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Edition 11.07	Paul Parent Garden Club News	February 17, 2011
<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> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>		<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;">The Back Porch ComposTumbler</p> <p>Makes Compost in 4-6 weeks!</p> <p>□</p> <p>This size was developed for backyard composting. If you have a city property or if you have a very small yard, this little composter was designed just for you. (There are other sizes; see the link below.) The frame includes two wheels so you can take the compost right to your flower beds and garden areas. You can add to it each day for continuous composting.</p> <p>Specs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 5 cubic ft. (4 bushels, 37 gallons)● Holds about one 30-gallon trash bag● 37 high x 31 wide x 26 deep● Heavy-duty polyethylene drum● Made in the USA● Aerator/drainage units and screened vents● Turning grooves let you grip the drum to turn it● Beautiful sage green color● FREE User and Composting Tips Guide <p>Click here for more information on ComposTumblers of all sizes.</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>		<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 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>If you have always wanted to grow tropical plants in your living room and have had problems because of the direct sunshine and heat in the room, here is a plant for you to consider. The plant is called the pencil tree (<i>Euphorbia tirucalli</i>) and it is a sculptural shrub-like plant. It is often thought of as a type of cactus, but it will thrive in a sunny room. The plant is native to the dry and sandy regions of South Africa and Madagascar.</p> <p>The pencil tree is a strong-growing, spineless plant that has branches that resemble pencil-like growth. This growth is dark green, 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter and each branch will grow 3 to 6 inches long before developing several small dark green leaves on the tip. These small oval leaves, about 1/2 to 1 inch long, stay on the plant for a short time during the growing season. When they fall from the tip of the new growth, new buds will form and soon one to three new branches will develop on the plant.</p> <p>The pencil tree is in the same family as the poinsettia and the crown of thorns plant. All three plants produce a milky white sap that can cause irritation to the skin and the eyes of sensitive people. If you like these plants, the spring time is the best time of the year to start new plants by taking cuttings of the stems. Just make a clean cut at a joint on the stem, wipe off the white milky sap, and dip the cutting in rooting hormone. Place the cuttings in a well-drained sterile soil. Keep them in a bright room, but avoid direct sun until roots begin to form. Soil should be moist during the rooting period; daily misting of the plant will help speed up root development.</p> <p>Pencil tree plants will live in a room with temperatures as high as in the high 90's and will tolerate</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">A Customized Gardening Tour of Ireland</p> <p>Join us for a journey to the beautiful gardens of the Emerald Isle.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div>

temperatures down to mid-40's during the winter. Average home temperatures are recommended for normal plant growth, but it loves the heat. Water the plant regularly from spring to fall, always allowing the plant to dry out slightly before watering again. Remember it may look like a cactus--- but it is not a cactus, and it does need regular watering. Keep the plant almost dry during the winter and on the cool side if possible, as the plant does need to go dormant for a short time during the winter.

Fertilizer is recommended when the plant is growing from spring to fall. Use a liquid fertilizer like Blooming and Rooting from Ferti-lome or Miracle Grow on a monthly basis. Feed from March to October and then *nothing* from November to February, OK? Mark your calendar for the first of the month and that way you will not forget to feed your plants.

The plant will grow well and will need to be repotted every two to three years--usually in the early spring as it begins to wake up from the winter dormancy period. Use a cactus-type soil that is well drained and has some weight to it, as the plant can become top heavy with all the foliage and could tip over if the container is small and light. Be sure that the container has drainage holes in it, and if you're placing the plant outside during the summer, do not place it in a saucer. During rainy periods the plant could set in water and that will rot the root system.

When put outside during the summer, it will love the direct sunshine and it will respond with a lot of new growth during its time in your yard. Be sure to bring the plant back indoors when the kids start back to school in early September as the plant will not tolerate frost. Also keep the plant away from drafty doors and windows, or the foliage could discolor and drop from the plant.

This is a great plant for your home or office and should give you many compliments because of the unique shape and its unusual-looking character. Look for the plant where cactus plants are sold, as even the greenhouse grower thinks of this plant as a type of cactus. I think of this plant--and care for this plant, much as I do the jade plant--as a type of succulent growing plant. If you are looking for a large plant for your home or office, you should ask your favorite greenhouse to try and get it for you. He can get it for you and you will love to add this plant to your collection. Small potted plants in 4 inch pots will be found in the cactus area of the greenhouse if you want to start with a small plant first. Size does not matter; just purchase one, and enjoy it for its character. Enjoy!

