

## Syringa - Growing Guide

### Growing Syringa

#### *Lilac*

Lilacs are very traditional features of English country gardens and are generally grown for their heavily scented flowers which can be enjoyed in close proximity to a path. They can readily be split into two distinct categories; *S. vulgaris*, or the common lilac which comes in many different flower colours which have been cultivated and bred over many years, and other species of lilac which have more variable growth sizes and habits as well as rather differently formed flower clusters.

All lilacs have in common conical or pyramidal panicles of fragrant tubular flowers.

Lilacs can be grown in a shrub border or as freestanding specimen trees in a lawn or woodland garden. Common lilacs grow up to around 20ft but can grow much larger in great age. They are not at all adverse to a severe chopping back from time to time to shape them up and rejuvenate them to produce more flowers on the new (not old) growth as they do.

Common lilacs grow well in acidic or alkaline soil conditions and flower best in full sun. The most common method of propagation is from greenwood cuttings in summer, but some lilacs can only be reproduced by grafting. Seed is quite easily germinated in a cold frame and can be sown in the autumn or spring. However, if your garden, or those of your neighbours', grows different coloured forms of common lilac then the seed will probably be a mixture and not come true to the colour of the seed parent.

We offer the following common lilac varieties as established plants of flowering size (normally) in 3, 4 or 5L pots. All these varieties flower in late spring and on into early summer (April to June).

'Carpe Diem' has pinkish-mauve semi-double flowers opening light blue and fading to light mauve.

'Charles Jolly' is a double red-purple in flower.

'Katherine Havemeyer' has purple buds and double lavender-blue flowers.

'Madame Lemoine' is a double white.

'Michel Buchner' is a double mauve.

'Primrose' has pale yellow single flowers.

'Sensation' has white edging to its reddish-purple flowers.

The other lilac species are rather more variable:

*S. emodii* 'Aureovariegata' is an upright bushy growing shrub with attractive yellow centres to its large green leaves. This Himalayan lilac has huge, long, pale lilac-coloured flowers in profusion in May or June which fade to white. This species seeds heavily with us and does not flower well until established.

*S. meyeri* 'Palibin', the Korean lilac, grows to only about 5ft in height with a similar rounded spread. It is fairly slow growing. It has lavender-pink flowers in dense panicles in late spring and early summer. Highly fragrant!

*S. microphylla* 'Superba' (Daphne lilac) forms a bushy shrub with us where we actually use it in the herbaceous border. It has rose pink flowers and, after the initial flush of flowers on the new growth, you usually get secondary autumn flowers. Our stock plant grows no more than 4ft tall with a similar spread.

*S. pinnatifolia* is a rather unique species that can fool you into wondering what it is. It grows as an open upright shrub with us to 10-12ft and has attractive peeling bark which shows up well in winter. It also has pinnate dark green leaves with up to 11 lance-shaped leaflets on each leaf. It flowers before the leaves appear and much earlier in the year than other lilacs. The flowers are fragrant and white from a distance but slightly

flushed pink close to. It is a collector's lilac which can be used to puzzle your gardening friends with exactly what it is. The author was certainly caught out in this way when he first saw this plant in Ireland.



Syringa pinnata



Syringa pinnata

*S. sweginzowii* is an upright shrub, also growing to about 12ft, with long lance-shaped leaves and lilac-pink flowers in upright panicles. An interesting and less well-known species.

## Removing Suckers On Grafted Syringa - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/FgQqCr1-6ml>

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