

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 12.02	Paul Parent Garden Club News	January 13, 2012
 <p>Featured Quote:</p> <p>"I am writing in the garden. To write as one should of a garden one must write not outside it or merely somewhere near it, but in the garden." ~ Frances Hodgson Burnett</p> <div data-bbox="557 629 721 663" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p>The perfect gift for your favorite gardener on Valentine's Day! Gardens require planning and cultivation, yielding beauty and joy. This garden journal helps make planning and organizing easy, and is autographed personally by Paul! The cover holds a 5x7 or 4x6 photo and a heavy-duty D-ring binder. Includes free delivery!</p> <p>Also included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>Order early to insure delivery and have Paul sign it for you. Half the price of a dozen red roses--and it lasts for three years! Click here to order online.</p> <div data-bbox="584 1666 695 1700" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 70px; height: 15px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p>It's the middle of winter and difficult to find a good flowering houseplant that will provide you with weeks and weeks of color and be easy to grow at the same time. The holidays are over and it's time to visit your local greenhouse or florist and ask to see their kalanchoe plants, because spring is a long 68 days away and you need flowering plants on your window sill to keep you SANE. It's been a long winter so far with the holidays, school vacation and the kids. No snow and now the real cold weather is here. Believe me, the Kalanchoe plant is just what you need to keep away "Cabin Fever" during the short days of winter, when it starts to get dark at 4:30 at night.</p> <p>Kalanchoe is a plant that originated in Madagascar, making it a tropical plant--but it will tolerate a room temperature of as low as 50 to 55 degrees. This wonderful plant is in the succulent family and has fleshy leaves that are thick and able to hold much water for the plant, similar to the hens and chickens you may have in your perennial garden outside. This plant can tolerate a dry atmosphere and will do very well in a home heated with forced hot air heat, a wood or coal stove--and can even be kept near a fireplace. It will also thrive in a sunny window where many plants wilt, dry up quickly and die.</p> <p>The leaves are oval and look similar in shape to the African violet leaf, 2 to 4 inches long and 1 to</p>	<p>Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p>Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p>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>Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p> <p>(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)</p> <p>Your e-mail []</p> <p>Your name []</p> <p>Their e-mail []</p> <p>Their name []</p> <p>[Send >>]</p> <p>Where can I find Paul on</p>	

2 inches wide. The edge of the leaf has unique oval indentations; it is deep green and very shiny. The plant will grow 10 to 20 inches tall and the leaves grow in pairs opposite from each other on the fleshy stems. The flowers develop on a strong stem where the leaf is attached to the main stem of the plant. This strong stem that grow 3 to 4 inches long and on the end of the flower stem, small four-petal tubular flowers develop in clusters 3 to 4 inches across. Each flower cluster contains 25 to 50 flowers depending on the size of the plant.

Plants grow best in a bright direct sunlight or a south facing window in your home. If you choose to keep the plant over to *flower again* next year like many of us do our Christmas cactus, keep it outside during the summer in a shaded area with the Christmas cactus and treat the plant the same way.

Plants do best with temperatures 55 to 70 degrees and the flowers will last longer in room with cooler temperatures during the winter months. During the spring to fall, the warmer the temperature is, the better it is for plant growth and more flower production during the winter months.

In the late spring or early summer, just before you put the plant outside for the summer re-pot the plant into a new clean container that is 2 inches larger in size. Use a good potting soil with a lot of compost or peat moss added to it--never use garden soil. Once the plant matures and begins to grow large, you can take stem cuttings to make new plants. Use a rooting powder on cuttings taken on the tip of the stems--about 3 to 4 inches long. The best time to take cuttings is in the early spring--April or May; be sure to use a sterilized soil like a seed starter soil.

You can also take leaf cuttings to start new plants; just dip the stem of the leaf into rooting powder and place leaf in a small 4-inch pot filled with seed starting soil. Leaf should form roots in 2 weeks when kept warm and in filtered sunlight. Keep soil moist at all times but never wet.

Kalanchoe should be watered sparingly during the cooler temperature seasons and kept moist during the summer months when the weather is warm but never wet. Always provide good drainage and never allow the plant to set in a saucer of water. When you put the plant outside for the summer, set it on a well-drained surface--never in a saucer. Showers can quickly fill the saucer with water and rot the roots, killing the plant.

