



From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.14	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 7, 2011
	<p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Every spring is the only spring--a perpetual astonishment." ~Ellis Peters</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p>Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Espoma Organic Seed Starter Mix</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contains Myco-tone®, a proprietary blend of 11 different strains of mycorrhizae, which have been proven to promote root growth, increase water uptake, and reduce drought stress and transplant shock.• For all seedlings and cuttings.• Promotes Root Growth.• In 8 and 16 qt.bags. <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Contact Information:</p> <p>E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p>Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p>Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p>Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p>Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p>
<p>The first time I fed my children spinach, it came in a baby food jar labeled "Strained Spinach."They did not like it and I do not blame them, as I would not eat it myself in that form. It tasted like green plaster but I had to eat some, to show them that Dad liked it and it must be good. As the kids grew, they never acquired a taste for it because of this first experience.</p> <p>Then one day in the spring, I took the kids out into the garden to plant. We planted tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and salad greens -- the things they liked -- except that year we also planted some spinach as a test. That first year we picked the spinach as a green for the salad and they liked it (two points for Dad). At Thanksgiving, we picked the last of the spinach from the garden and cooked it for the dinner. There were strange looks from the kids but the deal was, "Try a little bit and if you do not like it, you do not have to eat it." I think back now and remember seeing more butter, salt and pepper with a little white vinegar on the spinach than was needed, but they ate it and enjoyed it for the most part. It is still not a favorite when cooked but they love it in salads.</p> <p>Spinach came from Persia originally, then moved to us via China and then Spain. Spinach was a very popular crop in Colonial New England, as it grew in the garden when the weather was still cold for most other vegetables and everyone was looking for fresh vegetables. Today spinach is grown all over the world, but the United States is the number one producer of this spring vegetable. When planted in April, spinach will be ready in late May and last until late June. If you plant a crop every 2 weeks, you will have fresh salad greens until the hot days of summer arrive. I always buy double the seeds required so I can plant a fall crop in mid August for September and October. When the weather gets hot, the plant grows very fast and "bolts," which means going to seed rather than making foliage. The leaves at that time also become bitter tasting, so pick and enjoy them while the weather is cool. During July and August plant Swiss chard for fresh greens.</p> <p>Plant spinach in a rich garden soil. Condition the soil with compost, animal manure or peat moss. The better the soil, the more foliage it will produce; if you can keep the plants watered regularly and fed with a vegetable fertilizer once a month, you will have enough to give away to neighbors and friends. Plant the seeds 1 inch deep in rows and 2 inches apart between seeds. I like to plant a double row 12 inches apart and 3 feet long. In two weeks, plant another 3 feet into the space is filled up. The seeds will germinate in 7 to 10 days and must be kept wet during that time, so water every day for the best germination. If the garden soil gets dry, the plant will stop producing foliage and go to seed, so water regularly to keep it productive. Plant 'Bloomsdale' or 'Melody' spinach for early crops and switch to New Zealand spinach for crops that will mature when the heat arrives, as this variety is more heat tolerant.</p> <p>For salad greens, pick when the leaves are small and young. The plant will keep producing as you pick the leaves as long as you feed with a liquid fertilizer like Miracle-Gro. For cooked spinach, cut the plant to the ground, wash, and pull off the individual leaves along with the buds for cooking.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Subscribe to our newsletter!</p> <p>Click here to subscribe, unsubscribe or change your address.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p>

Pick, wash and store in a ziplock bag in the refrigerator to toughen the leaves for salads. No matter how you use it, fresh picked will have a much better flavor than what you purchase at the supermarket. One last thing, "Popeye the Sailor Man" was right, because spinach has over 20 minerals and vitamins in the foliage, making spinach a real powerhouse green vegetable from your spring garden. Plant some today for yourself and your kids!

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When you think of the weeping willow, think of water. Weeping willows love wet soil, love growing near a stream or pond and--be sure to remember this--the weeping willow will destroy your septic system if it is close by! Most trees have as much of a root system below the ground as they have branches above the ground. The weeping willow has double the roots of most trees, so be careful where you plant it on your property. This tree is one of the most loved in our landscape because of the beautiful golden bark branches that are also graceful and weeping. These long branches will grow right to the ground from the top of the tree. During the winter, the tree will almost shine with the sun on it.

