

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 4:09 PM  
**To:** rickmorin@earthlink.net  
**Subject:** Paul Parent Garden Club News - March 15, 2012

Please click here to read newsletter if not displayed below: <http://paulparentclub.com/news/12/11>

Edition 12.11	Paul Parent Garden Club News	March 15, 2012
 <p data-bbox="571 479 820 510"><b>Featured Quotation:</b></p> <p data-bbox="341 515 1027 591">"In the end, color combinations come down to our personal preferences, which we must discover through observation and experiment." ~ Montagu Don</p> <div data-bbox="549 680 730 719" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 17px; width: 114px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="443 748 833 792" style="text-align: center;"><b>The ComposTumbler</b></p> <p data-bbox="204 828 762 900"><b>Make compost in the ComposTumbler in as little as 14 days.</b></p> <p data-bbox="204 936 730 990"><b>The ComposTumbler is the world's best-selling, best-designed rotating bin composter.</b></p> <p data-bbox="204 1016 743 1128">With the ComposTumbler you can make a complete batch of compost, from start to finish, in just 14 days. Some gardeners have even finished batches of compost in as little as ten days!</p> <p data-bbox="204 1155 1040 1294">The ComposTumbler really works. It works better than any other compost tumbler or barrel composter. And of course it works faster and better than a compost bin or compost pile, without the mess, pests and difficulty of hand-turning your compost materials. <a href="#">Here is why the ComposTumbler will make compost for you so fast and so easily.</a></p> <p data-bbox="204 1321 1062 1375">There are four ComposTumbler models, a compost tumbler sized to fit every yard or garden. <a href="#">View the full line of compost tumblers here.</a></p> <div data-bbox="405 1451 874 1489" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 17px; width: 294px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="213 1527 1050 1680">Bells of Ireland got their start in Turkey and Syria as wildflowers and were brought to Europe by explorers; they have been under cultivation since 1570. The country of Belgium is where all the work was done to improve quality and make them better plants, so it is considered their birthplace. These unique flowers are in the Mint family but the foliage is not scented. In the early day of growing this plant, the bell-shaped flowers were crushed to make a perfume, but the perfume never became popular, so the plant's unique look quickly moved to the flower garden.</p> <p data-bbox="213 1693 1062 1895">When you look at the long strong stems, you will notice bell-shaped buds 1 or 2 inches wide that appear as green foliage with white streaks or veins on them. These green buds are called calyxes, and they cover the inner white flowers on the stock, and resemble a bell. The early name was bellflowers but the unique green color of the flowers resembled the beautiful open fields of Ireland--even though they did not come from there--and the emerald green color of the bells deserved a name change. So the horticulturist who worked on the plant to improve its appearance named the plant "Bells of Ireland," because the flower was as much a mystery as the country of Ireland was in those days.</p> <p data-bbox="213 1908 1062 2087">The first thing you will notice is that the long stems of the "Bells of Ireland" are covered with tiny thorns. So be sure to wear gloves when handling them in your garden or arranging them in a vase with other flowers--just as you handle roses. The bells grow in rows up and around the stem, completely covering it. The bells open from the bottom of the stem and move up and around the stem. The white flower in the bell opens for a few days and quickly fades to green and resembles the clapper inside the bell. If you take good care of the plant, each stem can grow up to three feet tall during the summer.</p> <p data-bbox="213 2101 1062 2154">Plant seedlings out in May when the threat of frost is over. Because this plant is so unique and misunderstood, it is not usually available at most nurseries. You will have to purchase seeds and</p>	<p data-bbox="1123 492 1340 515"><b>Gifts for the Gardener</b></p> <p data-bbox="1075 542 1366 618"><a href="#">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</a></p> <p data-bbox="1123 725 1337 748"><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <p data-bbox="1075 775 1260 824"><b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="#">Click to contact us.</a></p> <p data-bbox="1075 851 1382 949"><b>Telephone:</b> (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1075 976 1219 1025"><b>Fax:</b> (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1052 1311 1151"><b>Address:</b> Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1178 1305 1249"><b>Regular Phone Hours:</b> Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1088 1357 1375 1433"><b>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</b></p> <p data-bbox="1075 1460 1382 1559">(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1590 1209 1612">Your e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1630 1161 1657">[     ]</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1671 1209 1693">Your name</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1711 1161 1738">[     ]</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1751 1209 1774">Their e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1792 1161 1818">[     ]</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1832 1209 1854">Their name</p> <p data-bbox="1075 1872 1161 1899">[     ]</p> <p data-bbox="1177 1917 1286 1944" style="text-align: center;">[Send &gt;&gt;]</p> <p data-bbox="1107 2110 1356 2132"><b>Where can I find Paul on</b></p>	

start your own plant indoors--and now is the time to do that. From seed to transplanting is about 6 to 8 weeks, so get a bag of Black Gold organic seed starter mix and start planting.

