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Edition 12.05	Paul Parent Garden Club News	February 2, 2012
 <p>FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p>"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, There is always the garden." ~Minnie Aumonier</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <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>Valentine's Day is only 12 days away, so order now to receive your copy in time! Half the price of a dozen red roses--and it lasts for three years! Click here to order online.</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>If you're a gardener that has a shady yard, consider yourself lucky--yes, lucky. Why? Because you can grow many more unique plants than the gardener who has nothing but direct sun all day, and the flowers you grow will do better than those grown in full sun all day. Just because you cannot grow roses in your yard doesn't make shade a bad thing. Learn to use the shade to your advantage. Appreciate the shade and its benefits to you and your family. Think about this, are you more comfortable relaxing in the shade on a hot summer's day? Consider that working in the garden is a lot easier without the direct sun baring down on you--and your shady patio or deck is a more peaceful place to relax on than in the hot sun.</p> <p>All I want you to think about today is accepting the fact that living and gardening in the shade is like having friends and not enemies. To determine how to enjoy these friends you will need to know more about them. Begin by determining the amount of shade you have in your gardens, because few gardens are in shade all day long unless they are up against the north side of your house and your yard is completely covered with trees. When you're spending the day outside working in the yard is the best time to determine this.</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>

This is what I want you to do. You will need a large pad of paper to draw the individual gardens on, pencils, a kitchen timer and your watch. Begin by drawing out the gardens on the pad of paper, go out into the yard at 8:00 AM, and write on the paper what the light conditions are. If part of the garden is in sun, make a line through the garden where the lights is at 8:00 am and mark the time on the line. Do this for each garden. Set the kitchen timer for one hour and then check out the garden again when the buzzer goes off and make a new line where the sun is at 9:00 am.

Do this all day to determine where you are receiving morning or late in the day sunlight in the garden and where it stays shady all day. The light map you have created will help you select the right plant for each section of your garden. If your shade is made by leaf trees, you will have to wait until the leaves develop on the tree to be more accurate--but with evergreens, it can be done now while you have time. During May is the best time to make this map, as the sun is higher in the sky and will better represent the growing conditions of the summer. This way you will know which plants to choose for the garden while the selection is best at the garden center. You will discover that there are hundreds of trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and, yes, even some vegetables that will thrive in your shady gardens.

The map you created will help you select the best plants for your shade gardens. Plant material is expensive, so why guess and put the wrong plant in the garden and have the plant fail to grow for you? This spring, as you're cleaning out the gardens after the winter and preparing them for the spring, make this sun map before adding new plants or moving old plants around the garden.

Don't complain about what you cannot grow in your garden because of the quality of the sunlight. Instead, learn what to plant and rejoice over what you can now grow in that same garden. The place where you had little to no success in the past can now become your showplace garden of the future. Here are a few things to think about when you create a shade garden.

Here are some benefits of a shady garden:

Plants grown in the shade require less watering all year long, no matter what your soil is like. These plants will also require less fertilizer because they grow slower and less overall than sun growing plants. These plants also require less maintenance and care to grow and thrive in your shade garden. These plants will tolerate abuse and you're neglecting them better than sun-grown plants.

Plants grown in the shade will have better foliage color that is darker and never burnt out by the hot sun. The plants that flower will have more vivid colors as the sun will not fade them. These flowers will blossom longer and the flowers will stay on the plant at least an additional day, keeping your garden more colorful.

Shade gardens have fewer weeds growing in them, as most weeds love the brightness of the sun--especially grassy type weeds like crabgrass. In drought situations, shade garden plants fare better with the heat and lack of rainfall; they also recover faster when the moisture returns to the garden. If you're applying bark mulch or compost to cover the soil to protect the plants roots during the year, less will be needed, saving you money and the labor to apply it to the garden.

Plants grown in the shade have less winter damage or dieback on them when spring arrives, because the temperature around the garden stays more even and the sun is less likely to damage the foliage of evergreen plants. You also get less wind damage to the plants in these gardens, because the plants are more sheltered during the winter months and snow stays on the ground longer, acting like a blanket to protect those less hardy plants in the garden. Fewer insects prefer the shade to the sun garden and that means less spraying and care needed by you.

I want you to think about this carefully, because all perennials, shrubs and trees only flower for a short time, usually 4 to 8 weeks--depending on the time of the year and the temperatures outside. This is your opportunity to select plants for the texture, color, form and shape of their foliage. Think about fruit or berries on these plants and mixing the light and dark foliage for better contrast in the garden. Shade gardens are the perfect place to add lighting fixtures to help show off the branches of the trees overhead and create interesting shadow patterns on the ground.

