BULLETIN NO. 59.

The so-called Tree-Lilacs are beginning to flower and promise to be exceptionally fine this year. There are three of these Lilacs, all natives of northeastern Asia, and they differ from the true Lilacs in the short tube of the corolla of the flower from which the stamens protrude, and for this reason were once placed in a different genus, Ligustrina. The three species produce white, bad-smelling flowers with an odor like those of the Privets, and their leaves fall early in the autumn without change of color, in this differing also from the true Lilacs which hold their leaves until late in the season. The first of the Tree-Lilacs to flower, *Syringa amurensis*, is a native of eastern Siberia; it is a small tree or tree-like shrub with flat, spreading or slightly drooping clusters of ivory white flowers which make a fine contrast with the dark green leaves. The second species to flower is a native of northern China, *Syringa pekinensis*. This in cultivation is a shrub rather than a tree, although it sometimes reaches in this country the height and spread of branches of thirty feet. The stout stems are more or less pendent at the ends and are covered with lustrous reddish brown bark which readily separates into thin layers, like that of some of the Birch trees. The long, narrow, pointed leaves hang gracefully, and the half-drooping flower-clusters, which are flat and unsymmetrical, are smaller than those of the other plants of this group. *Syringa japonica*, a native of the forests of northern Japan, is the last of the Tree-Lilacs to flower. This is really a tree, often from thirty to forty feet high, with a tall stout trunk covered with lustrous brown bark, like that of a Cherry-tree, and a round-topped head. The flowers are produced in large, erect, symmetrical clusters which stand up well above the dark foliage and make this Lilac one of the most beautiful of the flowering trees which can be grown in this climate. The Tree-Lilacs are on the bank near the lower end of the Lilac Group, on the left-hand side of the path which passes up through this group. They are best seen, however, from the path which follows the top of the bank on which the Lilacs are planted. There is also a large plant of *Syringa japonica* among the Crabapples on the left-hand side of the Forest Hills Road, the site of the first Arboretum nurseries. This is one of the original plants raised from seeds sent from Japan to the Arboretum in 1876 by Colonel William S. Clarke, first President of the Massachusetts Agricultural College and of the Agricultural College at Sapporo, by whom this plant through the Arboretum was introduced into gardens. *Syringa amurensis* still remains comparatively rare in gardens; *S. pekinensis* has been occasionally planted in those of eastern Massachusetts, but *S. japonica* is now a common plant in the eastern states. All three species grow poorly in western Europe, and the size of the plants and the masses of flowers which they produce here always surprise European visitors to the Arboretum.

On the walk at the top of the Lilac bank one of the newer Lilacs, *Syringa Sweginzowii*, is in flower. This plant, which is probably a native of northern China or of Korea, is flowering in the Arboretum for the third year and appears to be perfectly hardy. It flowers very freely and the flowers, which are borne in narrow clusters, are slender with a long tube and are white tinged with rose color, and slightly fragrant. It is one of the latest, if not the latest, of the true Lilacs to flower here and promises to be a valuable garden plant in New England.
In the group of plants belonging to the Elaeagnus or Oleaster Family, on the left-hand side of the Bussey Hill Road above the Lilacs, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* is a conspicuous object. This small tree is a native of southern and southeastern Europe, Asia Minor, and southwestern Asia. It is now in flower but the small, pale yellow, fragrant, axillary flowers are almost hidden by the leaves, and it is in the leaves that the greatest beauty of this tree is found; these are long and narrow like those of some Willows and they are silvery white, retaining this color during the season. No other tree or shrub which is hardy in New England has foliage of such silvery whiteness, and where it is desirable to produce in this climate in a plantation a striking effect by the use of a tree with white foliage *Elaeagnus angustifolia* is the best plant for the purpose. It has sometimes been called the Wild Olive-tree for the reddish brown fruits which ripen in summer resemble in shape small olives.