When I was in Ireland last year, I talked to a gardener who told me to put the package of seeds in the vegetable crisper for a week before planting to chill the seed so they will germinate better. She also suggested sprinkling the seed on the surface of the soil, barely covering the seeds with soil and keeping them cool--50 to 60 degrees with no bottom heat. Once they germinate, move them to a bright and sunny window, as strong sun will give them better and stronger stems for when you move them into the garden.

Bells of Ireland love the sunshine, so choose a sunny spot in your garden for the best-looking stems with more bells on them. Your soil should be well-drained and the garden should never have standing water. If you have a clay type soil, add lots of compost to break up the soil and use garden gypsum to prevent rainy weather making the clay stick together. Soil Logic liquid Gypsum is better than dry garden gypsum, as it works faster and longer to break up clay soils. She also suggested using lots of animal manure or compost or even seaweed kelp, if you live near the seashore, to improve the soil before planting.

Fertilize the plant with Miracle-Gro or Ferti-lome Blooming and Rooting liquid fertilizer every other week when the plant is making flowers, as they are heavy feeders--and the more you feed the more flowers they will produce. If you're using Osmocote, use it at the time of planting and again in 60 days.

Because the plants will get 3 feet tall and possibly taller, choose a location out of the wind so plants aren't blown over. Plant them where you can tie them up easily, such as on a trellis or even on a fence. I grew some several years ago and when the peonies finished flowering I used the peony rings to hold the plants together. When you set out the plants give them some room--plant them 12 to 15 inches apart. I like them planted in groups scattered in the garden, rather than in rows in the back of the garden.

The flowers dry very easily when the bells are all open. Just hang them upside down in bunches in your garage or tool shed where you have good air circulation. It will take a couple of weeks and you will lose some of the green color but there is nothing better to mix with dry hydrangea than these dried Bells of Ireland-- and they will last all winter long. As a fresh cut flower, they are also wonderful for tall or wide arrangements. They will last for a couple of weeks in a vase of water; they will also bend with the light, giving the stems extra character in the arrangement.

If the weather gets hot and dry, soak the soil and water deeply to keep the plant active. If watering is a problem, use bark mulch, pine needles, compost, seaweed or straw as a mulch to help control weeds and retain soil moisture. If your soils are on the sandy side, be sure to dig in deep compost and Soil Moist granules at time of planting to hold water around the roots. Always water early in the day--never at night--to prevent insect and disease problems. When the flower stem stops growing, the plant is finished flowering and you should pick the flowers for display or drying. Bells of Ireland only flower once a year, so enjoy them while the flowers are on the plant.

Did you know that in the language of flowers the Bells of Ireland represents "LUCK?" Many Irish wedding bouquets will have a few Bells of Ireland in them for the luck it represents on this special day. This St Patrick's Day, be sure to pick up the real flowers of Ireland, not green tinted carnations but the Bells of Ireland--and may the luck of the Irish be with you all day long. You do not need to be Irish to enjoy these wonderful flowers in a tall vase of water this weekend. For extra beauty, just add a small bunch of white Baby Breath flowers around the Bells of Ireland for great accent. After all, on St Patrick's Day there is a bit of Irish in all of us. Have a Happy St. Patrick's day!

And to my wife, the former Christine Duncan of Watertown, Mass, who was born on March 16 at 11:50 PM--just 10 minutes short of St Patrick's Day, and who just missed being called Patricia because of her Irish roots, Happy Birthday!

Enjoy the holiday and celebrate, because all of us have a bit of Ireland in us on this day--and don't forget the "Bells of Ireland."

[Click to print this article.](#)

Irish moss is a luxuriant evergreen plant used as a ground cover. The foliage will grow 1 to 2 inches tall and the plant will spread well over a foot in diameter. The foliage is emerald green in color and the plant creeps on the ground like a fine carpet. The foliage is made up of dense growing strong stems of green foliage that resemble moss. You read this right--Irish moss is not a true moss but a wonderful plant that resembles moss, and you will not believe this until the plant flowers in mid-summer. You see, Irish moss will produce hundreds of small, star-like shaped white flowers that will cover the plant from late spring to mid-summer, late May to early August.

