
Syringa '**Betsy Ross**'



The U.S. National Arboretum announces the release of 'Betsy Ross', a lilac cultivar developed specifically for warmer climates. Adorned with a fluffy coverlet of blooms in early spring, 'Betsy Ross' charms and delights the senses with pure white flowers of simple beauty and pleasing fragrance, recalling those halcyon days when "lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed..."



U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction
Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit



U.S. National Arboretum, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 3501 New York Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002



'Betsy Ross' Lilac

Botanical Name:	<i>Syringa</i> 'Betsy Ross' (NA 62973; PI 596517)
Family:	Oleaceae
Hardiness:	U.S.D.A. Zones (4) 5–8
Development:	'Betsy Ross' is the product of a lilac hybridization program initiated in the early 1970's by the late Dr. Donald Egolf to develop superior, disease-tolerant lilacs for warmer climates. 'Betsy Ross' originated from a cross made in 1977 using <i>Syringa oblata</i> collected in China as the male parent and an unidentified <i>Syringa</i> from Highland Park, Rochester, NY, as the female parent. 'Betsy Ross' has been evaluated in a wide range of climatic areas from Minnesota to Alabama and west to California and Oregon. It was named and released by Dr. Margaret Pooler in July, 2000.
Significance:	'Betsy Ross' is the first lilac cultivar to be released by the U.S. National Arboretum. Selected for its abundant, white, fragrant flowers and rounded growth habit, it is well adapted to warmer climates and has good field tolerance to powdery mildew.
Description:	Height and width: 9.75 feet tall and 13 feet wide at 16 years. Habit: Deciduous, multistemmed, relatively compact, rounded shrub. Foliage: Thick, dark green leaves, field tolerant to powdery mildew. Flowers: Abundant inflorescences of large, white, fragrant flowers completely covering the plant in early April. Fruit: A leathery capsule; not showy.
Culture:	Grows well in any moderately fertile, well-drained soil in open, sunny sites (full sun for at least two-thirds of the day) with good air circulation. A soil pH of 6.0–7.5 is recommended. Avoid planting in frost pockets or against warm buildings that would prematurely force flower buds.
Propagation:	Roots fairly easily from semi-hardwood cuttings taken after flowering while the tips are still growing. Rooting occurs in 6–8 weeks under mist, 3000–5000 ppm IBA. Suitable for commercial propagation by grafting or micropropagation.
Landscape Use:	Early-blooming focal point in a mixed shrub border; single specimen; massed group; deciduous hedge or screen.
Availability:	Available in retail nurseries in 2002–2003.

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