The native Cornels (*Cornus*) have been largely used in the Arboretum, and the late-flowering species are beautiful here from the middle to the end of June. One of these plants, *Cornus rugosa*, sometimes called *C. eireinata*, is a common native shrub and one of the handsomest of the whole genus. It has green branchlets, broad, rounded pale green leaves, paller and hairy on their lower surface, and conspicuous clusters of creamy white flowers which are followed by beautiful light blue fruits. Like a few other Dogwoods, it is difficult to transplant, but once established it soon spreads into large masses. There are several individuals in the Cornel Group at the junction of the Meadow and Bussey Hill Roads, and large shapely plants can be seen on the bank just above the group of Sassafras trees on the right-hand side of the Bussey Hill Road and below the Benzoin Group. Among the Hickories on the right-hand side of the Meadow Road there are also large groups of this plant. A smaller plant and less showy, perhaps, *Cornus racemosa*, sometimes called *C. paniculata* or *C. candidissima*, is just beginning to open its flowers. This is a common inhabitant of roadsides and wood-borders in this part of the country, and is a round-headed shrub with slender erect stems and creamy white flowers produced in compound oblong clusters. The plant is as beautiful in October as it is in June for the flowers are followed by translucent white berries borne on bright red stalks, making this one of the most interesting of the shrubs which ripen their fruit in mid-autumn. The Silky Cornel (*C. Amomum*) is the last of the native species to flower. This is a large, widespreading shrub and requires abundant space in which to show its beauty of habit. For this reason it should be planted as an isolated specimen or on the borders of ponds or streams, a purpose for which it is admirably adapted. Its purple stems are attractive in winter and the bright blue fruits which ripen in the autumn add materially to the attractiveness of this shrub.

The Arboretum owes much of its early summer beauty to four shrubby species of native Viburnums which have been planted in large numbers through its border plantations and which can be compared in the Viburnum Group on the right-hand side of the Bussey Hill Road near its junction with the Valley Road. The first of these shrubs to flower, *Viburnum dentatum*, is already beginning to shed its flowers which during the summer will be followed by clusters of bright blue fruits. This is a common roadside and meadow shrub in the northeastern part of the country and, like the other American species, improves by cultivation, producing better foliage and handsomer flowers and fruits. The second species of this group, *Viburnum cassinoides*, is now in
flower. This is a native of swamps in the northeastern part of the country where it sometimes grows twenty feet high. In cultivation it has proved one of the handsomest of all the Viburnums introduced into the Arboretum where it forms a round-headed compact shrub. The leaves, which are thick and lustrous vary greatly in size and shape. The flowers are slightly tinged with yellow and are borne in large slightly convex clusters; the fruit is larger than that of the blue-fruited shrubby species, and at first yellow-green later becomes bright pink and finally blue-black and is covered with a handsome pale bloom; fruits of the three colors are found together in the same cluster. The third of these species, *Viburnum venosum*, will not be in flower for another week. This resembles *V. dentatum* in general appearance and in the blue fruit, but the young branches and the under surface of the leaves are covered with a thick coat of stellate hairs. This Viburnum is found growing naturally only in the neighborhood of the coast from Cape Cod and Nantucket to New Jersey. A larger plant with large lustrous leaves and more showy flowers, and larger later-ripening blue fruit, *Viburnum Canbyi*, will not flower for two or three weeks. This plant appears to be confined to eastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware, where it is by no means common; in cultivation it grows to a large size.

One of the attractive plants now in flower in the Shrub Collection is *Halimodendron argenteum*, the so-called Salt-tree because it inhabits the saline steppes near the river Irtish in Siberia. The pale rose-colored fragrant pea-shaped flowers, which are produced in great profusion, are borne in small clusters, and their delicate beauty is heightened by the color of the leaves which are covered with a silky down. This plant remains in flower during several weeks in the Arboretum and produces abundant crops of pods but the seeds apparently are rarely fertile.

The large and widely distributed genus *Indigofera* of the Pea Family has given a few beautiful small shrubs to our gardens. Two of these can now be seen in good condition on Hickory Path near Centre Street. The showier of the two, *I. Kirilowii*, is a low shrub spreading by underground stems, with ample leaves and comparatively large bright pink flowers in long racemes. It is a native of Korea. With it is a plant of *Indigofera amblyantha*, one of Wilson’s discoveries in western China and a slender little shrub with erect stems and axillary racemes of small rose-colored flowers which are produced continuously through the summer. Among Wilson’s discoveries there is not a more delightful small shrub than this. On the left-hand side of Azalea Path, near its entrance from the Bussey Hill Road are two other species of *Indigofera*, the white-flowered *I. decora* from China, and the purple-flowered *I. Gerardiana* from the Himalayas. The stems of these two plants are killed back to the ground every winter but new stems spring up in the spring, and as the flowers are produced on the new growth the killing of the old stems does not interfere with the flowering of these plants.

The Arboretum will be grateful for any publicity given these Bulletins.