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Monday is Presidents Day, so I thought we should talk a bit about the cherry tree. You know, the tree that young George Washington cut down, and when asked by his father, who did it, young George said that he could not tell a lie--that he had done it. Too bad some of our present day politicians were not raised by George's dad. I could not find any information on whether the tree was the flowering or the fruiting type tree, so with the arrival of spring only 31 days away, let me tell you about one of the first flowering trees to bloom in the spring, the flowering cherry tree.

It's fitting that every spring the city of Washington D. C. is filled with the beauty and smell of this tree, as it celebrates the Cherry Blossom Festival. The variety that is planted and dominates the Tidal Basin by the hundreds all over Washington D.C. is *Prunus x yedoensis*, or Yoshino cherry. These cherry trees were a gift from the country of Japan to our country. The Japanese people thought this tree was the most beautiful of all the native flowering trees growing in their country. They wanted the people of the United States to enjoy the tree that they cherish the most, with this gift to the city of Washington D.C.

This tree will grow in a rounded to spreading mound form. When mature it should grow 40 to 50 feet tall and wide in a warm climate like Washington, but 30 to 40 feet tall and wide, where winters are cooler, as in Boston. It is a Zone 5 to 8 plant and will tolerate winters of minus 10 to 20 below zero. Cold weather and snow keep the plant smaller.

The foliage is dark green and oval with a pointed tip, and will grow 2 to 4 inches long. In the fall the foliage will turn bright yellow and stand out in your yard, giving you additional color to enjoy. The foliage develops quickly once the flowers begin to fall from the tree, and that new foliage begins with a copper or bronze color tinge early on before turning green.

The flowers are sacred looking, so delicate on the dark bark of the tree branches. The light pink flower buds, which come in clusters, open to make flowers that will turn pure white. Each flower is 1/2 inch in diameter and has multiple petals. These delicate-looking flowers will cover the entire tree from the tip to the branches to the trunk of the tree like a white cloud. Almost as dramatic as the bloom is the time when the flower petals begin to fall from the plant. When the wind begins to blow your tree will look like a brief snow storm and the flower petals will cover the ground like snow for several days until they disappear into your lawn.

The tree also makes a small black fruit eaten by the birds that will grow to about 1/2 inch in diameter. The fruit will form during June and is not messy. The bark of the tree is smooth and looks like the birch tree bark, with elongated spots on it, except that it is dark gray to black in color.

Plant the flowering cherry in a part shade area on your property, if possible and it will flower longer but it will do very well in full sun also. If you have a sheltered location out of the wind the tree will bloom longer but you may miss the snow storm effect.

Plant the tree in a soil that is well-drained and never forms puddles for long periods of time. Condition the soil when planting with compost, animal manure, or peat moss to help the roots develop more quickly in your garden. If your soil is sandy and dries up quickly, be sure to add Soil-Moist when planting to help hold additional moisture around the root ball. Fertilize spring and fall with Plant-Tone granular fertilizer when it's young and then fertilize in spring only, when it is well established.

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This spring you will be able to purchase mycorrhizae, the new technology of gardening, for faster root development and better growth; use it. Mycorrhizae is wonderful to use around plants that have been damaged in the nursery before planting, damaged or broken root balls, and damage during the winter by snow storms. It will also minimize or eliminate transplanting shock when you move a plant from one garden to another.

Water the tree weekly for the first year, especially during the heat of summer. If your plant is over 6 feet tall, be sure to stake with a tree-staking kit to prevent the tree from moving around with the wind. Windy weather could damage the newly forming roots in the ground. I would also like to see you wrap the trunk of the tree with burlap from the ground to the first branch to help protect the trunk from sun damage during the first couple of winters in your yard.

Create a soil planting bed around the trunk of the tree and cover with bark mulch 3 inches deep to prevent lawnmower and weed whacker damage. Enjoy!

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The hickory tree is a tree that represents "strength" in the forest, for its strong wood and its ability to feed the animals who live there. Today, hickory lumber is more valuable than oak or teak. This symbol of strength during the early years of our country was attested by the nickname of "Old Hickory." During the War of 1812, one of our greatest generals, and then future President, Andrew Jackson, was given this name by his men who came from the hickory groves of Tennessee. His men said that General Andrew Jackson stood in battle like an old hickory tree and did not falter. His men were his family; he shared the ground he slept on and the food he ate with his men and the glory of their battles.

Just in case you forgot, "Old Hickory" and his Tennessee volunteers were responsible for destroying the British forts in Florida and driving out the British and the Indians who backed the British. He also prevented the British soldiers from entering New Orleans during a fierce battle that kept the South in colonial American hands and free from British rule. As President, he sent Lewis and Clark to map out the lands to the Pacific Ocean and back...just to name a few things he did. Today "Old Hickory," Andrew Jackson, is sleeping beneath the towering shagbark hickories in his grave in the gardens at the Hermitage Plantation, his home.

