



## FEATURED QUOTE :

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything."

~**William Shakespeare**

The Paul Parent Garden Club is pleased to announce that we are now back on Portland, Maine radio!

WTHT	Auburn, ME	HD 99.9	6 TO 9 a.m. EST
WBACH	Portland, ME	HD 96.9	6 TO 9 a.m. EST
WBACH	Portland, ME	FM 96.9	6 TO 9 a.m. EST

We are very happy to be back in Portland!

### Product Spotlight

## Organic Laboratories, Inc. Organocide Plant Doctor

Organocide Plant Doctor is an earth-friendly broad-spectrum systemic fungicide for disease control and preventative for use on turf, fruit trees, vegetables, ornamentals and flowers.

Organocide Plant Doctor prevents and controls a myriad of plant diseases, including those that cause root rot, leaf and stem blights, leaf spots and many others! A systemic product, it has a foliar or root application that will work its way throughout the entire plant to prevent disease and attack existing disease above and below ground. Once inside the plant, Organocide Plant Doctor increases plant metabolism so plants grow faster, bloom more and have an increased yield, while providing a nutritional boost of potassium and phosphorous, essential nutrients for plant growth.

# Monterey Lawn and Garden

## Agri-Fos Systemic Fungicide

Agri-Fos is based on the potassium salts of Phosphorous Acid. It is very effective against Phytophthora and Pythium disease on agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plants. This includes P. ramorum which causes Sudden Oak Death, (SOD). It also controls fire blight on apples, pears, and ornamentals and downy mildew on roses and other crops.

Depending upon the usage it can be applied as a soil drench, foliar spray, by soil incorporation, a basal bark treatment or as a bare root dip.

Agri-Fos can be used both as a curative & preventative spray. For downy mildew, treat at first sign of disease as a foliar spray. Treat at 14-21 day intervals.

### Rhubarb A Vegetable Used As Fruit

Nearly 5000 years ago, only rhubarb roots were used (as a laxative) in Ancient China. In the 18th century, people discovered that the stems made a good vegetable--especially when mixed with seasonal fruits like strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries when baking. The stems are tart-tasting and the smaller stems have the best flavor, so pick often while they are small for the best taste. Rhubarb is delicious when added to sweetened sauces, pastries and pies, but I still love eating the raw stems once they are peeled of the thick skin on them and dipped in white sugar. The one thing I want you to remember is that the leaves of the rhubarb plant are poisonous, so do not be tempted to eat them!

Rhubarb is an easy crop to grow in your garden. Once established, it requires little to no care--and the plant has few problems with insects and diseases. Best of all, the plant can last in your garden for up to 20 years and be just as productive from the second year to the 20th year--if you keep it well fertilized and watered when the summer weather gets hot and dry.

This is the time of the year to plant rhubarb as divisions; they are available at your local garden center or nursery as potted plants or dormant buds.. If you have large, well-established plants, this is also the time to divide your plants to make new plants for the future. Individual plants look like large red mushrooms, almost egg-shaped, but shiny red. Some of the rhubarb buds will have broken open and foliage is beginning to form in a clump just above the ground. These buds, or foliage clumps, develop on a ring made by the plant from last fall. As the plant grows larger, the ring will grow larger and produce more buds that will form clumps of foliage with those tasty red stems.

Before you plant the divisions or starter plants, dig a hole 2 feet wide and 12 inches deep and remove all the soil and condition it before putting it back in the hole for planting. Use a 50 pound bag of composted cow manure, compost, or garden coir fibers to improve the soil texture and soil fertility. Remember, the plant will stay productive for up to 20 years, so the better you condition the soil, the better it will produce for you. If your soil is on the sandy side, apply a couple of tablespoons of Soil Moist Granules to help retain soil moisture during the heat of summer--and I also would like to see you mix in Dynamite time-release pellets when you prepare the soil.