The number one thing about a shade garden is that you have the ability to make more sun possible for the plants by pruning the lower branches on the trees, making the sunlight stronger or increasing the duration of the sun. In a sun garden, it is often difficult to create shade for the plants without planting large and expensive trees, shrubs, or structures like trellises and arbors to produce shade for the plants.

On the negative side, shade gardens develop more slowly in the spring unless the shade comes from deciduous trees--evergreen trees definitely slow the development of your spring garden. On the other hand, shade gardens are often protected from the frost better and extend the garden appearance longer into the fall season. More ground cover plants prefer the shade and this is the perfect place to add a whole new family of plants to your garden with the many varieties of ferns, which are not grown in the sun.

To me the most limiting factor of a shade garden is the roots of the large trees around the garden and this is where you will need help from your local garden center or nursery to select the right plants. Bring your plan, measurements, the sun map, and pictures of the area along with a sample of your soil and you will soon be on the right path to a beautiful "Shade Garden." Enjoy!

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Millions of years ago, when the mighty dinosaurs roamed the world, many of them fed on the fern plants for food. Today, these dinosaurs are gone but there are still thousands of varieties of fern

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that populate our planet. Believe it or not, fern fossils were recently found in Antarctica--dating back 220 million years. According to William Cullina, director of Horticulture Research of the New England Wild Flower Society, the variety found growing in Antarctica is the same fern found growing from Newfoundland Canada and south to Tennessee and South Carolina. The fern is called "Osmunda claytoniana" and grows in damp woodlands, meadows, and along shady roadways where moisture is present. You may even have it growing in your garden right now.

The fern is well respected as a houseplant and is among the most desired plants for the home gardener. In the garden, the ferns planted outside are another story--with most gardeners, new or the seasoned, this plant receives little to no respect (you could call it the Rodney Dangerfield plant). How could a plant that has been around so long, and is so versatile in the ever-changing environment be so much a mystery to us gardeners? There is a fern for every part of your property, no matter what the growing conditions are like. Not many things bother the fern plant and the traditional problems that plague the other plants in your garden like insects, diseases, animal damage--and even drought--well, the fern has developed ways to cope with them naturally.

I think that because ferns are so different looking from other traditional garden plants we grow, we think that they are going to be difficult to grow and will demand more of our time in the garden. In fact, they are easier to grow and require less care than most other plants in our garden today. If you have been trying to grow grass under tall trees with no success, think ferns. If you have an area with moderate to dense shade and nothing will grow, think ferns. If you have a shady area that stays wet most of the year, think ferns.

Ferns will grow wonderfully in your perennial flowerbeds and help to make your existing perennials more delicate looking with the foliage they produce. If you're tired of planting , impatiens every spring for color to fill in those hard-to-grow areas, think about garden ferns for this spring. Hostas are wonderful perennials and come in many sizes and colors. But just imagine adding clumps of various types of ferns to the planting and how it would soften the coarse and heavy looking hosta foliage.

Ferns also grow very well in rock gardens; they can be planted in cracks and crevices in stone walls and will bring your water features to life. Ferns can live right at the base of large trees where no other plant can survive the shallow roots of the trees and thrive. Ferns also make a wonderful ground cover where you want to keep the area natural looking and maintenance free. If you have a well-established privacy hedge and the lower branches have died out, how about planting small clumps of tall growing ferns? Plant the ferns in between the plants and in just a few months they will fill in shrub bed, softening those thick stems of the hedge and give you some added privacy at ground level. Ferns will thrive inside privet hedges, large lilac clumps, and even overgrown junipers or yews planted around the foundation of the house, where no foliage will grow at the base of the plant.

Most ferns will thrive in soil from neutral to acid; they are not fussy! What they want for soil is one that has been prepared for before planting and conditioned with organic matter such as compost, animal manure, peat moss or even well composted seaweed. If this is not always possible, in the fall blend into the soil your leaves and pine needles to supply the soil with the much needed organic matter, just like the soil found in the woods where they live naturally.

The first year in your garden, fertilize spring and fall with a good organic fertilizer such as Plant-Tone or Dr. Earth Perennial plant fertilizer with Pro biotic. Water weekly to help the roots become established quickly before the heat of summer arrives. During the summer water as the plant requires moisture. If your soil is on the sandy side, be sure to use Soil Moist granules when planting to help retain moisture around the roots until they are established. Soil moist will last for several years and your ferns will love it--especially during the summer months if the garden does get some direct sun during parts of the day.

In the fall, do not remove the dead foliage from around the plants, as it will make a wonderful mulch to help protect the roots of the plant. In time, it will break down into rich organic matter that will feed the plant naturally. Before you plant ferns in your garden do your research, as some varieties have a clump-like growing habit but others will spread rapidly with underground roots and rhizomes and quickly choke out everything around them. Some varieties will make beautiful, tall-growing fertile fronds that will turn dark chocolate brown in the fall, giving your garden additional character during the winter months.

