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Edition 10.07	Paul Parent Garden Club News	February 18, 2010
<p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE :</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">"Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." ~William Wordsworth</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;">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 style="text-align: center;">Converted Organics Lawn & Turf fertilizer</p> <p>Converted Organics Lawn & Turf fertilizer is derived from all natural organic ingredients. The 8-1-4 NPK formulation provides the perfect combination of nutrients to produce deep rich color and dense turf. The 8-1-4 all-natural lawn food formulation is safe for people, plants and the environment; no warning flags and no waiting period before it is safe to resume lawn activity.</p> <p>Converted Organics will deliver professional results and work the way nature intended, by delivering nutrients to the soil and making them available when the grass calls for them. It accomplishes all this with fewer applications, because of the slow, long-lasting nutrient release properties of the fertilizer and the delivery of the nutrients to the grass through the soil.</p> <p>A 2006 Cornell University study confirms that the Lawn & Turf products seemed to offer significant disease suppression that could translate into a 75 to 50 percent reduction in fungicide use.</p> <p>~ Safe ~ Fewer Applications ~ Great Results ~ ~ Restores Nutritional Value ~ Enriches the Soil ~ All good reasons to use Converted Organics Lawn & Turf fertilizer!</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 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;"><input type="text"/></p> <p>When I was ten years old, my Mother received free seed packets by saving the end stickers from the bag that bread came in. With five kids, it did not take long for her to collect enough Wonder Bread stickers for seeds for the whole yard. That was 50 years ago; in those days there were very few seeds for the shade garden. At that time there was one perennial that was king of the shade garden--and still is today. That plant is the hosta!</p> <p>Hosta is shade-tolerant, rather than shade-loving. It will thrive on the edges of woodlands, under high limbed trees like oaks, maples, pines and spruce. Hosta will also grow well in the back of the house, a fence or at the base of a stone wall. The best place to grow hosta is open wooded areas, filtered shaded areas and in gardens with only morning sunshine.</p> <p>If you can grow rhododendrons, azaleas, mountain laurel and hollies in your foundation plantings you can grow hosta. For the best hosta plants select a garden or planting area that is sheltered from winds that can steal the moisture from the plant's foliage during the hot days of summer.</p> <p>Hostas have big leaves and the wind can steal water from the plant quickly. They are frost-hardy perennials with a fibrous root system. The plant grows in a compact rounded mound of wonderful colored, variegated or green foliage.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Trip to Croatia</p> <p>Join us this spring as we visit Croatia. (Click here for more information.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Subscribe to our newsletter!</p>

From the center of the plant will rise tall stems filled with tubular, bell-like, funnel-like and sometimes almost spider-like flowers. The flowers will range from white to purple in color, and single to double petals. If the bees do their job, the flowers will produce small jelly bean shaped seed pods.

The foliage appears in early spring and last well into the fall. The foliage of the hosta is what most of us grow the plant for--flowers are a bonus. Each leaf has a long stem that lifts it from the ground to help display the leaf color, shape, texture and unusual character. Variegated leaf varieties are unique as no two leaves on the plant are identical. Did you know that hostas have juvenile small foliage in the spring and larger summer foliage?

When my Dad first planted hosta on the shaded side of the house, he had very few varieties to choose from: solid green leaf and green and white variegated forms. Today hostas come in many forms and are classified by size, shape, leaf blade, finish, color, and venation. Also by size--miniature to giant--almost like we grade eggs.

If you want to grow hostas, you will need a fertile soil with a lot of organic matter, such as compost, animal manure or peat moss. The garden soil should be kept moist at all times but well drained--with no standing water ever! Clay-type soil must be broken up with conditioners such as compost and coarse sand. Provide shade for the leaves and protection from the wind. Plants grow best with one inch of water per week and spring fertilization. I use a good perennial fertilizer such as Plant-tone, Dr. Earth General Purpose, or Bradfield Organics General Purpose Organic Plant Food. Remember--the healthier the soil, the better it is fed, and if you provide the right amount of light the plant will grow better.

Add a little bark mulch or compost around the plant to control weeds, hold summer moisture around the plant and help protect the plant during the winter and your shade garden will be one to enjoy all summer. If slugs appear, use Sluggo or Sluggo Plus to control them, and remember--these two products are safe and effective.

When winter comes to its end, look to the common flowering quince to begin the spring season. Quince is one of the earliest flowering shrubs of the spring season. Not as showy as the well known forsythia shrub but it brings us a welcome sign that spring is here. If you can plant the quince in a south facing exposure--away from wind and protected--you will be in for a real treat. The flowers begin to open near the ground first and move up the stems as the temperatures increase outside. You can even cut branches from the plant NOW and force them into bloom indoors in a tall vase filled with water.

The quince grows in an unruly shaped mound that is just as tall as it is wide. It will grow to 6 feet tall but can be easily pruned on a yearly schedule and kept to 4 feet tall or less. Pruning is required to encourage new growth, because the new growth this year will make flowers for next year. After the flowers fade, remove some of the old wood to make room for the new growth--do not be scared to prune! Say to yourself "I am doing this for your own good," and the plant will thank you with more flowers the next season. Remember, the plant will have many stems almost like a tangled mass of crisscrossing branches.

The foliage is dark green and shiny. The leaves are 1.5 to 3 inches long and oval shaped. Under all the foliage is a surprise for you--thorns! The bark is dark brown. If you want to build a pretty hedge to divide your property from the neighbors and keep them out, this is your plant.