During the spring, April to fall, October fertilize the plant every 2 to 3 weeks with a fertilizer like Miracle Grow or Blooming and Rooting plant food. During the rest of the year, do not fertilize the plant--just enjoy the flowers. As the flowers fade, cut and remove the faded flower stems with scissors as close to the main stem as possible.

If you can keep this plant in a room without artificial light, it will continue to flower most of the winter. If the room you place the plant in becomes dark naturally and stays dark all night, it will continue to make flower buds. If you place the plant in a room where you turn on overhead lights, it will make the days longer and no new flower buds will form.

A healthy and happy plant will have a flush of red on the foliage when kept in a sunny location during the winter months. If your lower leaves begin to turn yellow or shrivel you are keeping the soil too dry for the plant. In addition, the leaves are brittle and break easily, so handle them with care. Like all succulents, the leaf will scab over and create a brown edge on the damaged leaf preventing, water loss. These are tough plants but handle them with a bit of care to keep them looking good.

Kalanchoe comes in several colors: scarlet-red, yellow, orange, pink and even white. The flowers are very showy and stay disease-free and insect-free as long as you give them good air circulation and don't jam them close together with other plants. Also never mist water on the flowers or foliage as this will increase the possibility of disease problems and attract insects.

When you choose a plant from your local greenhouse or florist, select a plant with fresh looking, deep green foliage with no sign of damage to it. You also want many flower stems on the plant and many buds on those stems that have not opened yet so you can enjoy the flowers on the plant longer.

If you like this plant, you will also like the Kalanchoe pumila, a hybrid hanging variety with silver-blue leaves and small lilac-pink flowers. The foliage is more toothed along its edge and is more prostrate growing, making a wonderful plant for a hanging basket in your sunny window. One last thing, these plants in the Kalanchoe family will grow best in a clay pot, rather than a plastic container. Enjoy.

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It may be January, but I want to recommend a twin pair of shrubs for you to plant in your yard this spring. Think of colored twigs all winter long, white flowers in the spring, thick green foliage during the summer, and beautiful, rich colored fall foliage. These twin shrubs are a bush type of dogwood that will help get you through the long, cold and snowy days of winter with their unique brightly colored stems. The rest of the year is a bonus to your garden and this plant that will guarantee you four seasons of enjoyment in your garden.

My first experience with this plant came at the University of Massachusetts, where it was planted as a hedge to hide large and tall ugly concrete stairs in front of a building. In early September, it looked like a nice thick hedge of medium green foliage, also used as a background for a perennial garden. When the weather got cold and frosty, the foliage started to change colors and soon this hedge was beautiful, with its rich coppery leaves that stayed on the plant for several weeks.

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As the foliage began to fall from the plant, it looked like most hedge plants with bright green stems. Then, to my surprise, in early October the green stems started to change color as the weather became colder. One side of the stairs, the twigs began to change to a beautiful golden yellow and on the other of the stairs, the twigs started to turn bright and shiny red. The colder the weather got, the brighter the color got on the stems. The twigs were so colorful you never noticed the cement stairs behind them even though the plants had no foliage on them.

The biggest surprise was yet to come because when the snow covered the ground, the plant became more visible and more beautiful. It could also be seen from quite a distance due to the color contrast. In the spring clusters of small 1 inch star shaped flowers developed on the tips of most branches. The flower cluster was almost flat and 3 to 4 inches wide on the plant, and it opened when all the foliage had developed on the plant in May. The flowers are not as showy as the Dogwood tree but they look very nice with the shiny green foliage of the plant.

The Red and Yellow Twig Dogwood shrub will grow 6 to 8 feet tall and just as wide. The plant resembles an upright growing mound thick with foliage, and the branches are stiff and firm, keeping its shape well. You can prune the plant to control the size of the plant in the early spring and encourage more branching. As the stems begin to age after 3 to 4 years in the ground, the stems will also begin to become woody looking and turn gray, losing its wonderful winter color.

In the early spring just before the foliage begins to develop is the best time to prune back the older stems right to the ground. The older and mature branches are more visible, making it easier for you to remove them, keeping only the colored stems. By removing the older stems, you will encourage new shoots to develop at the base of the plant, rejuvenating the red stems in the plant. If you like the flowers, you can also wait until the plant finishes blooming before cutting back the plant.

