

Common Lilac

Syringa vulgaris (Family: Oleaceae)

Description: A large shrub that could be a very small multi-stemmed tree. It is a prolific spring flowerer with fragrant panicles in a variety of colors. Plants have been selected and grown for centuries providing a plethora of cultivars. Native to Europe, this was a common planting on Northern Plains homesteads due to its winter hardiness and drought tolerance.

Hardiness: USDA hardiness zones 3 to 7.

Natural Habitat: Native to open woodlands and rocky hills in southeastern Europe.

Mature Size: Height: 8-15', Spread: 6-12'

Form (Shape): Upright leggy shrub that has an irregular shape, often suckers forming a large group of plants.

Growth Rate: Medium.

Foliage: Leaves are a dark green with a slight bluish tint in the summer. Foliage turns yellowish-green or brown in autumn.

Texture: Medium to coarse.

Flowers: 4 – 8", fragrant panicles from the terminal buds in Spring.

Fruit: Beaked, dehiscent capsule in panicles.

Light: Full sun.

Soil: Well drained, neutral soil, cannot stand wet feet.

Propagation: Division of parent plant and replant sucker.

Failure Patterns: Long-lived plants, but susceptible to diseases.

Disease and Insects: Susceptible to many pest and disease problems: Lilac borer, powdery mildew, and verticillium wilt.

Landscape Use: This species has many cultivars, but in most cases it is best if used in borders, masses or as a hedge due to its suckering habit and larger size.

Availability: Common in trade with multiple cultivars selected for size, flower color and fragrance.