Irish moss is a dense-growing plant that resembles a mat of tiny green leaves on short stems. The white flowers come from individual stems but are so numerous that at times they will almost cover the mound of foliage. Irish moss will grow best in a soil that is well drained, a bit on the sandy side and never in clay like soil. If you can condition the soil before planting with compost or animal manure the plant will have an easier time rooting into it as the plant spreads across the ground. Every tiny plant that makes up this mound of green foliage has its own roots, and as it spreads along the ground, the new stems that develop will develop roots, helping the plant to grow and expand more quickly.

Irish moss has a very shallow root system and requires moisture constantly, so plant it in a partially shaded area and avoid the summer midday sun. It is a perennial plant that is easily

## Sunday mornings?

[Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.](#)

## Join Us For...

A Customized Gardening Tour of England and the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show. [More information here.](#)

## Have a Look Around Our Website:



## Subscribe to our newsletter!

[Click here to subscribe, unsubscribe or change your address.](#)

divided in the spring during April and May. The best way to divide the plant is to use a sharp knife and cut it into 2-inch pieces or clumps. Get as much of the roots as possible when you dig up the clumps and plant them every 6 to 12 inches apart in your rock garden or borders.

Plants can be found in nurseries in the spring to summer months in small 4 inch pots--making them easy to transplant and inexpensive to buy. Look at the plant carefully for new growth that is developing along its edges; flower buds will also be visible as the new growth develops until the weather gets hot and dry. When you plant, set the plant into a hole as large as the root ball that is coming out of the pot. If you're planting near rocks or using with flagstones always use Soil Moist granules in the bottom of the hole and mix to help retain moisture. I always use an organic slow release fertilizer like Plant -Tone or Dr. Earth perennial fertilizer with Pro-biotic to help establish the plant quickly and feed it during the next several weeks.

Just set in place, firm the soil around the plant and water well. This is all that is needed for this plant to thrive in your gardens. During the first year, water weekly to help plant get off to a quick start especially if it gets hot and dry. Once the plant is established, it will be on its own but fertilize every spring to help it get a good start for the season.

I have found that this plant will grow larger if you are able to provide a growing condition that has mulch or compost covering the soil to keep it cooler and help hold soil moisture around the roots. As an extreme example, this plant will do very well when planted in between stepping stones or flagstone walkways that receive at least half a day of shade. Dig a nice big hole and fill with conditioned soil in between the stones so plants have rich soil to be established in. Space plants every 6 to 8 inches and keep moist at all times. By the end of the season, your plants should double their size easily.

Irish moss has a wonderful cousin called Scottish moss. It grows and flowers the exact same way in your garden or walkways. The difference with this plant is that the foliage is golden-green in color. If you are able to plant both the Irish and the Scottish mosses in your garden or on your walkways you will love the contrast in foliage colors. Some seed catalogs offer seeds of both types of moss but it is difficult to find them both (good luck). I prefer to split the plants every spring to make new plants; it's much faster to make new plants that way.

When you purchase new plants in the spring from the nursery and the foliage hangs over the side of the pot, you can split the plant in half before planting and that way you start with two plants. Both of these mosses will tolerate some foot traffic on them but not constant walking traffic. Your walkways made of random cut stones will look beautiful and the moss will fill in those irregular spaces in the walkway quickly, giving it much character. Enjoy!

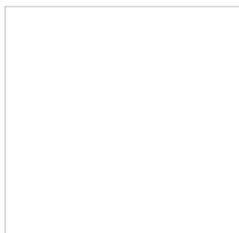
[Click to print this article.](#)



This is the week dedicated to the Irish people, their heritage and their wonderful country. Very few countries have a plant that refers directly to them as the Shamrock does to Ireland. Can you envision the green landscape of the Emerald Isle on St. Patrick's Day this Saturday? Irish or not, many of us wear the green on St Patrick's Day and celebrate with a pot of Shamrocks growing on our window sill. Have you ever wondered why the Shamrock is so important to the Irish people and how it became so famous a plant?

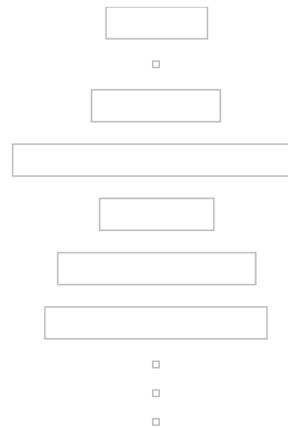
Well...it all began with a 3-leaf clover--not the 4 leaves that many of us think as being lucky. St. Patrick came to Ireland as a missionary to teach its people about the Catholic religion and used the Shamrock as a way to demonstrate the principle of the Trinity. The three leaves represented the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost united on a single stem. For this reason alone, a true Shamrock has 3 leaves and Irish history makes this quite clear. The term Shamrock is derived from the Irish word "seamrog" which translates to "little clover plant." In horticulture there are over 900 species of these plants, some grown from seed and some from bulbs and some of these plants are annual while others are perennial in our garden.