There are so many good hardy ferns you can also consider planting a shade garden that features ferns as the primary theme plant. Just remember ferns come in hundreds of colors, textures, heights--some will climb up your large trees, and some can even be grown for a wonderful spring crop known as "fiddlehead ferns." Fiddlehead ferns are picked in the early spring, steamed like fresh-picked spinach, and seasoned with melted butter, salt and pepper and a bit of white vinegar. I cannot get enough of them when they are in season.

Here are some of my favorite varieties to look for this spring at your local garden center:

The Osmunda Family:

Has the cinnamon fern that grows to four feet tall and just as wide. It has brown cattail wands growing out of the center of the clump in the early spring, which are as nice as the flowers on any plant in your garden. The foliage arches from the center and in the fall turns bright golden yellow.

In addition, the royal fern is in this family. It will thrive in sun to light shade in a moist to wet soil. It will grow 2 to 4 feet tall and just as wide. This fern looks spectacular (some say "regal") in a wet soil with full sun. This is wonderful plant to use near ponds and streams. If you have a water feature, it's almost a necessity.

The Adiantum Family (commonly known as maidenhair ferns):

If you want unusual texture and character, this is your plant. The plant is very delicate looking and low, usually growing under 1 to 2 feet tall and wide. It loves moist soil and will grow in acid soils. The plant will grow in a clump with foliage that resembles arching fingers that grow around a

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semi-circle of foliage. They are a wonderful ground cover but can become invasive if they like where they're growing. Think "delicate and classy" when you consider this family of ferns to plant in a shady garden.

The Dennstaedtia Family (Better known as the hay-scented-fern):

This is the best and hardiest of the ferns that I like, and they will tolerate moist to dry soils. They will also tolerate very acid soils. If you want to quickly cover an area, this is your plant. It is also a wonderful fern to plant under tall trees or to create a wild, natural, wooded look in your yard. This fern is wonderful traditional looking plant with light green foliage that when crushed or bruised will release a wonderful smell of fresh cut hay, giving it its name.

The Athyrium Family:

Another favorite fern family, because of the unusual colors of many shades of green and gray in the foliage on the same plant. Also known as the "Painted Fern" that (to my surprise) is very hardy in my garden in Kennebunk, Maine and has done very well planted under large pines with low-growing branches just a couple of feet over them. Great color when planted with other ferns or evergreen ground covers in the same garden. Enjoy!

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If you like change, this wonderful tropical plant is for you. When the plant is young, the leaves will be in the shape of a heart, but as it matures, the foliage begins to change noticeably. The older growth will always stay heart shaped, but the new growth becomes more arrowhead-like in shape, with a deep lobe near the stem. When young, it will grow more like a clump or bush shape, making a wonderful potted plant for the windowsill or on a plant table. As it matures, it will begin to produce strong main stems or vines and the plant will begin to climb if provided with a stake or slab of wood to attach itself to.

But if you put it in a hanging basket, the strong stems will begin to cascade over the side of the pot giving the plant much character. The plant resembles the common philodendron vine in growth but is more rigid growing--and the running stems are much thicker and stronger. The plant also requires more sunlight to grow than the philodendron; there is a reason for this. The leaf of the arrowhead plant is variegated--and when plants have variegated foliage, there is less green in the leaf, so it requires more light to grow properly.

I mentioned leaf change earlier...as it grows, additional changes begin to happen to the color of the leaf. The new growth is deep green with a creamy white streaks running through it like veins of color at first, but the white areas expand and soon the white and green colors are equal on the leaf. The leaves are very showy and bright looking. As it matures, the deep green color slowly begins to fade but it now begins to blend with the white giving the leaf a soft green look with some veins of darker green streaking. If you can keep the plant out of direct midday sun, some of the leaves will lose all of the green streaking and turn a solid soft white with a tinge of green. What is so unique is that all these changes are happening to the plant at the same time and no two leaves will look the same in shape or color.

Also, as the plant matures and begins to grow larger on the vine-like stems, the individual leaves begin to have longer stems and the plant will lose its compact growth and become more vine-like in appearance. If you want to keep the plant like a bush in shape, with compact growth, you can prune out the shoots that develop. This is a wonderful plant to add to a large container with a plant that has lost its lower foliage and looks old and tired. The arrowhead plant will quickly begin to send out its shoots and, with a bit of help, they will attach themselves to the naked lower branches in the large plant in the container and quickly cover the leafless stems with foliage. This gives the large plant much character and renewed interest.

