

required strength of hormones mixed in talc and reducing this powder to the required level by adding an equal quantity by volume of 10% Captan.

MODERATOR MCDANIEL: Thank you very much, Jim. Our next speaker will be Mr. Al Lowenfels, Willow Lake Farm, White Plains, New York.

## LILACS, SECOND YEAR FROM CUTTINGS

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Because of the presence of so many learned and noted botanists, this talk should have said "*Syringa*." But just being a plain propagator I use the common name. My inspiration for raising lilacs from cuttings came from reading a pamphlet by Kirkpatrick issued at least 20 years ago by Boyce Thompson, Yonkers, N.Y. Aside from that I find very little in the literature on propagating lilacs from cuttings. Bailey, in his classical nursery manual, gave various methods of propagation and said "Green cuttings handled in frames in the spring and summer are used," and he also mentions that mature wood would grow. Well, I'm not able to root summer cuttings or mature wood. Mahlstedt and Haber give one line on lilacs, showing spring and summer as the best time for green lilacs. Hartman and Kester give almost a page to lilacs including green cuttings taken early in spring, but remark, "due to the fact that cuttings must be taken at a definite time in the spring at the peak of the nurseryman's busy season, some commercial propagators practice grafting."

Well — I do not see where propagators are any busier in early May than any other time — and I do not think grafting is as good as own rooted plants. Putting lilac on lilac should be against the law. Putting them on privet means a battle with privet suckers, in a fair number of instances. Some growers, such as Heard of Des Moines, put lilac on Ash — but having rooted lilac cuttings for some years, I think this is the best method. Kirkpatrick told me that the best time to take the cuttings is when the terminal bud is unfolding, when the joint with the main stem is somewhat sticky — and that this joint should be included. My experiments show that this is correct. I have been unable to root lilac cuttings without this joint.

Last year I took my first cuttings on April 28th. I made 960 cuttings of about 25 varieties of hybrids and my list (which I will be glad to show anyone) shows 38 different plantings. This year I stuck the cuttings in perlite which was on top of peat moss. My last cuttings were made on June 12th. I used Hormodin #3 and had Captan on some — I didn't find this made much difference. I got 579 rooted cuttings. I think I would have had more except that on one very hot May day, my mist

system was turned off through an error. I used an electronic leaf, English device, which I showed at a previous meeting and which I find most satisfactory, for all my propagation. My cuttings are in a greenhouse with bottom electric cable heat at around 65 to 70 degrees. I believe that green lilac wood can be rooted without a greenhouse, but that full sunlight, mist, and bottom heat are essential.

During the past year, Roger Coggeshall had an article in the trade paper in which he showed good results with cuttings taken later. But my experience is that the earlier cuttings are much better than the later, harder ones. Also that the thin spindly cuttings root with more ease than the heavy sturdier ones. I used to put rooted cuttings into plant bands, but thanks to a talk with Jack Hill at one of the meetings, I now put them right out in the open. (I use a shader.) You can see they have made new growth which is most important to get sizeable plants sooner and to help winter the plants over. I show you a cutting made last May, and one the previous May, which is the lilac the 2nd year from a cutting. Note the sturdy root system.

A publication called *Lilacs for America* should help anyone interested in lilacs. The first edition was in 1941 and it was revised and republished in 1953. The work was done by a committee headed by Dr. Wister — and the book shows a lot of it. A list of the 100 best lilacs according to those who should know — classified by color and whether single or double. A long list of all the lilacs that have been named, a list of nurseries who carry lilacs, public gardens where lilacs can be seen, etc. The book costs just \$1.00 and I have a copy here which I'll gladly show anyone. While we have peony, holly, rose and many other societies devoted to single species, I do not think there is any U.S. Lilac Society. There should be — for everyone loves a fine spray of lilacs — and I find that the plants sell better than any other deciduous shrub.

MODERATOR MCDANIEL: Thank you, Al. Next we shall hear from Steve O'Rourke who will tell us about Arcillite as a soil amendment.

## **ARCILLITE AS A SOIL AMENDMENT IN POTTING MIXTURES**

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Practical plantmen have always used certain soil amendments to "lighten" soil for pot and container growing. Organic matter such as peat moss, leaf mold and compost and inorganic materials like sand, cinders, perlite and vermiculite are frequently used. One of the more recent materials to be employed is arcillite, a montmorillonite clay which has been calcined at high