The tree has a rounded appearance year round. Gold branches without leaves in the winter and in the fall with golden-yellow leaves. During the summer, the leaves are a rich green color with a bit of shine to them. The leaves are 2 to 4 inches long and 1/2 in. wide, shaped almost like your finger. The weeping willow is one of the first plants to develop leaves in the spring. The golden leaves of spring really stand out among other trees still dormant in early April. This plant will grow 50 to 75 feet tall and just as wide. Each year the weeping willow can grow 3 to 5 feet a year if there is plenty of water.

When you plant this tree, place it in the back yard where you can admire it from afar. The branches are not strong and heavy; wet snow can create a mess of broken branches after the storm. It is a messy tree and many small branches will fall during the year making for constant cleanup. However, in the right place, the weeping willow will keep your yard dry and usable again. You need to weigh the pros and cons before you plant this tree on your property.

The weeping willow will make a great wind-break, noise-barrier, or screening for privacy and will provide you with shade quickly when planted in groups. When planted alone, it makes a great specimen plant. The tree is not one that will last long in your yard, as it matures in 20 to 25 years and falls apart quickly. Trees planted in a full sun location do much better than trees planted in the shade.

The Native Americans were the first to recognize the willow tree for its beauty and medicinal value, using willow extract to relieve pain, arthritis, and fever. The salicylic acid found in the willow bark is an anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving ingredient. The dried bark can be used as a detergent to clean clothing, and crushed young leaves were thought to stop bleeding. As Native Americans moved across the country looking for food and fertile soils to grow crops, they also looked for the native willow tree. The willow grew where fresh water was found--and without water, the people could not survive.

In Irish legend, the willow is the wood used to make the harp sing. The most famous Celtic Harp is the "Brian Boru" and is exhibited at Trinity College, Dublin. Made in the 15th century, the harp has a pillar and head-piece made of oak, a sound body of willow and is strung with brass. The willow is the resonating-vessel that receives the vibration from the strings and makes the music.

In Jewish tradition, the willow is one of four woods used in the "Feast of the Tabernacle" to give thanks for the harvest. In your garden, the willow means resonance and harmony. When looking for a site to drill a well, dowsers always use the willow branch to find water. You see, the weeping willow is much more than just a tree.

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You have worked hard all day and it is now time to relax at home. I think that the best place to relax is in your back yard, in your favorite chair, breathing the fresh air that your lawn made for you while you were at work. Your lawn has been cleaning all the impurities around your house and changing it to clean oxygen while you were working, and it is ready for you now. Did you know that just 625 square feet of grass-- a bit over 30' by 20'--supplies all the oxygen that a person needs each day? The average home lawn is 5000 sq. ft., producing enough oxygen for eight people each day. When talking about trees, it would take two 100-foot tall trees to do the same thing for eight people. And you thought it was just grass to mow!

Did you know that when the temperature of asphalt or concrete is 100 degrees or more, your lawn will be a pleasant 75 degrees? The grass works like an air conditioner around your home to help keep it cooler. But, remember, it is just grass.

This year, let us start from scratch with your lawn. I want you to walk on your lawn and look at it closely. Look at the color of the grass, the density of the grass, weeds that are beginning to develop, bare spots in the grass, and exposure to sun and shade. I want you to sit down with this information and decide what you have to do to make the lawn better this year. The color of the grass should be deep green. This color will improve when you fertilize your lawn. Fertilizer applied

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during April will quickly darken the color of the grass and help thicken areas that seem to be a little thin. Grass that is dark green and thick will have fewer weeds and discourage future weed development. Ask any real estate agent and they will tell you that a home with a good green lawn will sell much faster than a lawn covered with weeds.