Dynamite will feed your plant for 9 months, compared to other products that feed for just 3 to 4 months and the cost is the same. Dynamite is the name of this retail fertilizer used by most greenhouses that grow their own plants in pots or containers, the commercial name is called Nutracoat, and it only comes in 50 pound bags. I have used it for over 30 years with great results. This plant food will get your new plant established quickly in the garden. Blend 4 to 5 tablespoons at the time of planting and blend well in your soil as you prepare for planting. Each spring at the first sign of foliage beginning to form from the plant apply 4 to 5 tablespoons around the plant and work into the soil 3 to 5 inches deep and you're done feeding the plant for the year--great stuff.

If your soil is heavy and wet, be sure to blend in coarse sharp sand--50 pounds; use sand box sand--- also sold at your favorite garden center--or half a bag of pine bark mulch to break apart the clay-like soil in the garden. If your garden has standing water in the early spring or stays wet well into April build a raised garden bed 6 to 8 inches higher than the rest of the garden and your rhubarb will thrive. I also like to cover the ground with a couple inches of the left-over pine bark mulch, garden straw, compost, or chopped up seaweed to control weeds and help retain soil moisture during the summer months. This will also give the plant additional protection during the winter months. The plant will grow and spread to be 3 feet wide and almost as tall as it becomes more mature so give it plenty of room in the garden. If the summer is hot and dry, water the plant regularly, just like the rest of your garden.

In the summer months, the rhubarb plant will produce a large flowering stem that will be covered with masses of creamy white flowers. This flowering stem will grow to be 4 to 5 feet tall, looks beautiful and will make seeds to produce additional plants for next year. I usually remove the flowering stem so the energy the flower needs to grow stays in the plant to keep it productive later on into the summer.

Harvesting the stems of rhubarb starts in the early spring and lasts into the early summer--about 8 weeks. Do not harvest any stems the first year, so the plant can become well established in the garden. The second year you can pick 6 to 10 stems from the plant, and the third year on, up to half of the stems--but not all at the same time. The best way to harvest a stem is to grab the stem at the base of the plant and twist it out of the socket vertically. Cut off the foliage and toss it in your compost pile; remember the foliage is toxic and poisonous. Do not eat it. Use the larger stems when you harvest them from the plant, as they will have more flavors.

The stems of rhubarb will last for over two weeks if washed to remove any soil on them and stored in a perforated plastic bag in your vegetable crisper. I love fresh-picked rhubarb stems if they are cooked fresh out of the garden--or you can cut them into pieces for freezing in freezer bags.

The best varieties are:

'Canada Red,' which has thick, dark red, sweet stalks.

'Valentine' rhubarb is a strong-growing plant for a northern climate Washington D.C. And north, with sweet red stalks.

'Victoria' rhubarb has green stalks with a rosy sheen at the base--not stringy, and very tasty.

'Early Victoria' rhubarb is a new hybrid that matures earlier in the season, with the same qualities as 'Victoria.'

'Macdonald' rhubarb has many smaller stems with rich red color and a great tart taste.

'Sutton' rhubarb has many smaller stems with medium red color and has a great tart taste.

'Champagne' rhubarb has all sizes of stems, with a more pale red coloration to the stems. Very tasty.

You will need two clumps of rhubarb for a family of 4 to 5 people if you like rhubarb cooked by itself or mixed for other berries during the summer months. My favorite is stewed chopped rhubarb that has been chilled in the refrigerator and then spread on toast for breakfast. Try it--you will love it in season. Enjoy!

### **Downy Mildew On Impatiens**

The number one selling annual flower in America, the impatiens, was at the edge of extinction in the US last year, due to a fungus disease called downy mildew. This disease moved from Southern Florida last winter north to Maine and west to Ohio--in just four months. It happened so fast that no one knew what to do to stop the problem. The largest seed producer in the country, Ball Seed Co., was baffled and so were the state universities and extension services across the country. During the winter, annual flower growers across the country were told to start looking for alternative plants to replace this annual, because the spores from this disease would spend the winter in the ground and if impatiens were planted the following spring, they would be quickly infected and die in just a few weeks. By late February, several universities had found the answer to America's favorite flower problem--but if you want to grow them in your garden, it will take a little extra work for you this year.