The flowers resemble small roses with multi petals. The flowers are numerous on the tips of the branches and run down the stems of the plant. Each flower will open to 1 to 2 inches in diameter and have a yellow center. The flower color range is from pure white, soft pink, salmon to scarlet red. As the flowers mature, the color will fade, giving the plant a multi-colored look. Some of the flowers will be single and some double, on the same plant. The flowering cycle is 4 to 6 weeks, longer than most because of the outside temperatures being cooler at this time of the year. The warmer the outside temperatures, the shorter time a plant will bloom.

With a little bit of luck Mother Nature will give you a present. This plant will make some fruit that will grow 2 to 3 inches round, pale yellow to a blush color, resembling a pear and as hard as a rock. The fruit will make a great tasting jam or jelly--which can often be found in Cape Cod gift shops.

You can plant in a part shade area as well as a full sun location. The best plant will grow in a rich soil with a lot of organic matter, such as animal manure or compost. Well-drained soil with no standing water is best--and sandy rather than clay-type soils. Fertilize in the spring after pruning to encourage more flowers. Build a mulch bed around the plant and it will make it easier to mow the grass around the plant. The only problem you will have is in the fall when leaves from trees fall on the quince and you want to remove them. Just remember THORNS!!

If you are looking for a shade tree that will thrive in our New England climate of four seasons, look no further than the 'Little Leaf' linden. From Presque Isle, Maine to Providence, Rhode Island, there is no better tree for your front lawn. Linden means "lime" tree and that is because of the wonderful fall color the leaves turn to--bright golden yellow. When the sun shines behind it, the color will definitely excite you.

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The linden tree will tolerate just about any soil type from heavy clay soils, sandy loam and soils that are very acid. The linden tree will tolerate dry soil much better than most other deciduous trees. The linden tree is widely used as a street tree, often planted in parks and golf courses--and makes a wonderful tree for shade on your front lawn.

The branching structure is pyramidal when young and, like us, with age it will change to pyramidal and rounded. Because of the dense branching and thick foliage, it is one of the trees commonly selected to replace dying American elms in parks and along the roads in the center of many towns.

The leaves are 1.5 to 3 inches long, with small teeth on the edges; they are heart-shaped and dark green. They have the ability to grow most anywhere, with strong and dense branching not damaged easily in icy weather, and able to cope with some road salt. They are long-lived.

The linden also has a second name in the industry--the "Bee Tree." In the month of June, the tree is covered with thousands of fragrant cream-yellow flowers. If the bees do their job, a inconspicuous nut develops but does not make a mess on the lawn. Bumblebees and honey bees feed on the flower at a time when there is not much else for them to feed on. Bees are not a problem in your yard, as the feeding period is short and they are too busy collecting pollen to bother you.

The linden will grow up to 60 to 75 feet tall and 35 to 45 feet wide. As the tree matures, try not to remove the lower branches, as they give the tree character. Remove just enough branches so you can mow and walk under the tree. Sometimes when young, the linden will produce many suckers at the base of the tree. Just cut them off and they will stop growing.

In the medical industry, the Linden has many qualities including soothing tension and irritability. It is also used to reduce cholesterol, helps the blood and lowers blood pressure. Another important contribution to human life was the fiber in the inner bark called, "bast". Before the fiber of hemp was discovered this tree--the linden--was mainly used for rope, string, fishing nets, and lumber; today it is used for SHADE on your lawn.

Plant the linden in full sunshine for the best shape when mature. Dig a big hole at least 12 inches larger than the root ball, mix compost or peat moss with the soil you just dug; after planting, put it back in the hole around the plant. Water weekly for the first year; if the tree is over six feet tall, be sure to use a staking kit to hold it down during the first winter. Make a ring of bark mulch or compost around the tree to prevent damage to the trunk when mowing and plant a few flowers around it to insure that you water regularly. Feed spring and fall with Tree-tone or Bradfield Organics Luscious Garden Food 3.1.5 Organic at the rate of 1 pound per inch diameter of tree trunk.



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. Keep 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!



This Week's Question:

Why are some hydrangeas known as "nature's little soil tester"?

This Week's Prize:

One bottle of Vacation.

[Click Here to Answer](#)

Last Week's Question:

What American singer who owns a theme park also has a rose named after her?

Last Week's Prize:

One bottle of Vacation.

Last Week's Winner:

Carolyn A. Martel

Last Week's Answer:

Dolly Parton has both a theme park - Dollywood - and a rose named after her.

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:

Chicken Calvados



This is a crock pot recipe that can be easily adapted for whatever you have available. You can substitute thighs for the breasts, regular brandy or apple juice for apple brandy, and if you can't find Havarti cheese, Gouda or Colby works well.

What You Need

- 2 medium golden delicious apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- 4 large boneless skinless chicken breasts
- Salt
- Freshly ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup French apple brandy, regular brandy, or apple juice
- 4 ounces Havarti cheese, sliced (Gouda or Colby cheese can be substituted for the Havarti)
- Chopped parsley

Step by Step:

- Spread apples in the bottom of a slow cooker.
- Arrange chicken, overlapping pieces slightly, on top of apples.
- Sprinkle with salt, pepper and nutmeg.
- Pour in brandy.
- Cover and cook on low for 6-7 hours.
- Using a slotted spoon, lift chicken and apples to a small baking dish.
- Pour cooking liquid into a small pan and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring often until liquid reduces (8 minutes).
- Pour liquid over chicken.
- Cover each chicken piece with a slice of cheese and broil in oven until cheese is bubbly (about 2 minutes).
- Sprinkle with parsley.

Yield: 4 servings



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