

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.11	Paul Parent Garden Club News	March 17, 2011
 <p data-bbox="576 479 826 510">Featured Quotation:</p> <p data-bbox="341 512 1058 566">"In the end, color combinations come down to our personal preferences, which we must discover through observation and experiment."</p> <p data-bbox="341 566 483 589">~ Montagu Don</p> <div data-bbox="555 680 735 719" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 17px; width: 113px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="304 748 981 792" style="text-align: center;">Thatch Control by Natural Industries</p> <p data-bbox="204 828 863 1055">Although some thatch in your lawn is a good thing, too much thatch can cause fungal diseases to grow and spread. Thatch Control is a high concentration of the patented microbe, <i>Streptomyces violaceusniger</i> strain YCED 9. This beneficial microorganism will germinate and grow on harmful thatch, at the same time using the thatch as a food source. Lawns treated with Thatch Control will be hardier, lusher, more vigorous and better protected from harmful turf diseases.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1086 379 1111">Uses & Benefits</p> <ul data-bbox="204 1120 815 1317" style="list-style-type: none">• Contains patented, beneficial microbes• Breaks down excessive lignin and cellulose found in thatch• Converts harmful thatch into beneficial nutrients for lawn• Environmentally safe & non-toxic• Promotes lusher, hardier and more vigorous lawns• All-natural, no chemicals• One 2-oz. bag treats 5,000 sq. ft. of lawn <div data-bbox="443 1391 847 1429" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 17px; width: 253px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="213 1467 766 1491">If you can answer yes to the following questions you are ready:</p> <ul data-bbox="177 1520 1046 1865" style="list-style-type: none">• Have you started your lawn mower and sharpened the blade yet? Now is the time to have it serviced before the waiting time becomes long.• How about the rototiller or weed whacker--do you have fresh gas ready?• Have you oiled your fertilizer spreader and cleaned it yet?• Have you cleaned and sharpened your hedge shears, pruners, loppers and the pole saw yet?• Is there air in the tire of your wheelbarrow?• Do you know where your garden gloves are?• Is your hose still frozen--but you know where the sprinkler and nozzle is? <p data-bbox="213 1892 1066 1991">Now, one last question: are you daring enough to put the snow blower in the back of the garage or tool shed and move the mower into the front? Are you ready, almost ready, getting there, anxious, thinking about it, or do you still need it? I DO and I am still almost ready, so get going and think positive!!!</p> <ul data-bbox="177 2067 1062 2139" style="list-style-type: none">• Have you looked at the wooden handles of your long handle tools and the wheelbarrow yet? If the handles look a bit dried out, how about rubbing a bit of linseed oil on them to help them become more flexible and less likely to break. Spray all the metal parts of your tools with WD40 to	<p data-bbox="1123 492 1347 515">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1086 539 1374 616">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1129 725 1340 750">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1086 777 1272 824">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1086 851 1369 949">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1086 976 1228 1023">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1050 1323 1149">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1176 1385 1247">Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1109 1357 1362 1406">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1431 1366 1478">Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p data-bbox="1129 1590 1343 1639">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div data-bbox="1123 1653 1343 1789" style="text-align: center;"><p>Home About Paul Paul's Recipes Newsletter Archives</p></div> <p data-bbox="1086 1890 1374 1912">Subscribe to our newsletter!</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1937 1374 2011">Click here to subscribe, unsubscribe or change your address.</p> <div data-bbox="1139 2119 1335 2157" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 17px; width: 123px; margin: 10px auto;"></div>	

keep them strong and rust-free. Spray all moving parts of your garden cart, wheelbarrows, spreaders, and cutting tools to keep them lubricated.

• Check out the ends of the hoses--have you crushed them so they won't attach properly, how about washers in them--do they leak? Fix them now--before you need them.

• How does the chain saw look--will it start, so you can use it to do a bit of pruning in the next couple of weeks? It's easier to cut branches now--without the leaves on them--and clear out winter damage.

• How about the leaf blower--will it work to blow off all the sand from your driveway and clean the garden beds?

• Does the garden patio furniture need to be repaired or painted for the season, or even replaced? Now is a great time to do this work, before you get busy with the lawn.

• How about cleaning out the garage and getting things organized before the season begins. Many times, I cannot find the tool I need because it's buried under something else in the tool shed--and after I buy a new one I find it. Has this happened to you?