If you prune back the plant every year and remove the gray branches, your plant will stay very showy. If you just prune off the top of the plant to control the height and width of the plant, new shoots will develop where you cut back the plant and the bottom of these stems will soon turn gray as they age. I recommend that you cut back the plant every year and remove the gray stems right to the ground to keep all the color on the stems.

By pruning every year, you can easily control the size of the plant and color of the stems. If your plant is overgrown, it may be time to cut the entire plant in half and then remove one third of the stems right to the ground. This will encourage new colorful shoots at the base of the plant and also encourage new growth to develop on top of the branches remaining on the plant. Next year, remove half of the remaining gray branches, and then the final third the following year--and you have gradually rejuvenated the plant back to all red twigs.

The Red and Yellow Twig Dogwood will make a wonderful privacy hedge, as it will grow 2 to 3 feet a year in height and width. Space plants every 6 to 8 feet to create a wonderful thick hedge for privacy or to create a noise barrier from the traffic. The foliage is clean and neat looking, making a wonderful background for perennial or annual gardens or plant a single plant as a specimen plant along a fence or up against a building. If you have a white vinyl stockade fence for privacy and it's visible from your windows, plant these Dogwoods in front of the fence to enjoy the winter color.

Plant the Dogwood in a full sun to half a day of shade location in your garden. Prepare the hole with compost, animal manure and peat moss. If your soil is sandy, add a bit of Soil Moist granules, as this plant loves moisture. It will do quite well in soils that are wet and heavy. The plant will also tolerate a bit of road salt better than most other hedge type plants. This wonderful Dogwood will also do quite well in areas near the water's edge, like a stream or pond for winter color.

Both colors are very hardy and will tolerate winters with temperatures dipping below minus 40 degrees. If you live near the seashore, these plants will also tolerate the winds off the ocean. Besides the green leaf variety there is now a new variegated leaf variety with creamy- white margins, which will give you additional color all summer long in the garden. Variegated leaf varieties are available with both red and yellow twigs during the winter months.

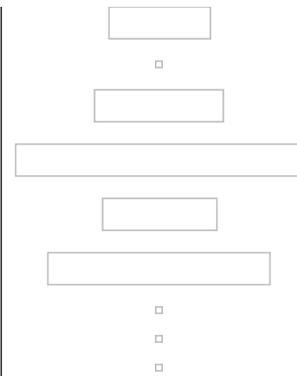
Fertilize every spring with a granular fertilizer like Plant Tone or Dr. Earth Shrub fertilizer with Pro-biotic to encourage new shoots to develop from the base of the plant and new growth on top of the existing branches. Fertilizer is the key to a lot of new shoots and brighter color during the winter months. Insect and disease problems are not a problem unless we have a rainy summer, and then leaf spot could develop on the foliage and easily controlled with Serenade fungicide.

The red twigs are wonderful to use in flower arrangements during the winter holidays with carnations, roses and mums, because of the wonderful shiny red stems. Place them in window boxes or containers with mixed evergreens and they will stay red all winter long outside. The yellow twig types work very well during the Easter celebrations with cut flowers or in the pots with your lilies.

If you have a large hedge and it needs to be pruned think about selling some of those branches to your local florist this Valentine's day to add to those wonderful red roses. Cut a few branches 18 to 24 inches long "NOW" and bring them to the Florist and I am sure they will buy everything you can cut from your overgrown plants and you won't have to prune when spring arrives. With the extra money, you can buy roses for your sweetheart--and maybe dinner. Enjoy.

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Let's use the winter months wisely this year to make our gardens of 2012 the ones to remember. The garden that is prepared properly will produce plants that will develop better, perform better,



thrive and because of this these plants will be more resistant to insects and disease problems. If you want your plants to reward you for your efforts, let's take a few minutes and talk about the "basics" that we sometimes forget all about the sun, the soil and the care.

When you look to purchase a new home I know you have heard this phrase; "Location, Location, Location." This is the first step when planning your garden, because the specially chosen plants you want to grow in your yard will need specific growing conditions. Look around your property and pick the right location first. Sunshine, or should I say the intensity and duration of the sunshine, is the first and most important factor to consider for a specific type of garden.

Stand in the middle of your yard and say to yourself the following: "southern exposure is the best place to grow a garden; next best is eastern exposure with morning sunshine, western exposure with late in the day sun and last--but not least--is a northern exposure for the shade garden."