The shagbark hickory is a native growing tree from Maine to Tennessee and beyond. You will recognize this tree because its rough bark, which peels in strips from the bottom, curling up like a lady's skirt blowing in the wind. These strips of curled up exfoliating bark are dark smoky-gray, jagged, rough looking, and like a coat of armor--hence the name shagbark hickory.

The trunk of the tree will grow very straight, with many branches that grow up and as many that grow down--very unusual and seldom seen on other trees. The tree will grow 50 to 75 feet tall and 25 to 40 feet wide in a similar shape to that of the northern oaks. If the soil is rich and deep it will grow well over 100 feet tall. When you stand under the tree you will notice that the ground will be littered with thick strong strips of bark that fell from its trunk.

In the spring the tree will burst its buds making both leaves and "catkins," the flowers of the hickory. The catkins resemble the pussy willow plant you pick in the early spring. These catkins produce a very sweet nut that can only be removed from its pod with a hammer in the late summer. The leaves consist of five deep green leaflets, each 4 to 6 inches long and oblong-shaped. They are arranged with one leaf on the tip, two leaves just below the tip, and two more 2 inches below them--unique to this plant.

The foliage is very aromatic during the summer if there is plenty of rain. During dry summers the foliage will turn brown and fall early, making the tree look a bit naked. The fall color is dull gold and very beautiful with the fall sunshine.

The lumber of this tree is prized for its ability to last outside for long periods of time; only the locust tree lumber is longer lasting. The wood is prized for smoking food such as ham, and today is available for your charcoal stove. It is also used in Cuba for the boxes that hold their famous cigars. The wood burns hotter than most woods used today for heating your home and lasts longer in the stove. One cord of hickory is almost the equivalent in thermal units to a ton of anthracite coal--and it costs less.

This tree is usually not available at your local nursery but your local nursery can find a source of plants for you. This is a great tree to plant on open fields for future generations because of the value of this wood. When young seedlings are established--in a year or two--they will grow 2 to 3 feet each year. Insects and disease problems are very few. If you're looking for an unusual looking tree for your yard, this is one for you.

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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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Join Paul Parent for a garden tour of the Emerald Isle! Note--we are looking for a single female to share a room with a fellow female traveler, as well as a male to share with a male. Save over \$400.00 as roommate.

Tour includes the Cliffs of Moher, Connemara National Park, Brigit's Garden, Muckross Gardens, Bantry House & Gardens, Kilravock Garden, Garnish Island, Annes Grove Garden, Lakemount Gardens, Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre, Heywood Gardens, Powerscourt Gardens, Dublin Castle, Dillon Gardens and much more.

[Click here for details.](#)

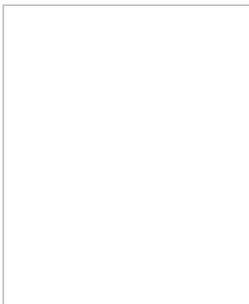


This Week's Question:

What is the National Floral Emblem of the United States?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

This Week's Prize: *Healthy Garden, Healthy You*, by Milo Shammass



Milo takes us through a storytelling journey of soil health, plant health, animal health and how they directly relate to human health.

BONUS: 100 easy-to-grow plants, their growing instructions, and their direct human health benefits and disease prevention properties.



Last Week's Question:

What is the world's largest herb plant? (Hint: It produces a popular fruit.)

Last Week's Winner:

Valerie Jeffers

Last Week's Answer:

The banana plant is the world's largest herb plant.

Last Week's Prize:

Healthy Garden, Healthy You, by Milo Shammass

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: New England Clam Chowder

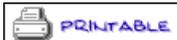
What You'll Need:

- 3 8 oz. bottles of clam juice
- 1 lb. potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 3 slices of bacon, finely chopped
- 2 cups onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 1/4 cup celery, diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 10 oz. cans of whole baby clams or minced clams
- 1 1/4 cups half and half
- 1 tsp. hot pepper sauce
- salt and pepper to taste

Step by Step:

- Melt butter over medium heat in a large pot.
- Add bacon and cook until it begins to brown.
- Add onions, garlic and celery, bay leaf. Sauté until vegetables are soft, about 6 mins.
- Stir in flour and cook 2 mins. (don't let flour brown).
- Gradually whisk in the bottles of clam juice.
- Add potatoes, clams with the juice, half and half and hot pepper sauce.
- Simmer chowder for 5 mins. to blend flavors, stirring frequently.
- Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serves 6



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