• Do you have any leftover fertilizer, garden chemicals, soil conditioners, or grass seed in your tool shed; are they still good; can you read the labels? If you need these items, are they on sale now? If not, keep an eye out for the sales early in the season.

• Check your pressure sprayer to see if it stills holds pressure; if not, most times it's just a gasket or washer, just pump it up and try it out now before you need it.

• Did you use the electric extension cords for the Christmas lights and will you need them for the electric shears--where did you put them?

• Check out the mosquito zapper or gas-fired insect killer, is it ready to go--do you have propane for your Mosquito Magnet, and will it start?

• Have you planned out the layout of the vegetable and flower garden yet?

• Are the tomato cages still good; do the trellises or arbor need to be fixed?

• It's time to put out the bird bath, have you cleaned it yet?

• How about the Gazing Ball--is it clean and can you find the bottom to put it on?

• Check out the fountain: is it clean, and does the pump still work?

• If you have awnings for the window, what type of shape are they in--is the fabric still in good shape? If they are moldy, get some Wet and Forget and spray them when you put them up to kill the mold and clean them.

Print this list and put it up on the garage wall so you can check things off as you do them. There is a lot to do to prepare for the arrival of spring, so begin now and do a little bit each week so it does not get ahead of you. All these things must be done before you even get out in the yard and start to work, so let's get started now. While you're out, how about picking up a few first aid items just in case: Ben-Gay, Extra-Strength Tylenol, and, yes, some beer to help you relax and enjoy all your work and accomplishments. Do you still like the arrival of spring? If you need some help, call me on Sunday morning; I will be there to answer all your questions.

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When my Aunt Ruth was alive, she loved to work in the vegetable garden--and my garden became hers. That was OK, because I never had to weed or water that garden and, most of the time, I could just stand there and enjoy watching her enjoy what she was doing. She loved to grow leaf lettuce because it grew so fast, tasted so good and because you could cut it down to a couple of inches of the ground and it came back without replanting. She loved the different shapes, colors, textures and tastes of the foliage; most nights she would pick lettuce for us and make a wonderful salad. Her favorite was a salad of just mixed lettuce greens with basic oil and vinegar dressing. She would say to us, "I have made a honeymoon salad--*lettuce alone*." I do miss her a lot, and when I am in the vegetable garden working, I know she is right there next to me, working alongside me.

Did you know that there are 4 main groups of lettuce that you can grow in your garden? The crispheads, loose heads, Cos or Romaine types, and leaf lettuce. The crispheads will form a solid and more rounded head of foliage--the 'Iceberg' is the most popular type found at the supermarket. This family is great for the spring and fall only, as it does not do well in the heat of summer. Cool weather is the key for this family of lettuce. It takes about 85 days to grow in the spring and 95 days

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in the fall for this family to mature, so plan ahead.

The loose head types--commonly known as the Bibb lettuce family--do not produce a firm central head. The foliage is loosely packed, more tender, much darker in color, and forms many outer leaves around the head. Some of these types of lettuce will tolerate the summer heat, but all will grow in the spring and fall.

Cos or Romaine types of lettuce will form upright growing heads with longer leaves and a thicker central midribs for support. This family will take longer to grow and mature, so plan ahead. The flavor is best when planted as a spring or fall crop in your garden. Summer heat will spoil the flavor and the plants will bolt easily in the hot weather, making them bitter tasting.

Aunt Ruth's favorite was the loose leaf; this family does not make a head at all. It resembles an arrangement of beautifully arranged leaves growing from a central point with foliage of different sizes and colors. This family will mature very quickly--in just 40 days in the spring or fall. During the summer, it's even faster because all you have to do is cut it back to within 2 inches of the ground and in just a couple of weeks the plant will replace all the foliage you ate earlier in the season. This plant has the ability to re-grow new foliage 2 to 3 times a season, if you fertilize with a water solvable fertilizer every 2 weeks. Use Miracle-Gro or Blooming and Rooting for the best response.

All lettuce plants do best with cooler temperatures and you might think of planting some of your favorite varieties in the shade during the summer. To me lettuce can also be used in the landscape as a foliage plant grown for color. Much like what dusty miller, vinca vines, coleus, and sweet potato vines are grown for. Best of all, when lettuce is grown in containers you can eat the foliage as it matures as a bonus. Lettuce will also make a wonderful container plant for those of you with limited growing space--so consider growing mixed colored and foliage types of loose leaf lettuce instead of flowers in your container this summer.