If you still think that the Shamrock has 4 leaflets, look at the tale wing of Aer Lingus Airlines (Ireland's National Airlines); it has 3 leaflets. And if you're from New England or a big Basketball fan, look at the Boston Celtics Logo--the Shamrock has only 3 leaflets. If you have your heart set on the 4-leaf clover, start looking as soon as the clover begins to grow in your lawn--you will need lots of luck to find one. The National Botanical Garden in Dublin, Ireland revealed that when the Irish people wear the Shamrock it usually comes from the white clover, red clover, hop clover or a clover-like plant called Black Medick. All are members of the Pea family. If the ground is still cold where you live, and you want to see a 4-leaf clover look at the box of Lucky Charms cereal for the 4-leaf clover on it. Or see the picture we put to the right.



Another family of plants is the Oxalis family; they closely resemble the Clover family. They are also sold as Shamrocks for St Patrick's Day because of their wonderful foliage with many shapes, colors and sizes of the leaf. The Oxalis family also has wonderful flowers in many beautiful colors. Oxalis originated from South Africa and Central America, and was quickly adopted by gardeners because it was easy to grow as a bulb plant. Most Oxalis plants are not winter hardy outdoors but will overwinter in a pot of soil in your basement very easily.

Here is all you have to do to grow these wonderful bulbs in pots in your home. Oxalis bulbs will be available in the fall and again in the spring where bulbs are sold at your local garden center. The bulbs are small--about the size of a lima bean seed--so plant 5 to 7 bulbs to a 4 to 6 inch pot. Use a good potting soil like Black Gold Organic Potting soil, as these bulbs prefer a rich well-



drained soil that has been fortified with organic matter and contains no clay. Cover the bulbs with 2 inches of potting soil and keep them moist at all times. Like all foliage plants, fertilize monthly--especially when the are in bloom. The flowers have 5 petals; they resemble a trumpet and develop in clusters on long stems that grow above the foliage. The flowers will last on the plant for 4 to 8 weeks or more, depending on the variety; most have no fragrance.

These are some of the varieties available this week at your local greenhouse or florist:

**Oxalis rubra:**

This will grow to 16 inches tall and will look great in window boxes or planters. The plant has 3 leaflets that are medium green in color and hairy on the underside. The plant will bloom all summer with red to pink flowers. After first frost, dig up and pot to store in your basement for next year.

**Oxalis 'Iron Cross':**

The plant will grow under a foot tall and has a cross-shaped brown spot on the foliage that is deep green in color. The flowers are red, and this plant is best kept in a container.

**Oxalis triangularis:**

My favorite because of the dark purple leaves that grow large--each leaflet is over an inch in diameter. The plant will have white, pink and violet flowers on it at the same time. The foliage is wonderful when used as a houseplant or when mixed in planters for contrasting foliage colors. It can also be dug up in the fall, repotted and stored in the basement for the winter. Bring it up in January and place the pot in a sunny window and water well. In just a few days, new foliage will develop and the fun begins all over.

**Oxalis triangularis papilionacea:**

Nice light green foliage and large leaves like the purple variety; this plant has deep pink flowers that look great against the foliage. Treat and care for just like the purple leaf type.

**Oxalis triangularis papilionacea regnellii:**

Nice deep green large foliage like the above two, but this plant has large clusters of bright white and very showy flowers. Flowers all summer long and is hardier but I suggest that you treat like the other two varieties during the winter. Great potted plant for containers with nice foliage to enjoy.

Now let's talk about the common Shamrocks--or clover. The plants are grown by seed and are also sold for St Patrick's Day in pots. The flowers are different from the Oxalis, as each flower is more rounded in shape and made up of many small single flower petals. The flowers grow an inch in diameter or smaller and have a bit of fragrance. The flowers form during the early summer and are loved by honeybees and butterflies. The plants are winter-hardy and can be very aggressive when they show up in your lawn. The plant spreads with both underground stems and seeds from the flowers. The plant grows very flat and close to the ground--often pushing down the grass plant in your lawn and smothering it. The foliage is medium to dark green with 3 leaflets (occasionally 4 for you 4 leaf clover fans). Makes a great pastime for the kids to see if they can find one in the lawn.

