Lilacs. When this Bulletin reaches its readers many of the earliest Lilacs will probably be in bloom and there is every promise that Lilacs this year will be unusually full of flowers. A large part of the Arboretum collection consists of seedling varieties of the plant which has been a favorite in gardens for centuries and to most persons the only Lilac, the *Syringa vulgaris* of botanists. It is now known that it came originally from the mountains of Bulgaria and that it reached western Europe from Constantinople about 1560. The date of its introduction into the United States is not known, but it was probably in the seventeenth century. There are now in the Arboretum collection twenty-seven species of *Syringa*, three hybrids and about one hundred and ninety forms of *S. vulgaris*; and Lilacs will be in bloom from the receipt of this Bulletin until the end of June. There are specimens in the collection raised some twenty years ago from seeds of the wild Bulgarian plant. These are interesting because it is possible by comparing them with modern Lilacs to see the change that selection and cultivation has made in these plants. Hardly a week passes that the Arboretum does not receive a letter for the names of the best six, or the best twenty-five Lilacs. Most of the varieties of the common Lilac are handsome plants, and no two persons ever agree as to their value, some preferring flowers of one color and others another. To study the Lilacs in flower in the Arboretum will prove the most satisfactory method of making a choice suited to individual taste. Most of the common Lilac forms have much the same habit and foliage and all have inconspicuous fruit; they all bloom freely every year. Breeding
and selection, however, have somewhat affected the perfume of their flowers as it has that of many plants, such as some of the modern Roses. There is considerable variation in the size of the flowers; the double flowers generally open a little later than the single flowers and last longer, but there is really little difference in the time of flowering of all these plants. The size of the flower-cluster varies somewhat on different forms and is larger on young plants than on old ones, and it can be enlarged by severe pruning which increases the vigor of the flowering branches. The plants are labeled and many of the kinds growing in the Arboretum can be found in American nurseries.

*Syringa persica* is a beautiful plant with slender, drooping, wide-spreading branches, narrower leaves than those of the common Lilac, and small, fragrant, lavender-colored flowers in short compact clusters. It was for many years universally believed to be native to Persia or some adjacent country. It is now known to be native to northwestern China and to have been brought originally from the east to western Asia and Europe just as the Peach and other Chinese plants found their way westward. There is a variety with white flowers and another with laciniate leaves. The first hybrid Lilac appeared in the Botanic Garden in Rouen in 1777 where it was raised from seed of *S. persica var. laciniata*, no artificial cross having been made. This is one of the most delightful of all Lilacs and grows into a bush twelve feet high and broad, and of rather open habit. It is very hardy, blooms freely every year, and should be in all gardens where the Lilac is cultivated. Its flowers resemble those of the Persian Lilac, but are produced in small clusters from numerous pairs of lateral buds on the same branchlet and appear as one large inflorescence sometimes two feet long, and so heavy that the slender branches bend under the weight. There are forms with dark red flowers and with nearly white flowers. Through a misunderstanding as to its origin this plant must be called *S. chinensis*.

The white-flowered *S. affinis* is usually the first Lilac to bloom in the Arboretum. The earliness and delightful fragrance of the flowers give value to this plant for the spring garden. The variety with mauve-colored fragrant flowers (*var. Giraldii*) is blooming as usual; it is a tall shrub, and except when in flower of no decorative value. The north China *S. oblata* is one of the handsomest of the species, with thick lustrous leaves which in the autumn assume brilliant shades of orange and red. The flower-buds, however, are too often injured in this climate, although the plant is otherwise hardy. By crossing this plant with a double-flowered form of *S. vulgaris* the hybrid known as *S. hyacinthiflora* was obtained many years ago. It is a large shapely bush with good foliage and small clusters of double flowers as fragrant as those of *S. oblata*. A Chinese Lilac discovered by Wilson, *S. pinnatifolia*, is also in bloom. The pinnate leaves of this plant make it interesting among Lilacs, but the small white flowers in short clusters are without ornamental value. The flowers of another rare species, *S. Meyeri*, will soon open and this year the species and garden forms are all well covered with flower-buds.