If you would like early lettuce for your garden, now is the time to start the seeds indoor to transplant seedlings into the garden during mid to late April. Use a seed-starting soil like Jiffy mix or the new Espoma Organic Soil with mycorrhizae bacteria added to it. When the plants are 1 to 2 inches tall, transplant them into the garden and space them according to the type recommendations. You can direct seed into the garden in late April, as soon as the ground has warmed up. If you're planting loose leaf lettuce types and want fresh lettuce all year long, plant 2 to 3 feet of new seed row every 2 weeks. This will give you fresh succulent plants developing all season long.

When you plan your garden, just remember to rotate your crops, as lettuce should be rotated every year to a new location, so as not to deplete the soil of nutrients that the crop needs to grow. I plant lettuce at the base of tall-growing plants like tomatoes, peppers, broccoli and Brussels sprouts (just for example) in the summer and use the shade they produce to cool the lettuce plants. The main thing to remember is that lettuce MUST have a lot of water during the hot days of summer or the plant will "bolt," which means it stops making leaves, and makes seed instead--and the foliage will get very bitter tasting.

Lettuce will grow in most soils and the better you prepare it, the faster the plant will mature--especially during the heat of summer. If you direct seed in the garden and seedlings come in thick in areas and spare in others thin thick area--just dig out a few seedling and transplant them. If plants are grown too close together, they will be less productive for you. Plant seed just about 1/4 inch deep and keep wet until they germinate; they will take about 10 to 14 days to germinate.

If you like variety in lettuce you can also purchase mixed blends of seed like Mesclun spicy mix, Mesclun Salad Mix, mixed color leaf types, and mixed texture leaf types. I plant several of these mixes for variety, color, texture, and flavor. This spring, be sure to plant lettuce in your garden, your containers or as an accent plant in your landscaping. As my Aunt Ruth would say: "How about a honeymoon salad tonight--lettuce alone." Enjoy!

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Spring officially arrives on Sunday, so let's get ready and begin to clean up the yard. For those of you that still have snow covering part of your yard, save this page and use it when the snow is all melted--it will not be long now. Snow is actually a good thing to have on the ground during the winter if you live in the northern half of the country, as it does protect our groundcovers, the lawn, newly-planted evergreens, and our perennial gardens. With the change of season it would be very nice to see the ground again and watch our garden grow--once again--IT'S TIME.

The most important part of your yard, once the snow disappears, is your lawn. The lawn is the picture frame that encloses your home and all of your gardens. At this time of the year, the grass does not look like much--just green and brown blotches in the landscape--but if you act now, you can change the brown to all green, making this picture of your home come to life. The snow and winter weather has beaten down the grass and, like the soil, it is packed down and compacted--so let's scratch it up a bit. The best thing to do to the lawn once it dries up from the winter moisture and you are able to walk on it again is rake it. If you can walk on the grass without hearing a squishy sound or sinking into the mud, it's time to begin.

Use your bamboo rake or spring-action metal rake and begin to remove all the winter debris off the lawn. If, in the past, you have noticed dusty-white areas, spots, or even white rings in the lawn, it is usually a fungus developing in your lawn at this time of the year. Disease problems are more prominent during periods of wet and cool weather like spring than any other time of the year. Raking of the lawn will pull up dead plant material for removal, while lifting and separating the good and healthy blades of the grass so air can circulate around them easier. When your blades of grass are all lying on top of each other and disease does develop, it can spread on your lawn

much quicker, like "dominoes."

Some of you fertilize your lawn often to keep it thick and weed-free, and that is great. Before you rake the lawn, I want you to take a sharp knife and cut into your lawn so you can pull up a piece of sod and look at the thatch layer on it. Thatch is a build-up of dead plant matter between the green grass leaves and the soil, and we all have it. A good lawn can have up to one-half inch of thatch without affecting the growth of the lawn; some thatch is good, because it prevents weed seeds from getting down to the soil and germinating, making more weeds.

If you have more than one-half inch of thatch, it may be time to remove some of it with a dethatching machine that you can rent at a local power equipment store. If you have never used a dethatching machine before, you will be amazed how much junk will come up from the lawn. You will have to rake up the debris, so thatch first--and then rake.

