not tamp the medium.

Following the advice of Mr. Swanson, we take our cuttings just as soon as the terminal buds are formed. In our case, this is usually from the middle to end of May. We have tried taking cuttings earlier and they always failed. We have taken cuttings two or three weeks after the terminal buds were formed and the stand was reduced.

We make cuttings only from the terminal growth. The cuttings are five to six inches long and are cut to a node. The bottom leaves are removed and the remaining leaves are folded in half and trimmed to a point, leaving about half of the original surface.

The cuttings are dipped in Hormodin Powder No. 3 and are stuck two inches deep in the medium. The cuttings are thoroughly watered in and the sash is put on making sure the seal between frame and sash is tight. Lath shades are put on with a brick placed between shade and sash. Burlap is rolled on the frames from eight to five o'clock. We water the cuttings every morning.

The sash is kept tight until the cuttings are rooted, this time will depend on varieties and ranges from one to two and a half months. As soon as the cuttings are rooted, the sash is raised one half inch for four days, then it is raised two inches for two days and then the sash is removed. The lath shades are left on and the burlap is rolled on for another five days.

We carry the rooted lilac cuttings in the cold frames until the following Spring. The cuttings are fed once during August and once during September with a soluble fertilizer. During the winter the frames are covered with straw. Paper is rolled out on top of the shades and the straw is put on the paper about 8 inches deep. We do not want straw to fall down among the cuttings. As early as possible in the spring the rooted cuttings are potted and after four weeks in the pot they are ready to be lined out in the field. We have tried planting them bare-rooted early in the Spring but we have found that late Spring freezes will kill many of the cuttings.

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PRESIDENT SCANLON: Thank you, John, for this interesting discussion of rooting lilacs. The second speaker, this afternoon, is Donald Wedge, Wedge Nurseries, Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Mr. Wedge presented his paper entitled "How We Propagate French Lilacs at the Wedge Nursery." (Applause).