Now break down the yard again into two main areas. The front of the house--this is your formal area for the public view and for you to show off what you can do in the garden--your "bragging rights." The back of the house is your private area, a working area and a place for all to enjoy your property, even a place to hang out the laundry so the neighbors don't see your underwear drying in the sunshine.

When you design your home landscaping, you will want to scatter color for all seasons in front of the house because your yard is seen all year. The back yard is enjoyed from May to October by you and your family and you should concentrate on plants that give you enjoyment while you're there to enjoy it. If you're not sitting on your deck during April, why plant azaleas that are in bloom at that time there? Save the space for hydrangeas (for example) that will flower July, August and September when you're there to enjoy your back yard deck.

This winter, make a plan of your property, take pictures of what is there, and visit your local nursery or garden center for advice to improve what you currently have in place. I'm not saying start over--what I want you to do is ask for help to improve what you currently have. If you want to make your yard kid friendly, if you want to install a waterfall and fish pond, if you just want a garden to enjoy while you're outside enjoying the summer. Tell the person whether you like gardening and would enjoy working in one or whether you'd rather plant it and forget it.

Many nurseries can make suggestions to help you out with a quick plan of your yard or, for a few dollars, they can design a full-scale plan for the entire property. If you're going to do it yourself, do it in sections--one garden area at a time--so you can enjoy your work in the yard. Alternatively, you can hire someone to do it for you--and in a short time, your gardens are all in place. Start with a plan, visit the nursery and look at the plants suggested for your yard and ask your gardening friends about these plants, even show them your plan for their feedback. Your gardening friends know you and how you enjoy your yard and I'm sure they will be happy to give you suggestions or recommendation to improve on the current plan to fit your needs better.

One last thing before having your yard landscaped and very important, always go to the nursery to select and tag the plants to be used in your yard. Tag the trees to be used, as you know what type of character you would enjoy from that plant. You're part of this design and you should have the right to select the plants to be used in your garden.

Soil preparation is also very important and make sure you condition the soil before planting. Soil additives like compost, animal manure or even digging an oversize hole and back filling with extra top soil or loam can make a big difference in the development of your plants. If your soil is sandy, stony or heavy clay without proper conditioning, your plants will not perform properly once installed in your yard without lots of extra help from you during the year.

When the plants arrive, be home to examine the plants before they are planted. Have the landscaper set up the planting to your liking before they plant. Be there and stay involved during the planting because some time looking out the kitchen window a plant will not do what you want it to unless it is moved just a couple feet over to the right or left that may not be noticeable on your plan. Work with the Foreman and his helpers but don't become a pest!

Ask for their suggestions while they plant, as they have the experience and they want you to be happy with their work. You never know what you will find while planting and it may be necessary to move things around a bit or even bring in extra top soil and plant on a raised mound to do the job right. This is an investment in your home--just like a rug or couch in the living room--so be happy before it's all planted and the landscape people have left.

When you select a plant, find out how to care for it and what you can expect from that plant's performance in your yard. Make sure before the landscape crew leaves that you walk the property with them and they answer all your questions about the plants and their care. If you should see a problem developing, don't wait. Call the nursery that did the planting or where you purchased the plant that you planted.

Try to purchase plants that will do several things for you, like spring flowers with and fall fruit, summer flowers with fall colored foliage, a thick-growing privacy hedge with unusual winter character. If your town is always on water restrictions during the summer months, how about plants that require less watering or plants that will grow well in wet areas and help to drink up the extra surface water. If you live on a corner lot, how about selecting a fast growing plant to create a privacy hedge and control the road noise at the same time. Something that is hard to find in nature is a plant that flowers and is fragrant at the same time.

Think seasons of the year and what these plants have to offer you each season, think of the maintenance required by you during the year, and the benefits of the plants to your living space. Do your research first, then ask questions, ask more questions, and only then plan your living area outside when you know the benefits of each plant. Remember my motto: "There are no dumb garden questions!!!" Enjoy.

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Featured Recipe: Apple Crunch Salad

What you need:

- 2 cups cubed cooked chicken or turkey breast
- 1 cup diced eating apples
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onions
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon sour cream
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Step by Step:

- Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl.
- Combine mayonnaise and remaining ingredients in a second bowl, stirring well with a whisk.
- Add the mayonnaise mixture to the large bowl, tossing well to coat.

Yield: 4 servings



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