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Johnston's Journal

The Garden in May

*"When wake the violets, Winter dies;
When sprout the elm buds,
Spring is near;
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,
Bud, little roses,
Spring is here."*

—Oliver Wendall Holmes



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May for

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Lilac Time

Lilacs have a special place in our gardens. They aren't much to look at after the blooms have faded, but it's this fleeting beauty that makes them so essential. Lilacs do not respond to more hours of daylight, but rather to increasing temperature. This is why "Lilac Time" varies from year to year, sometimes by more than a month. Lilacs tell us where we are in the season: when the sweet scent of Lilacs is in the air, you know spring is almost over and summer is near.

So much of our work in the garden should be attuned to the rhythms of nature, and not just the calendar. For instance, when you see Lilac leaves fully expanded in their buds, it's time to get in your cool season veggies; when the Lilacs are in full bloom, you can plant your warm weather crops.

Even if you must wait until the end of the month to put out frost-sensitive annuals, now is the time to plant lots of veggies and any perennials, shrubs, and trees your heart desires. Johnston's has a great selection of plants and seeds to get you started.

Time to stop planning and start planting!

But, of course, we don't grow Lilacs just so we know where we are in the seasonal calendar; we grow Lilacs because they are stunningly beautiful and magnificently fragrant. And we grow them despite the fact that their season of glory is so short. Everyone should have at least one Lilac, so if you don't have one yet, put one in this spring. We have some fantastic varieties available (see over for some ideas).

Lilacs stir our desire for beauty. It was a long winter, and spring always seems too short. Make the most of the season by letting your desire for natural beauty run wild. Let the fleeting beauty of the Lilac inspire you to create the garden of your dreams this season. And let Johnston's help you choose the plants that will make your dreams come true.



Lilac 'Wedgwood Blue'

Hellebore 'Ivory Prince' and Peony 'Bartzella'



'Ivory Prince'

Few flowers are as impressive in the spring garden as a Hellebore. And among Hellebores, few are as striking as the variety 'Ivory Prince.' The picture on the left is of a three-year old specimen in my garden. When I checked it this morning, it had almost thirty blooms and buds. A must-have for the early spring garden.

If you're one of those people who looks forward to a lush

display of peonies at the height of the gardening season, you might not believe that this old-fashioned favourite could be improved upon. The new Itoh hybrid peonies offer the best characteristics of both the herbaceous and tree peonies. Finally, enjoy yellow blooms on a herbaceous peony! These plants have been difficult to propagate, and were, until recently, outrageously expensive (often more than \$1000 per division!). But thanks to new

micro-propagation techniques, they have become more available and affordable. Come to Johnston's and you can own this wonder for only \$29.95.



'Bartzella'

Lilacs for All Reasons



'Beauty of Moscow'

If you have space in your yard you should have at least one Lilac. If you already have one (probably the old-fashioned purple *Syringa vulgaris*) think about planting another for twice the show and twice the fragrance. We have the spectacular 'Krasavitsa Moskvyy' (translated as 'Beauty of Moscow') with pink buds and deliciously fragrant double white blooms. 'Beauty of Mos-

cow' is widely considered one of the best Lilacs currently available. 'Wedgewood Blue,' as its name suggest, has an almost-blue single bloom opening from pink buds on a semidwarf shrub. If you are looking for the largest florets choose 'Agincourt Beauty.' The violet florets on this large shrub can be as wide as 1.5 inches. Don't have much space? No problem: 'Miss

Kim' (*Syringa patula*) is a compact Lilac that, despite its size, produces masses of cool pink blooms whose fragrance is so strong that on a warm evening it can be almost overpowering.

Give your new Lilacs plenty of sun—at least six hours a day. Just remember, don't pamper them. They are hardy creatures that thrive on poor soil and neglect.



Check out our great selection of Proven Winners plants

Annual Favourites

The greenhouses are already full of colour, with a huge assortment of all of your favourite annuals. We have the best selection anywhere — hanging baskets, bedding plants, and choice container specimens for those of you who like to experiment with new combinations each season. No time to

plant? That's ok: we do custom containers, too. Give us a call or drop by, and we'll show you what we can do.

For something a bit different this year, check out our selection of annual grasses. Stipa 'Ponytails' looks fabulous in mixed containers or mass

planted in sunny beds or borders. For something truly unique, look for 'Green Twist' bamboo in hanging baskets. This unique grass will create a delicate screen of trailing leaves over two meters long!

