Lilacs (Syringa species) belong to the Oleaceae (olive) family from Eurasia. They range from low shrubs to small trees. They like full sun, average to well-drained soil and close to neutral pH. Lilacs seem to thrive on neglect, but summer watering and a flower or all purpose fertilizer will help them provide armloads of fragrant flowers for generations.

Syringa vulgaris (French or common lilac) is the shining star of the lilac family. It is grown for its incomparable fragrance and fine color range. Each named variety has its own distinctive fragrance. One is not necessarily better than the other, a lot like roses. One interesting phenomenon that we have observed here and at other nurseries is that not all varieties bloom true to color their first year. Common lilac is extremely cold-hardy, easily tolerating temperatures down to -25°F.

Lilacs have few pests. The most serious is probably the leaf miner. The larvae of this insect riddle the leaves with tunnels, eventually killing the leaves. If you see leaves with white or transparent areas between the veins, remove the affected leaves. This cultural control usually is adequate; see a Sky nursery associate for recommendations if you need a chemical control.

The other problem here in the Northwest is lilac blight or Pseudomonas syringae. Blackened or scorched leaves usually occur in June and July. Prune out affected twigs; clean shears with a 70% alcohol solution between cuts. Prune only when dry. Use a copper based spray in the spring—spray two to three times seven to ten days apart when the foliage emerges.

You may see powdery mildew on the leaves toward the end of the season. It is usually not harmful to the plant. However, if it is unsightly you can use Bonide Remedy to control it.

Should a lilac need pruning to shape, do it just after the flowering period, usually in May or June. Cut out weak or damaged canes. (Note: pruning reblooming lilacs will reduce the fall bloom.)

Given ample sun and a little care, lilacs will reward even the most novice of gardeners with a bouquet of flowers that will leave you wanting to put in even more lilacs!
FRENCH LILACS & FULL SIZE HYBRID LILACS

Adelaide Dunbar. Rapid growing upright shrub. Height 8-12 feet—spread 6-12 feet. Double purple flowers.

Angel White. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height and spread 6-8 feet. Hardy to -30º F. Pure white flowers.

Beauty of Moscow (Krasavitsa Moskovo). Medium growing upright shrub. Height 8-12 feet—spread 6-8 feet. Bicolor: deep pink buds, pale pink to white petals. Very full, fragrant flowers; long blooming period.

Blue Skies. Rapid growing vase-like shrub. Height 8-10 feet—spread 4-6 feet. Fragrant light lavender-blue flowers.

Charles Joly. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height and spread 6-12 feet. Fragrant double magenta flowers.

Congo. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 6-12 feet—spread 6-12 feet. Hardy to -25º F. Magenta flowers.

Declaration. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 6-8 feet—spread 4-5 feet. Blooms about a week earlier than most lilacs; covered with fragrant deep reddish-purple flowers. A selection from the National Arboretum.


Ludwig Spaeth. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height and spread 6-12 feet. Fragrant single purple flowers.

Madame Lemoine. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 6-12 feet—spread 6-12 feet. Hardy to -25º F. Double white flowers. One of the most fragrant varieties.


Pocahontas (Syringa x hyacinthiflora ‘Pocahontas’). Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 12-15 feet—spread 10-12 feet. Hardy to 0º F. Maroon buds open to fragrant single violet flowers.

Primrose. Rapid growing vase-like shrub. Height 8-12 feet—spread 6-12 feet. Yellow buds open to cream white flowers streaked with primrose yellow.

Scentara® Double Blue. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 6-8 feet—spread 4-8 feet. Extremely fragrant double flowers are a cool blue-purple.

Sensation. Rapid growing upright shrub. Height 8-10 feet—spread 4-8 feet. Unusual wine-red flowers with white picotee edges.

Yankee Doodle. Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 10-12 feet—spread 6-8 feet. Hardy to -20º F. Single deep purple flowers—one of the darkest purples.
**DWARF/COMPACT LILACS**

**Dwarf Korean Lilac (Syringa meyeri 'Palibin').** Medium growing upright shrub. Height 3-4 feet. Hardy to -10° F. Lavender flowers.

**Miss Kimm.** Medium growing rounded shrub. Height 2-3 feet—spread 3-4 feet. Hardy to -40° F. Deep purple buds open to ice blue flower; some fragrance.

**Tinkerbelle.** Medium growing vase-like shrub. Height 4-5 feet—spread 4-5 feet. Hardy to -20° F. Pink flowers. Charming smaller lilac.

**Tiny Dancer.** Slow growing rounded shrub. Height 4-5 feet—spread 3-4 feet. Purple buds open to fragrant single lavender flowers. Heat and cold tolerant, mildew resistant.

**REBLOOMING DWARF/COMPACT LILACS**

These reblooming lilac varieties bloom heavily in the spring, then re bloom more lightly mid-summer into fall.

**Bloomerang® (Bloomerang Purple, AKA Penda).** Slow growing vase-like shrub. Compact: height 4-5 feet—spread 4-5 feet. Single lavender-purple flowers, fragrant. Hardy to -10° F. Re blooming variety.

**Bloomerang® Dark Purple.** Slow growing vase-like shrub. Height 4-6 feet—spread 5-6 feet. Single dark reddish-purple flowers, fragrant. Hardy to -10° F. Re blooming variety.

**Bloomerang® Dwarf Pink.** Slow growing rounded shrub. Dwarf variety stays about 3 feet high and wide. Single pink flowers, very fragrant. Hardy to -10° F. Re blooming variety.

**Bloomerang® Dwarf Purple.** Slow growing rounded shrub. Dwarf variety stays about 3 feet high and wide. Single light purple flowers, fragrant. Hardy to -10° F. Re blooming variety.

**Bloomerang® Pink Perfume.** Slow growing vase-like shrub. Compact: height 4-5 feet—spread 4-5 feet. Single pink flowers, very fragrant. Hardy to -10° F. Re blooming variety.