Late Flowering Lilacs. Among these are plants which can add
much to the beauty of northern gardens in the last weeks of June and early July. They are eastern Asiatic with the exception of the Hungarian *S. Josikaea*, which is the only one of these plants which has not been introduced into gardens since the Arboretum was established. The first of the late-flowering true Lilacs from eastern Asia which reached the Arboretum was *Syringa villosa* which was raised here in 1882 from seed sent by Dr. Bretschneider, at that time attached to the Russian Embassy at Peking. This has proved the most valuable of these plants; it is perfectly hardy, grows rapidly into a large, round-headed, compact bush often fifteen feet high and broad, and flowers every year. The flowers, which are arranged in long narrow clusters, are pale rose-pink, flesh color or occasionally nearly white. This is the only one of the late-flowering Lilacs which has been used successfully by the plant breeder. Crossed in the nurseries of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris with *S. Josikaea* it produced a race of Lilacs of vigorous growth with the habit of the Chinese plant, and in some of its forms with flowers more deeply tinged with the violet color of the Hungarian parent. To the handsomest of these hybrids the name Lutece has been given. No shrub of recent introduction better deserves a place in our gardens. Another plant of this race known as *Eximea* differs in its much more compact clusters of rose-colored or reddish flowers which on opening become light pink. Another late-flowering Lilac which promises to be valuable as a garden decoration in this climate is *S. Wolffi* which reached the Arboretum in 1906 from Petrograd where it had been sent from northern Korea or Manchuria by the Russian traveler Komarov. *Syringa Sweginzowii*, a northwestern China plant, came to the Arboretum from Petrograd in 1910; it is a tall narrow shrub with slender erect stems, dull green pointed leaves, and long narrow flower-clusters. Not very unlike this species in habit, *S. yunnanensis* from southwestern China differs in its more fragrant flowers which are white tinged with rose color. Another related species, *S. microphylla*, is interesting because unlike other Lilacs it flowers in the Arboretum twice during the year, once in the middle of June and again in October. The nearly white flowers are pleasantly fragrant. *S. tomentella*, an older name for the plant later called *S. Wilsonii*, is a tall, vigorous, fast-growing shrub with erect stems, dull green leaves, and open, long-branched panicles of pale rose-colored flowers. *S. Julianae*, like the last, a recent discovery in western China, is a late-flowering plant closely related to the north China *S. pubescens*. Two recently described species, *S. reflexa* and *S. Komarowii* from western China, with leaves very similar to those of *S. villosa*, promise to be useful garden plants. The first is conspicuous at this season of the year, for unlike those of all other Lilacs the flowers are gracefully arching and pendent on long stems. In habit *S. Komarowii* resembles *S. reflexa* but differs from that species in the denser flower-clusters which are spreading or nodding.

Tree Lilacs. The Lilac season closes with the flowering of the eastern Asiatic species popularly known as “Tree Lilacs.” They all have handsome dark green leaves which fall in the autumn without change of color, and large usually unsymmetrical clusters of white
flowers with the disagreeable odor of the Privet. They are handsome hardy plants and when in bloom the most conspicuous of the trees or large arborescent shrubs of their season. The first of them to flower, *S. amurensis*, is a native of eastern Siberia and a shrub twelve or fifteen feet high, with dark-colored bark, leaves pale on the lower surface, and short unsymmetrical flower-clusters usually produced only in alternate years. *S. pekinensis* blooms a little later; it is a native of northern China and a shrub sometimes thirty feet tall and broad, with stout spreading stems covered with yellow-brown bark separating into thin plate-like scales like that of some Birch trees. This species retains its leaves later in the autumn than the other "Tree Lilacs" and flowers profusely every year. The last of the "Tree Lilacs" to bloom, *S. japonica*, is a tree sometimes forty feet high with a tall straight trunk covered with lustrous brown bark like that of a Cherry-tree, a round-topped head of erect branches, broad thick leaves, and mostly symmetrical flower-clusters often eighteen inches in length.

**Early Flowering Asiatic Azaleas.** The earliest of these to bloom, *Rhododendron mucronulatum*, a native of northern China and Korea, is already out of flower. This beautiful plant has flowered every spring in the Arboretum for nearly twenty years. It is a tall, deciduous-leaved shrub inclined as it grows old to a straggling habit. It is one of the handsomest April flowering shrubs which can be successfully grown in this climate. There is a large clump of it on the lower side of Azalea Path on Bussey Hill. Already in bloom on this path are the Korean Azaleas, *R. Schlippenbachii* and *R. poukhanense*. *R. Schlippenbachii* is one of the commonest shrubs of Korea, and is often the dominant undergrowth in open woods. From Korea it crosses into northeastern Manchuria, and it is known in a few localities in northern Japan. In Korea this Azalea on the wind-swept, grass-covered cliffs of the coast grows less than a foot high and is covered with flowers. In the forest of the interior it often grows to a height of fifteen feet and forms a tall and shapely bush. It grows naturally further north than any other Azalea with the exception of the North American Rhodora. *R. Schlippenbachii* has flowered now for several years in the Arboretum, and planted in an exposed sunny position it has never suffered from cold. Its hardiness and the beauty of its flowers make it one of the most valuable shrubs, if not the most valuable, which northeastern North America has obtained from northeastern Asia. The flowers are perhaps more beautiful than those of any other Azalea. Although probably unknown as a garden plant beyond the limits of the Arboretum, *R. poukhanense* deserves a place in all New England collections. Another Japanese species, *R. reticulatum*, more generally known as *R. rhombicbum*, now well established in the Arboretum, has opened its flowers. This plant is common over a large part of Japan, growing on open wind-swept hillsides, on the borders of forests and in the shade of thick woods. The flowers are deep magenta color, red-purple or rose color, and do not harmonize with those of several other Azaleas, but when this species is isolated or planted with the white-flowered form (var. album) it is when in bloom one of the most beautiful and distinct of all hardy Azaleas.