Lilac shrubs in the parks of Timisoara

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Abstract  *Lilac* is one of the frequent shrub species that can be found in the streets and green spaces of Timisoara. There are many parks and private domains in the town where you can find this species in greater or smaller numbers. It was always very common in the yards of the town. Generally speaking lilac shrubs are a usual presence in the green spaces of Central Europe, because of their nice flowers without being excessively sensible or very expensive.

*Syringa genus* (Lilac)

Lilacs are prized for their upright to arching panicles of small, highly fragrant flowers, which are massed in loose heads. They appear from mid-spring and range in color from white and pale yellow to all shades of pink, mauve and purple. Most of the common garden varieties of *Syringa vulgaris* were raised in France in the late 1800s, though new forms appear from time to time; not all cultivars are fragrant. The genus contains about 20 species, all deciduous shrubs and trees from Europe and northeastern Asia. Most bushes reach about 2.4m high and 1.8m wide, with opposite leaves. The foliage sometimes colors well in autumn.

Cultivation: Lilacs prefer moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil in sun or light shade. They do best where winters are cold because they require at least a few frosts in order to flower well. Any pruning is best done immediately after flowering. Species may be raised from seed or cuttings. Named cultivars are usually grafted but can sometimes be stuck from hardwood or semi-ripe cuttings. Established plats produce suckers that can be used for propagation.

*Syringa vulgaris* L.

Common Lilac

In our country lilac grows spontaneously in the mountains of Cerna, Banat, Oltenia and Dobrogea regions.

This is the species from which most garden cultivars derive. It is native to south-eastern Europe and grows to about 6 to 8m high with pointed, oval or heart-shaped leaves up to 10cm long. The stem is branched near to the ground. The flowers are borne in dense pyramidal heads and are strongly fragrant, white or pale mauve. ‘Andenken an Ludwig Spath’ has single deep purple large heads in mid-season; ‘Aurea’ has yellowish green leaves and darker lilac flowers; ‘Charles Joly’ is a double deep reddish purple lilac with very fragrant flowers and strongly upright growth; ‘Congo’ has single rich dark purple flowers; ‘Edith Cavell’ is white; ‘Firmament’ is light blue; ‘Katherine Havemeyer’ has fully double large-flowered heads of lavender-purple buds opening to a soft mauve-pink; ‘Lavender Lady’ is mid-mauve; ‘Marechal Foch’ is purplish pink; ‘Miss Ellen Willmott’ has double white flowers with buds tinged green.; ‘Mme Antoine Buchner’ is pale mauve-pink; Mme F Morel’ is purplish pink; ‘Mme Lemoine’ is a double white with medium-sized tight flowerheads on a free-flowering and compact shrub; ‘Mrs Edward Harding’ has double reddish purple flowers in large heads; ‘President Lincoln’ is light blue; ‘President Poincare’ introduced by Lemoine in 1913, has double flowers of a rich claret-mauve in large heads; ‘Primrose’ has early soft single lemon flowers on a compact shrub; ‘Souvenir d’Alice Harding’ has small heads of white flowers in summer; ‘Vestale’ is pure white; ‘Volcan’ bears single ruby purple flowers; and ‘William Robinson’ bears single royal purple flowers.

*Syringa josikaea*, the Transylvanian lilac, is not so decorative as *vulgaris*, but because of its rarity and partly endemic character it must be protected as a monument of nature.

Jusititie Park (Park of Justice) is situated in the center of Timisoara, near the town hall, in an area surrounded by large boulevards and on one part by the river Bega. The park has nice old trees of different species, while the grassy areas are smaller in size. There are a few monuments too. The total surface of the *Syringa vulgaris* shrubs crowns is 34m². There are 6 individuals belonging to this species in the park. Their ages are between 10 and 30 years. Their height is between 2 and 3m. The average diameter of the shrub crowns is 2m. The shrubs are situated mainly in the neighbourhood of the Hydrotechnics building of the Politechnic Institute. Copiilor (Childrens) Park is situated in Timisoara on the bank of the river Bega near the center of the town. It has nice old trees of different species and used to have playgrounds for children. There are 5 *Syringa*
vulgarsis shrubs in the park, aged between 10 and 20 years. The height of the shrubs is 2 to 3m. The total surface of the tree crowns is 6 m². The diameter of the shrub crowns is between 1 and 2m.

**Central Civic (Civic Center) Park,** is situated in the center of Timisoara, behind Bega Store House. The green space appeared forty years ago, when the region was rebuilt after the demolition of an old building. There are 3 Syringa vulgaris shrubs in the park. The shrubs are 10 to 20 years old, 1 to 3m high. The total surface of the shrub crowns is 19 m². The diameter of the shrub crowns is between 2 and 3m. The shrubs were planted all over the green space. When the park was created 40 years ago the tree species were mixed equally in the whole area. Civic Center Park is rather a transit area than a place where people come to walk in their free time.

**Alpinet Park** is situated on the bank of the river Bega, in central town. It is not a great green space, but it has a nice design, and contains many species of trees and shrubs. There are 2 Syringa vulgaris individuals in the park. The total surface of the shrub crowns is 4m. The shrubs are aged between 10 and 20 years. The height of the shrubs is 3 to 5m. The diameter of the shrub crowns is between 2 and 2.5 m.

**Central Park,** (Parcul central) is probably the oldest park in Timisoara, with a history of 150 years. It is situated in the center of the town near the orthodox cathedral. Its central part is geometrical and monumental, while the rest is more natural. There are statues, flower beds, fountains and pergolas in the park. 49 Syringa vulgaris shrubs exist in the park.

The total surface of the tree crowns is 170m². The trees are aged between 10 and 20 years. The average height of the shrubs is 2 to 3m. The diameter of the shrub crowns is between 2 and 3m. The shrubs are situated mainly near Bul. N. Titulescu, which is bordering the park.

**Syringa vulgaris** shrubs can be found all over the town, on the side of lanes, in parks, in alleys. It is between the most common species in Timisoara.

**Lilac** shrubs have ecological and esthetic value. The shrubs are planted generally because they have nice flowers in spring. It can be seen in poorer areas and in the outskirts as well as in central parts of the town.

**Results and Discussions**

*Syringa vulgaris* is an important species, present in many green spaces of Timisoara. The shrubs contribute a lot in spring to the outlook of certain urban areas. There are shrubs which are old and have a great visual and ecological value, while others are younger. The species is present in all important parks of Timisoara, and can be found in many streets also. Their numbers and importance are variable. Usually there are a couple of lilac shrubs in a green space, but in Central Park (Parcul Central) the number of lilac is much higher than in any other parks in central town. The individuals are sometimes concentrated near building or streets, where have been planted years ago with esthetic purpose. The study shows that they are present in nearly all green spaces, in smaller or greater numbers, disposed in little groups or isolated. In Timisoara pink, mauve and purple lilacs predominate, but there are white too.

**Conclusions**

1. *Syringa vulgaris* shrubs are present in nearly all the parks of Timisoara, in greater or smaller numbers, as well as in many streets. They are considered valuable shrubs because of their nice flowers in spring.

2. These shrubs contribute a lot to the diversity and beauty of certain green spaces, especially when they flower in mid spring.

**References**

Syringa vulgaris – Lilac