

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 12.01	Paul Parent Garden Club News	January 5, 2012
 <p data-bbox="560 483 839 510">Quotation of the Week:</p> <p data-bbox="349 517 1027 568">"We may think that we are tending our garden, but of course, in many different ways, it is the garden and the plants that are nurturing us." — Jenny Uglow</p> <div data-bbox="549 636 729 669" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 113px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="213 701 1062 792">Miracle-Gro® Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food</p> <p data-bbox="204 833 1054 896">It is now easy to achieve a spectacular landscape or container garden. You can bring your creativity to life in the garden with the help of Miracle-Gro.</p> <ul data-bbox="237 927 871 1189" style="list-style-type: none">• Grow more spectacular flowers, bigger vegetables, lush foliage and stronger trees and shrubs!• The easiest way to feed and water your garden. Instantly feeds through both the leaves (foliar) and roots (soil zones).• Ideal for all plants (indoor and outdoor), flowers, vegetables, and all soil and water conditions.• Safe for all plants--won't burn when used as directed. <div data-bbox="903 931 1064 1198" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 101px; height: 119px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <div data-bbox="582 1267 694 1301" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 70px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="213 1346 1062 1469">If you are looking for a flowering plant for the house that can be transplanted outside later, look at the primrose. The primrose is a perennial flowering plant that is among a handful of flowers that bloom early in the spring gardens outside. Its Latin name, <i>Primula vulgaris</i>, implies earliness and means "early." Because it flowers early naturally, the primrose can be forced to bloom even earlier in the greenhouse for your enjoyment in your home at this time of the year.</p> <p data-bbox="213 1487 1054 1610">The foliage is a ground-hugging rosette of shiny green leaves that are medium to dark green in color. The leaves are 4 to 6 inches long and only about an inch wide. The leaves have a rough look to them, as they seem wrinkled or puckered, with small teeth on the edges of the leaf--and a bit hairy. Once you see the rosette growth habit, you will always be able to distinguish this plant from all the rest of the perennials in your garden.</p> <p data-bbox="213 1628 1062 1879">As soon as the frost is out of the ground, the leaves begin to emerge from the ground, and before you know it the flowers pop out of the center of the foliage. The plant will grow 4 to 6 inches tall and spread to about 8 to 10 inches wide. Growth will start in most gardens during March if the snow has melted and the weather has begun to warm up. The flowers come on short stems, 3 to 4 inches tall, and hold clusters of flowers. Each flower has five petals and the bloom resembles a shallow trumpet. The flower colors are BRIGHT, in shades of yellow, red, blue, purple and white. All the flowers have a bright yellow center, like a "bull's eye." The flowers will last from March to May in the garden outdoors and for 4 to 6 weeks indoors, if you can keep them cool. The best temperature indoors is 50 to 60 degrees; keep them out of south-facing windows where they get sun all day.</p> <p data-bbox="213 1897 1062 2045">The primrose will grow best in a soil that is well-drained, and rich in organic matter like compost and peat moss. Grow them in your garden as a border plant up front and in groups of 3 to 5 for the best show of color. Primroses also will grow well in shaded gardens, rock gardens and wall plantings. If you have a woodland or shaded wildflower garden, this plant is a must. Remember the primrose flowers early; if you are looking for early color to motivate you to get you out in the garden early, this is the plant with all the excitement!</p> <p data-bbox="213 2063 1062 2157">As a houseplant, the primrose makes a great potted plant, all by itself. You can mix it with other flowering or foliage plants. I pick the faded flowers from the stems as they fade; when the stem has no more buds I remove the entire stem right above the foliage at the base of the plant. This prevents the plant from making seeds and the energy stays in the plant, so you can transplant it</p>		<p data-bbox="1123 495 1342 517">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1078 544 1366 618">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1126 725 1335 748">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1078 777 1262 824">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 853 1382 949">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 978 1219 1025">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1055 1313 1151">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1180 1307 1249">Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1359 1374 1435">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1464 1382 1561">(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1592 1208 1615">Your e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1632 1163 1657">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1671 1203 1693">Your name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1711 1163 1736">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1749 1208 1771">Their e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1789 1163 1814">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1827 1208 1850">Their name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1868 1163 1892">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1179 1921 1283 1946">[Send >>]</p> <p data-bbox="1107 2114 1358 2136">Where can I find Paul on</p>

into the garden in mid to late April.

No fertilizer is needed in the house, but once you plant in the garden, use compost and a product like Flower Thrive, Bio-Tone or Dr. Earth Starter Fertilizer, as they contain microbes and mycorrhizae for a quick start to the root system. The new garden technology in fertilizer will astound you because it is a reproduction of what lives in your soil already--and plants love it. Treated with this technology, plants grow better, faster, healthier, bloom more and need less care. Enjoy indoors now and plant outside for years of enjoyment in your garden outside.

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In late January or early February, when you are sure that spring will never get here, there is one plant that has a surprise for you! The surprise is that this plant will begin to flower in winter, and the flowers will last until March. The witch hazel is a winter garden surprise for those of us with cabin fever during the winter. One of the hybrids, 'Arnold Promise,' will have yellow flowers, and its sister 'Diane' will have red flowers. 'Arnold Promise' was voted Plant of the Year just a few years ago. This hybrid was introduced to gardeners at Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts, where it was developed, hence its name.