The arrowhead plant originated from South America and plant breeders have changed it dramatically by growing it from tissue culture rather than cuttings. This method of plant propagation keeps all the good plant traits that they want and they are able to remove the negative ones, creating a new and improved plant. This method has made the plant more disease resistant--which was a real problem earlier. The plants are now more colorful and they have become easier to grow in your home--even with forced hot air heat and low humidity in the air. But best of all...because they are easier to develop, the plants are now less expensive to purchase and more available to your local greenhouse or florist shop.

The older leaves that are heart shaped are 2 to 2.5 inches long and wide but as the new growth develops, the newer arrowhead shaped foliage will begin to grow larger and can reach 3 to 4 inches long and 2 inches wide. The end of the mature leaf has a more rounded point and the leaf is more elongated. If you want to start a new plant from the mature plant you have, just remove the long stems from the plant by taking cuttings 3 to 4 inches long. Each cutting should have four leaves on it and you should make the cut, just before the leaf stem. Then, remove the first leaf where you made the cut and dip the end of the cutting in a rooting hormone that can be purchased from your local garden center. Fill a 4-inch pot with a rich potting soil that has a lot of organic matter added to it like the new "Black Gold" potting soil for houseplants. Place 3 to 5 cuttings in the pot to create a full-looking container quickly. The new plant can stay in that container for up to a year before it will need to be transplanted.

The plant loves humidity, so keep it away from a room with a wood or coal burning stove and away from forced hot air vents. If you notice that some of the leaves are beginning to shrivel and fall, mist the plant and place it on a larger saucer filled with small stones that you can add water to every morning for additional humidity. Standard oil forced hot water heat will not be a problem. Plants do best in a house with temperatures 60 to 70 degrees and they can go outside for the

summer on a shaded porch or breezeway.

For the best growth and foliage colors, fertilize every 2 weeks spring to fall and monthly during the winter months. Use Osmocote fertilizer pellets every 4 months or liquids fertilizers like Miracle-Gro or Blooming and Rooting fertilizer for the best growth. Keep the soil moist at all times, but don't over-water or the lower leaves will begin to turn yellow. Poke your index finger into the soil and feel for moisture is the best way to determine if it needs water. Happy plants can stay in the same pot for up to two years before being transplanted to a larger pot (2 inches larger). It is best to transplant your foliage plants in the early spring as they begin to grow again after the long dormant period during the winter months.

The arrowhead plant is a wonderful plant to use if you're making a dish garden with several other plants in the same container like philodendron, dieffenbachia, English ivy and dracaena. They can grow together for several years if fed and watered faithfully in this container, as all these plants require the same amount of light, water and care to thrive.

The arrowhead plant constantly produces new growth. If you should notice that some of the new growth turns brown before opening, your soil is too dry. Cut off the damaged leaves and water more often. If the leaves all appear to be light green and you do not have a variety of different colored leaves on the same plant, it could be that the plant is getting too much light. Keep the plant in an east- or west-facing window and never in a south window with sun all day.

As with most plants, insects can be a problem so examine the plant when you water or fertilize it to catch the problem early and prevent damage. This plant is sensitive to chemicals but a soft cloth with a warm soapy mix of dishwashing detergent will do a great job of removing the problem.

Look for the new hybrids with much more color such as 'White Butterfly,' with white overlay on a green background, 'Emerald Gem,' with many shades of green or 'Pink Allusion,' with metallic pink highlights. Enjoy!

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Susan Hill's sculpture 'The Giant's Head' in the Lost Gardens of Heligan

A Customized Gardening Tour of England and the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show

Paul Parent hosts a tour that includes the Wisley Gardens, the Chelsea Flower Show, Tower of London, Roman Baths & Pump Room, Riverford Organic Farm, Garden House, Rosemoor Gardens, Lost Gardens of Heligan, Village of Megavissey, Stonehenge, the Wilton House Garden Centre and more.

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Trivia will be returning soon.



Featured Recipe: Slow Cooker French Dip

What You'll Need:

- 4 pounds rump roast (make sure it will fit in your crockpot)
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can beef broth
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can condensed French onion soup
- 1 (12 ounce) can or bottle **dark** beer (stout recommended)
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder (or to taste)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 6 French or hoagie rolls
- Approx. 2 tablespoons butter
- Optional: sliced provolone cheese

Step by Step:

- Trim any excess fat from the rump roast, and place in a slow cooker.
- Add the broth, onion soup, garlic powder, salt, pepper and beer (tip: if you don't have stout or want a deeper flavor, add some browning sauce--like Kitchen Bouquet).
- Cook on low for 8 hours. (Cooking time may vary depending on crockpot.)
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Split the rolls, and spread with butter (and/or cheese).
- Bake until heated through and cheese is melted.
- Slice the meat on the diagonal, and place on the rolls.
- Put sauce in bowls for dipping.

Serves 6



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