Clover is in the legume family or pea family and has the ability to pull nitrogen out of the air and place it in your soil to help rebuild soil quality. Clover is wonderful to control erosion problems in poor soils on sloping areas and great if you have animals that feed on your grass. You can purchase seed for white or red clover at many nurseries or feed and grain stores to plant in areas where you want a natural look--like in fields or along the side of the road where road salt kills everything else during the winter. Red clover is taller growing, has larger flowers--a larger growing plant overall but not as hardy as the white clover. White is more drought-tolerant, flowers more, is more aggressive and makes a better food for wildlife. If you do not like clover in your lawn, white clover is the most difficult to remove. It will take several applications of a broadleaf weed killer to control it. A little prayer to St Patrick could help!

If you are a lawn fanatic, clover is often considered a lawn weed and can be easily controlled with a broad leaf weed application about the time that the dandelions begin to flower on your lawn. If well-established, a second application will be needed 10 days later to kill the plant. But this week is for the Shamrocks and clover plants. They were sent to us by St. Patrick to protect our open areas of soil against wind and rain erosion problems. They will rebuild the quality of the soil, helping other plants to grow where they were not able to at one time. They are also a wonderful food source for animals and flowers for the bees to make honey. So this week, be sure to wear a bit of green on Saturday and make it a **three leaf clover--a Shamrock**. ENJOY!

[Click to print this article.](#)

## 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 Mevagissey, Stonehenge, the Wilton House Garden Centre and more.

[Click here for details.](#)



### This Week's Question

If you kiss the Blarney Stone in Ireland, what talent are you supposed to acquire?

#### This Week's Prize:

Bio-tone® Starter Plus

All Natural Plant Food Enhanced with Bacteria and Mycorrhizae

- Microbe-enhanced all natural plant food
- Includes both endo and ecto mycorrhizae
- Grows larger root mass to help plants establish fast
- Promotes bigger blooms
- Reduces transplant loss

For more information, [see the Espoma site.](#)

[Click Here to Answer](#)

### Last Week's Question:

Botanically speaking, which of the following doesn't fit in?

- A. Chili Pepper
- B. Cucumber
- C. Eggplant
- D. Tomatillo
- E. Tomato

### Last Week's Winner:

Cathy Fruhauf

### Last Week's Answer:

B. Cucumber - all the rest are in the Solanacea (nightshade) family of plants.

### Last Week's Prize:

Bio-tone® Starter Plus

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!



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.](#)



## Featured Recipe: Shepherd's Pie

- 2 lb. potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 6 tbsp. whole milk
- 1 stick butter, cubed
- 1 tbsp. butter for the sauce
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1/2 tbsp. lard or dripping
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup finely diced carrots (see substitutions below)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 cups ground or minced lamb
- 1 3/4 cups beef stock
- 1 cup chopped white mushrooms
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped flat leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese (if you can get an Irish cheddar, by all means, do!)

**Substitutions:**

- Vegetables: you can also use peas, corn, mixed veggies...if you use frozen veggies, thaw first. Canned veggies are not recommended.
- If you don't like mushrooms, add another cup of veggies.
- You may substitute ground beef for the lamb--but then it's a Cottage Pie, not a Shepherd's Pie.

**Step by Step:**

- Heat the oven to 375 degrees F.
- Boil the potatoes until soft; then drain into a colander.
- Place the milk and butter in the pan used to boil the potatoes, return to the heat and warm gently until the butter has melted.
- Add the potatoes and mash. Salt and pepper to taste and keep to one side.
- Melt the lard or dripping in a large deep pan.
- Add the onion and carrot and fry for 5 minutes.
- Add the garlic and cook for another minute.
- Add the ground lamb and one-third of the beef stock to the onion and carrot mixture and cook, stirring constantly until all the meat is browned.
- Add the remaining stock, parsley and mushrooms, season with salt and pepper. Cover with a lid and cook for 15 minutes.
- Mash the flour into the remaining 1 tbsp. butter then add in small pieces to the ground meat sauce, stirring until all the flour has dissolved and the sauce has thickened slightly, approx. 5 mins (use more or less flour to adjust to your desired consistency).
- Place the meat and sauce into an 8" X 3" deep ceramic or glass baking dish and cover with the mashed potato.
- Sprinkle the grated cheese on top of the potato and bake in the heated oven for 30-35 minutes, or until the surface is crisp and browned.
- Serve immediately



[click here for a printer friendly version of this page](#)



Written content © 2004-2011 Garden Partners LLC, or respective authors. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#). All written content contained in this site is protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published, or broadcast without prior written permission of Garden Partners, LLC. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content. Would you like a newsletter like this for your nursery or garden center? Please feel free to look at what we have to offer and contact us for your [garden center marketing](#) solutions.