As an alternative, you can apply a new natural microbe produced from Natural Industries that will eat the thatch and turn it into fertilizer for your lawn, saving you a lot of work. It's called "Thatch Control." Easy to remember; by "eating" some of the thatch you will have less disease possibility and fewer problems. Just mix it with water and spray it on your lawn after your rake it clean in the spring--no mess.

While you're cleaning the lawn, try to rake up any moss that has developed during the winter and remove it. Moss loves moisture and will thrive in wet spots or in the shade. Apply ground limestone at the rate of 50 pounds per 500 sq. ft. to help raise the pH of the soil and make it less acidic; this helps prevent moss developing in your lawn. If you have a large lawn to do or have a lot of moss growing, I would use Jonathan Green's new Mag-I-Cal to do the same job. One bag will cover 5000 sq. ft.; compare that to 10 fifty pound bags of limestone, (500 pounds). Better still, it will help change the pH in just 7 to 10 days--compared to six months with limestone. It will cost you less money, will be less weight to handle in and out of your trunk of the car, is easier to apply with your spreader--and it will work faster. Don't forget to get extra for your vegetable and perennial gardens, and also if you have lilacs or clematis.

If you had crabgrass last year and the plants turned red on your lawn, I guarantee that you will have more this year, as each crabgrass plant can make over 500 new seeds *per plant* each fall. Be sure to use a fertilizer and crabgrass preventer combination this spring when you feed the lawn. If you're planting new seed to thicken the lawn this spring, be sure to ask your garden center sales person to help you select a specialty product that will kill the weed seed of crabgrass and allow you to plant the new seed.

It will cost you a bit more but is well worth the investment--and remember that regular crabgrass preventer will kill your new grass seed. All types of fertilizer and crabgrass preventers must be applied before the forsythia has begun dropping its beautiful golden-yellow flowers this spring. When you apply the product this spring, be sure to water the product once you apply it to the lawn so the water can change the powder product into a liquid, form a skin on the soil, and kill the crabgrass seed. Super Turf Builder Plus Halts is for non-seeding lawns and Starter Fertilizer Plus Crabgrass Preventer is to be used when you planting seed to a lawn area where crabgrass was a problem in the past.

If you have a lawn along the side of the road and where you live, you had a lot of snow this year, it may be a good idea to treat the grass area with garden gypsum to help open up the soil so the April rains can flush out road salt this spring. Road salt will kill your grass or any other plant living on the side of the road--even trees. Look at your trees and if the top of them are getting thin, less new growth is developing or you are noticing dead branches at the top, it's road salt damage. Use gypsum because it works faster, is easier to apply, is less weight to handle, and is less expensive than powder products

Soil Logic's Garden Gypsum is available at most garden centers or nurseries. Get a bit extra for clay soil to help drain excess water during rainy spells and prevent puddles on the lawn. Garden gypsum will also help your vegetable garden to grow better roots crops like beets, carrots, turnip, and potatoes if your soil is on the clay side. It will also help discourage moss from developing on your lawn.

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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

[Click here to order online.](#)

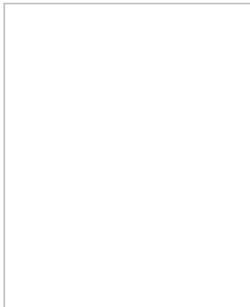


This Week's Question:

The White House hosts an annual White House Easter Egg Roll on the White House lawn each year. What year was the first *official* White House Easter Egg Roll held?

[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 botanical name for the Lenten rose?

Last Week's Winner:

Gail Moretti

Last Week's Answer:

Helleborus orientalis

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: Rhubarb-Strawberry Crunch

What You'll Need:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup water

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups fresh rhubarb, chopped
- 1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced
- Whipped cream

Step by Step:

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- Mix flour, oats, brown sugar, butter and cinnamon together until crumbly.
- Press ½ of the mixture into bottom of a 9-inch square-baking pan.
- Mix sugar, cornstarch, water and vanilla extract in a medium saucepan.
- Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until thick and clear, about 5 minutes. Set aside.
- Toss rhubarb and strawberries together gently.
- Place tossed fruit over the crumb mixture in the prepared pan.
- Pour cornstarch mixture over fruit and top with remaining crumbs.
- Bake approximately 1 hour or until crisp.
- Serve with whipped cream.

Yield: 8 servings



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