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'Prairie Petite' Lilac

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Additional index words. *Syringa vulgaris*

The Nebraska Agricultural Research Division, Univ. of Nebraska, announces the release of 'Prairie Petite' lilac, a selection of *Syringa vulgaris* L. with a compact, dense growth habit. The name 'Prairie Petite' has been registered with the International Registration Authority for Cultivar Names in the Genus *Syringa*, and we are publishing the registration in *HortScience*.

Origin

'Prairie Petite' lilac originated from a project at the Univ. of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte, begun in 1960 in which lilac seeds were subjected to ionizing radiation. Seeds of an unknown *S. vulgaris* source were treated at Brookhaven National Laboratory with slow neutron radiation (treatment rate unknown) for 10 h followed by a cold stratification (temperature unknown) treatment for 60 days (Pringle, 1976). Three seedlings grew, one of which was an extreme dwarf after three growing seasons. In 1962, additional seeds were irradiated under about the same conditions.

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¹Professor.

²Deceased.

The seeds were germinated and evaluated for dwarfing tendencies. R-2 generation, open-pollinated, seedling plants, derived from the smallest R-1 plants of the 1962 studies, were grown and evaluated for dwarfing characteristics. Several R-2 plants were selected for further testing, and we are releasing the one (NP103) with the name 'Prairie Petite'.

Description

At the Univ. of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, the original plant of NP103 is 94 cm tall × 114 cm wide after 23 years, and several 6-year-old plants average 38 cm tall and 70 cm wide. This selection was vegetatively propagated and evaluated for 5 years at four other locations (Table 1); it tended to be more vigorous at locations other than North Platte but still was considered a compact dwarf.

Leaf blades on the original parent plant in North Platte average 4.9 cm wide × 6.9 cm long, while leaves on the 6-year-old plants in North Platte averaged 4.5 cm wide × 6.2 cm long. The initial color of newly opened florets

is light pink, which fades to light lavender as the florets mature [red-purple group 73D and red-purple group 69D, respectively, of the *Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart*, (Royal Horticultural Society, 1966)]. Florets average 0.9 cm wide, and inflorescences average 5 cm long × 5 cm wide.

'Prairie Petite' is vegetatively propagated by divisions, stem cuttings, or micropropagation (tissue culture) techniques. Division is usually performed in early spring, and cuttings are taken during the spring and summer season.

This selection also has potential as parental material in lilac breeding programs. Progeny grown from open-pollinated seed collected from 'Prairie Petite' have been variable in plant size in field trials at North Platte.

Availability

Plant material of 'Prairie Petite' will be offered for sale through Briggs Nurseries, 4407 Henderson Blvd., Olympia, WA 98501. This selection is not patented.

Scientists interested in plants for research purposes should contact D.T.L., Univ. of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, Rt. 4, Box 46A, North Platte, NE 69101.

Literature Cited

- Pringle, J.S. 1976. Some effects of thermal-neutron radiation on seeds of *Syringa*. *Bul. Intl. Lilac Soc.* 5(1):2-3.
- Royal Horticultural Society. 1966. *Royal Horticultural Society colour chart*. Royal Hort. Soc., London.

Table 1. Performance reports of 'Prairie Petite' lilac at four locations after five growing seasons.

Location	Ht (cm)	Width (cm)	Comments from evaluators
South Barrington, Ill.	76		Dark-green foliage
Johnston, Iowa	90	71	
Parkhill, Okla.	105		More tolerant to powdery mildew than other <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> selections
Olympia, Wash.	90		Compact and good foliage, seems to bloom at a younger age than other <i>S. vulgaris</i> selections