Two products have been recommended by several state Universities and they are: AGRI-FOS, a systemic disease control made by Monterey Lawn and Garden and Organocide Plant Doctor Systemic Fungicide, (formerly Excel LG) from Organic laboratories--an earth-friendly broad spectrum disease control. Both of these products are available at your local nursery or garden center now and if they do not have this product yet, show them this article and have them order it for you. Remember, you cannot plant impatiens this spring without one of these products being used on your plants.

This disease will not affect the New Guinea hybrids, only the common garden impatiens that we grow in hanging baskets, window boxes, garden containers and in the flower garden. The following Universities have worked hard and long for an answer to this problem: University of Florida-- Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University--Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Auburn University-- Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Penn State University--Extension Educator for Horticulture/Small Fruits, College of Agricultural Sciences and Palm Beach County, FL Cooperative Extension-- Environmental Horticulture Department. Without their many hours of research and hard work this spring would bring us a garden without impatiens--and I know you and I are very grateful of all their work to save America's favorite flower. Thank You.

Downy mildew is caused by high humidity paired with cool nights, which creates the perfect conditions for this disease to develop in your garden. Downy mildew favors about 50 to 70 degrees nighttime temperatures to thrive in the plant. This is what happened last summer. The young plant and the new growth are most susceptible and will show symptoms first. The foliage begins to look a little yellowish or speckled. The symptoms look like nutritional deficiencies. You may notice faint gray lines on top of the leaves or notice the leaf edges curling downward.

As the disease continues to spread on the plant, you will notice a whitish downy-looking growth on the underside of the leaves. This whitish growth is spore-containing structures that have developed from the lower leaf pores. Once this spreads over the plant the leaves and flowers will drop quickly, leaving mostly stems. Many gardeners thought that rabbits had come into the garden and had eaten the foliage from the plant, so they fertilized the plants and applied rabbit repellent to no avail, as the plant quickly rotted and died. It is very important to note that this disease does not infest New Guinea impatiens or Sunpatiens or any other type of flower or herbs.

The disease was first reported in the U.S. in 1942, but the outbreaks were sporadic and confined to small areas or individual gardens. In 2004, things changed and the problem became serious. In 2011 widespread regional outbreaks were reported across the country and by 2012 it had spread all over the country. If you had a problem last year with impatiens plants in your flower bed or containers, it is most likely that the problem will be worse this year. Remember, I told you that the disease or pathogen will overwinter quite well in the soil and will persist for many years to come.

Several days of humid, foggy, drizzly, or otherwise wet weather along with mild temperatures 60 to 73 is required for the disease to develop. If dry weather patterns develop, regardless of the temperature, this will suppress downy mildew--as will low night time temperatures or high late spring and summer afternoon temperatures. The ideal time for downy mildew to develop would be when wet and mild weather conditions develop where you live, when you water the garden on cloudy days, and when you water the garden in the early evening--allowing the plant to stay wet all night long.

Downy mildew can spread two ways in the garden by two different types of disease spores. One type is called zoospores; they move through water and also with the wind. That is why this disease is spread by splashing overhead irrigation, rainfall and the wind. The other type of spore is called oospores, and form inside the plant's tissue, where they can survive for years. Downy mildew is very aggressive and can spread rapidly, so be sure to act quickly if you spot it in the garden. The oospores will survive in plant debris in landscape beds and the soil as well as on containers, tools or benches and walkways of the greenhouse or even on your porch if they were grown there when the disease started to develop.

If you plant impatiens in infected soil or contaminated potting media, the oospores will germinate and trigger a new disease outbreak if conditions are right. Prevention is the only way to stop the problem, so remember eliminate overhead irrigation and night time watering, cut back on fertilizer, space plants further apart to prevent overcrowding--and reducing other stresses on the plant would be very helpful. The best thing to do is to inspect the foliage of your new plants this spring before you plant. Shop at a responsible greenhouse or garden center this spring. If the business is clean, the chances are good

that your seedling will be disease-free. If you notice that some of the plants are having a problem remove them at once from your planting beds or containers and dispose them quickly.