If weeds are present now, they are perennial and will return each year. If you have thin spots or bare spots in your lawn, now is the time to fill them in with fresh grass seed. If you do not plant these areas, Mother Nature will do it for you--and she will use her own mixture of what we consider weeds. If you are planting grass seed, remember that the lawn with weed problems cannot be treated until the new grass seed is up and growing. The weed killer will kill the newly germinating seedlings; you must wait until the plants have grown enough to mow twice before you apply the weed killer. If your lawn contains more perennial weeds and fewer open spots, concentrate on those weeds now and reseed in the fall. Perennial weeds will get bigger and in the weeks to come, producing hundreds of seeds and making the problem even worse. Crabgrass, for example, can produce several thousand seeds per plant each fall.

If the entire lawn has a weed problem, fertilize it to thicken the grass and prevent future weed growth. Combination weed killer and fertilizer products such as Scotts Turf Builder Plus 2 or Jonathan Green Weed and Feed are available at your local garden center. Apply when you see that the dandelion plant is beginning to flower. Apply the product when the grass is wet or covered with the morning dew. Wet grass will catch the dry granular product better and the moisture on the leaf will dissolve the weed killer so the leaf can absorb it quickly and begin to destroy the weeds. Make sure that there is no rain for the next 24 hours!

If your weeds are scattered all over the lawn, spot treat those weeds with a liquid weed killer such as Bonide "Weed Beater Ultra" or Fertilome "Weed Out with Q." Both these products can be applied to the lawn as soon as weeds are visible and work even when the temperatures are still cold. Both will also kill ajuga, ground ivy, and violets, which are difficult to control.

Remember that a good thick lawn will also absorb unwanted noise. Grass is the best and safest surface for your children to play on. Grass will help to keep your house cleaner by trapping dust. Grass prevents erosion problems caused by heavy rains because the roots knit the soil together, trapping runoff water. One last thing--when was the last time you saw a sign on a lawn that said "KEEP OFF THE GRASS?" Today grass seed is stronger than ever and you can play on your lawn all you want without hurting it, so do so.

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Are you looking for a great gift for a gardener (or yourself)? This garden journal helps make planning and organizing easy. This journal, *autographed personally by Paul*, makes a perfect gift for gardeners. The cover holds a 5x7 or 4x6 photo and a heavy-duty D-ring binder.

Also included:

- 8 tabbed sections
- 5 garden details sections with pockets for seeds, tags...
- Weather records page
- 6 three year journal pages
- Insect & diseases page - 3 project pages
- 3 annual checklist pages
- Plant wish list page
- 2 large pocket pages
- Sheet of garden labels
- 5 garden detail sheets
- 5 graph paper pages for layouts
- 5 photo pages, each holding four 4x6 photos in landscape or portrait format

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This Week's Question:

If you suffer from sepiophobia, you'd probably not have a compost pile. Why?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

This Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Seed Starter Mix

- Contains Myco-tone® mycorrhizae
- For all seedlings and cuttings.
- Promotes Root Growth.
- In 8 and 16 qt.bags.

What are the names of the two roses that were the 2011 AARS Winners?

Last Week's Winner:

Anna Provencher

Last Week's Answer:

'Walking on Sunshine' and 'Dick Clark.'

Last Week's Prize:

Healthy Garden, Healthy You, by Milo Shammas

One winner per question - we choose winners from the list of those who answer correctly. Winners must be newsletter subscribers. We'll ship you your prize, so be sure to put your address in the form in case you win!

FEATURED RECIPE:

Banana Spring Rolls



This is wonderful served with vanilla ice cream!

Ingredients:

- 2 large bananas
- 8 (7-inch square) spring roll wrappers
- 1 cup brown sugar, or to taste
- 1 quart oil for deep frying

Step by Step:

- Preheat the oil in a deep-fryer or large cast-iron skillet to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
- Peel bananas, and slice them in half lengthwise, then crosswise into fourths.
- Place one piece of banana diagonally across the corner of a spring roll wrapper, and sprinkle with brown sugar to taste.
- Roll from the corner to the center, then fold top and bottom corners in, and continue rolling. Dip your finger in water and brush the last edge to seal. Repeat with remaining banana pieces.
- Fry a few banana rolls at a time in the hot oil until evenly browned. Remove to paper towels to drain.
- Serve hot or cold.

Yield: 8 servings



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