The flowers of witch hazel are either in pairs or two pairs together. When the bud opens, four petals will develop and they will resemble straps about one inch long and often slightly twisted. If you're able to get to the plant through the snow cover in the garden, you will be in for a second treat--it is fragrant. Plant this shrub close by, so you can see and smell it during the long days of winter. On days that the weather is cold and windy, the flowers just coil up like New Years horns. Blow on a flower and it opens; stop and the horn will roll back in place. This keeps the petals lasting longer. The leaves appear in May and are dark green and two to four inches long.

Plant witch hazel in a full sun location for the best flowers--but I have seen them growing in partial shade and they looked good. They love a rich soil, so when planting be sure to add plenty of organic matter such as peat moss, compost and animal manure. They will do best in a moist soil that is well-drained and never has standing water. Fertilize spring and fall with Plant Tone fertilizer for the first couple of years to get off to a good start. After the plant is established, fertilize once a year to help it make flowers for the next year. Sunny locations that are hot, dry and exposed will slow down the growth of the plant and give you fewer flowers. So give them a little shelter with evergreens as a background and the flowers will be more noticeable.

Wichhazel will grow 10 to 20 feet tall and as wide, so I prune them to control the size in April before the foliage develops. That way the plant has time to make new growth and flowers after you prune it. If you see new shoots that grow quickly straight up, remove them, as they are suckers and will not flower.

In the fall, another treat for you--the foliage will turn to a rich yellow to orange with some red. I love this plant when it has the ground around it covered with English ivy or Pachysandra and the flowers appear. Like the background effect, the flowers become more visible with a ground cover. Great for a wildflower garden, Japanese garden, or a spot in the yard where you can see it from the kitchen window during those long days of winter--it will help you cope!

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We all know that winter is still here, and we see that spring is coming--but not fast enough for most of us. I think you should know of a winter-flowering house plant called the pocketbook plant. This is the time of the year when you will find it at your local greenhouse or garden center. It is an annual-type flowering plant that will blossom for 4 to 6 weeks in your home. Enjoy the plant and then recycle it to compost, where it will help your outside garden plants grow better.

The "pocketbook plant" is a strange name for a plant--until you look closely at the wonderful flowers. The flowers grow in clusters on short stems from the tips of the branches. The young flower buds resemble tiny balloons. As the flowers mature, they will begin to develop a unique look that resembles an old fashioned pouch like that pocketbook that your grandmother or great grandmother once carried.

The plant grows to 12 to 15 inches tall and just as wide. The foliage is heart-shaped, deep green and very soft to touch. The leaf is also a little floppy looking, and will stack on top of other leaves. Because of this, the plant will show signs of drying out quickly. Water the plant regularly and plentifully. If your home is dry with forced hot air heat, place the plant on a tray filled with stones and add water daily to the tray to increase the humidity around the plant, and it will bloom much longer.

As the tiny balloon-like flowers mature into pocketbook-like flowers, the color of the flower will also intensify. The colors will range from bright yellow to orange and red. To complement the flower colors, tiny red or brown spots will decorate them like freckles on a child's face. The flower looks almost like a half-filled balloon and matures to 1-1.5 inches wide.

The plants will do best in bright light--but not direct sunshine. The heat of the sun will make them look wilted. Keep them in a cool room and they will flower for you longer--50-60 degrees is best.

Sunday mornings?

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Keep them away from drafts or your foliage will get spotty. When watering the plant, use warm water and keep it off the foliage. Cold water will spot the foliage, just as it spots African violets.

When you pick out this plant, select one with many small flower buds and the blooming time will last longer. If the weather is cold outside, be sure the sales person wraps the plant well before you take it from a warm greenhouse to a cold car. No fertilizer is needed as it is a gift-type plant and will not bloom a second time. This colorful plant is telling you that spring is just around the corner. Enjoy!

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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

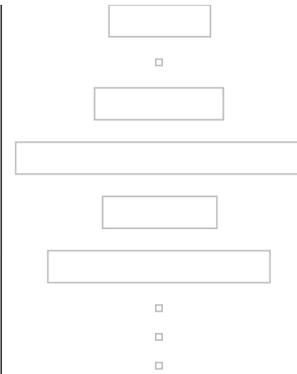
The Euphorbia family has almost as many succulents as the Cactus family, but also has some non-succulent plants. What popular non-succulent Christmas plant is a Euphorbia?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

This Week's Prize:

Wilt-Pruf®...The Safe Way To Reduce Moisture Loss When Plants Are Under Water Stress due to:

- winter kill
- windburn



- drought
- transplant shock

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Last Week's Question

If you pop a fruit cultivar called 'Muller Thurgau' in your mouth, what did you just eat?

Last Week's Winner:

Steven Rothert

Last Week's Answer:

A white grape. (Used for making white wine, but quite edible.)

Last Week's Prize:

Wilt-Pruf®

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

Double Tomato Bruschetta



What You'll Need:

- 6 Roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, stems removed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 French baguette
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Step by Step:

- Preheat the oven on broiler setting.
- In a large bowl, combine the Roma tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, basil, salt, and pepper. Allow the mixture to sit for 10 minutes.
- Cut the baguette into 3/4-inch slices. On a baking sheet, arrange the baguette slices in a single layer. Broil for 1 to 2 minutes, until slightly brown.
- Divide the tomato mixture evenly over the baguette slices. Top the slices with mozzarella cheese.
- Broil for 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Yield: 12 servings



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