If you notice early symptoms of downy mildew developing, quickly begin recommended fungicide treatments. If you remove an infected plant from your flower bed, plant something other than impatiens in its spot or new and healthy impatiens will quickly become infected. Always dispose of infected plants and NEVER put them in a compost pile or drum type compost maker, as the fresh compost will be infected with the disease spores. When you handle infected plants, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly and before handling non-affected impatiens.

Also do not confuse downy mildew with powdery mildew. Powdery mildew is true fungal pathogens that produce white, flower-like colonies--and they are found on the top of the leaf, NOT under the leaf. Downy mildew, on the other hand, is a completely different kingdom of organisms, more closely related to algae than to fungi. Downy mildew produces a grayish, fuzzy-looking spore and mycelium on the underside of the leaf. The distinction between powdery mildew and downy mildew is important because the fungicide that is effective against one is *not* effective against the other.

If you had a problem last year, the problem is still there and the only way to successfully grow impatiens is to use a recommended fungicide as a preventative. Do not wait to see downy mildew symptoms before you begin spraying, as it will be too late in most cases. Make fungicide applications every seven to ten days when you start planting the garden. This disease is much easier to prevent than it is to eradicate, so begin your spraying program early, and keep to a regular schedule.

The two recommended products to control this problem is Agri-Fos from Monterey Lawn and Garden and Organocide Plant Doctor (formerly Excel) from Organic Laboratories. Follow the recommendations on the package and your plants will grow without the problem of downy mildew this summer. The cost of the fungicide will be about a dollar to treat one hundred square feet of garden with each application.

One last thing pick up either one of these products as soon as possible as shortages are expected with the seriousness of this disease all over the country this summer. Your local garden center will have this product on their shelf now or real soon so get it or reserve it NOW for a wonderful garden filled with impatiens this summer.

If you do not want to spray your plants, than you can plant alternative plants that are resistant to the disease, such as the following. Big leaf or Tuberous begonias, wax begonias, lobelia, Sunpatiens, New Guinea impatiens, coleus, or polka dot plants. Talk to your local greenhouse or garden center for recommendations. Get ready NOW.

## **Alaska Trip**

### **Paul Parent will be hosting a tour that includes:**

Vancouver, BC

- Butchart Gardens--55 acres of floral display!
- Cruising the Inside Passage:
- Ketchikan
- Icy Strait Point
- Juneau
- Skagway

- Hubbard Glacier Cruising
- Seward
- Scenic Drive to Anchorage
- Denali National Park
- Fairbanks City Tour, a tour of the Gold Dredge # 8 and a cruise down the Chena river on the Riverboat Discovery Sternwheeler.

### **Trivia**

#### **This Week's Question**

In the Wars of the Roses, what color was the Lancastrian's rose?

- A. Orange
- B. Purple
- C. Red
- D. White
- E. Yellow

#### **this Week's Prize:**

Bio-tone® Starter Plus

All Natural Plant Food Enhanced with Bacteria and Mycorrhizae

- Microbe-enhanced all natural plant food
- Includes both endo and ecto mycorrhizae
- Grows larger root mass to help plants establish fast
- Promotes bigger blooms
- Reduces transplant loss

#### **Last Week's Question:**

Rosolio is a product made using roses. If someone gave you rosolio, what would you be expected to do with it?

- A. Drink it
- B. Dye cloth with it
- C. Eat it

- D. Polish your shoes with it
- E. Display it

**Last Week's Winner:**

Glenn Conway

**Last Week's Answer:**

A. Drink it. (It's a liqueur.)

**Last Week's Prize:**

Bio-tone® Starter Plus

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!

**Garden Journal**

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



## Featured Recipe: Luscious Creamy Lemon Pie

### **What You'll Need:**

- 1 (6 ounce) can frozen lemonade
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 (8 ounce) container Cool Whip or whipped cream
- 1 graham cracker crust (You can buy this ready-made)

### **Step by Step:**

- Use mixer and mix all ingredients until fluffy.
- Pour into graham cracker crust.
- Refrigerate until firm (this is a good one to make a day before--and let set until you are ready to use.)
- Top with whipped cream or Cool Whip and garnish with lemons.

Note: This can also be made with limeade.

### **Contact Information:**

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Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM

Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM