

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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Edition 13.12	Paul Parent Garden Club News	March 22, 2013
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FEATURED QUOTE :</b></p> <p>"I appreciate the misunderstanding I have had with Nature over my perennial border. I think it is a flower garden; she thinks it is a meadow lacking grass, and tries to correct the error."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">~Sara Stein, <i>My Weeds</i>, 1988</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Turbo Tiller 1000</b></p> <p>With its patented six-tine cyclonic tiller head, there is no job too large for the TT-1000. The Turbo Tiller is a precision, quality-made garden tool for just about any garden or landscape project you can think of. Simply attach it to your drill motor and you're ready for extreme gardening. We do recommend a side-handled drill motor for optimal ease and control.</p> <p>The Shovel Vane Tumbler is the kind of innovation that separates us from the rest in the Garden and Landscape Industry. With the S.V.T. attached, you have a built-in 360 degree shovel as part of your arsenal. Working your soil and moving the soil around with the S.V.T. makes gardening a snap.</p> <p>Innovation: With our three-piece aluminum drivers, you can do your garden work on your knees, or standing up.</p> <p>Turbo Tiller applications are endless. There are no restrictions regarding all the garden applications. For example: weeding, mixing amendments, installing a small to medium size sod lawn, trenching for sprinkler lines, bulb planting for your annuals or perennials, turning your soil, and mulching.</p> <p><a href="#">For more information (and videos), see the Turbo Tiller website.</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gifts for the Gardener</b></p> <p><a href="#">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <p><b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="#">Click to contact us.</a></p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p><b>Fax:</b> (207) 985-6972</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p><b>Regular Phone Hours:</b> Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</b></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 style="text-align: right;">[Send &gt;&gt;]</p>	
<p>Hoya/Porcelain Flower/Wax Vine</p> <p>If you're looking for a fast growing, vining plant for a west window, I have the perfect plant for you. Yes I mean a west window--with bright light all day and direct sunshine at the end of the day--is perfect for the Hoya plant. Hoya is a wonderful flowering vine that will not tolerate direct sunshine during midday. Direct midday summer sunshine will scorch the foliage like sunburn and it will turn white and fall from the plant quickly.</p> <p>Hoya was originally found in Burma and central China growing wild as a vine on the edge of wooded areas. In the wild, it is a vigorous climbing vine with fleshy thick foliage that will twine up most anything--but it also loves to dangle its branches over the edge of containers.</p> <p>Hoya is in a group of plants called Asclepiadoideae, the Milkweed family.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</b></p>

When your wild milkweed plant comes into bloom in the summer, look at the flower on the plant, as it resembles the hoya plant closely. Hoya, however, does not make the soft fluffy pods that form the seeds that are ejected into the air and float all over your yard in the fall.

The foliage of the hoya is oval shaped, with a blunt point on the tip. The foliage will grow one to two inches long and one inch wide. The foliage color varies depending on the plant variety. Most are medium to dark green in color, some have a silvery tinge to them, and variegated types with white edges on the foliage are commonly available. But if you want something unusual, look for the twisted or curly leaf varieties and you will enjoy foliage that is rippled and curls under itself--just beautiful.

This plant loves a warm location to grow in, with summer temperatures 70 degrees plus. During the winter, temperature should be 10 degrees cooler to give it time to rest. Growing near a window is perfect location because the cold winter temperatures will provide cooler temperatures near the glass. Drafty windows could chill the plant, which will not tolerate this, so check windows before placing the plant there. Hoya *does not* like to be moved once it is placed in the window, as it takes time for the plant to adapt to the location, so have patience as it adjusts.

During the summer, water moderately but give the plant time to dry up a bit between waterings, as soggy soil will rot the roots, causing the foliage to wrinkle up and fall. Always allow the surface of the soil to dry up between waterings. The rest of the year, water less often, especially during the winter months when you want to water just enough to prevent the soil from drying out completely. Misting the foliage will help the plant thrive and prosper if you heat your home with forced hot air or use a wood stove. If the plant is in bloom, do not mist the flowers or they will rot and fall from the plant.

Fertilize from May to September and then NOTHING during the winter months! If you fertilize too often the plant will make just foliage and no flowers. If the plant is growing vigorously and looks lush, feed less often. During the growing season, once a month is all that is needed for good growth. Use a well-balanced fertilizer like Miracle-Gro or Neptune Harvest and stay away from high-potash liquid feed. Potash is the third number on the package of fertilizer.

The unusual looking flower heads are produced from the tip of the vine during the summer. The flower is a cluster of up to ten starry-shaped, waxy, white flowers that have a pink five-point center. The flower looks shiny and firm to touch. The flower cluster is heavy and it will hang down from the vine, so if you want to enjoy the flowers, be sure to grow them in a hanging basket. You can also grow them on a wire frame or a wire wreath ring if hanging the plant is not possible, but you will have to train the plant and secure it to the structure with twine.

The flowers are sweet-smelling when in bloom, and some of the new varieties will have a strong fragrance that will fill your room with a perfume scent. Often, if the plant loves the growing conditions in your home, the flower will produce drops of sticky nectar. When the plant is in bud, never move the plant even to clean the window--or the buds will fall.

While in college, I was taught that if you trained the plant to grow horizontally, it would help the plant to flower better and earlier. A hormone called Florigin produced by the plant must accumulate in these horizontal growing stems to make flowers. Also do not remove the faded flowers; let them fall by themselves, as they will flower from the same spurs next year and you could damage the spur. Enjoy!

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Did you know that the cabbage plant has its roots in England and continental

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Why do you think that the cabbage plant has its roots in England and continental Europe? Like all the vegetables we grow in our garden today, it was a wild-growing plant that was domesticated as a food crop. The Greeks and Romans grew cabbage in their gardens sometime before 1000 BC--but it took until the 17th and 18th centuries for the cabbage to become a food staple. Sauerkraut was used by Dutch sailors to prevent scurvy as they traveled around the world during long ship voyages. Cabbage was first planted in America in 1541, thanks to Jacques Cartier, who introduced it to the early colonists; by the 18th century, it was planted in most gardens across the colonies.

Most of us are accustomed to seeing a cabbage in the garden that grows to 5 to 10 pounds, but if you live in or travel to Alaska you are in for a real treat--because in Alaska cabbage is king! The world record for the biggest cabbage is in Palmer, Alaska, weighing in at 138.25 pounds, due to the cool temperatures during the summer months and the very long days. Several years ago I was in Fairbanks, Alaska. The cabbage plant is used there in many of the public gardens, along with the flowers, to create wonderful gardens. Come with me this year to Alaska and see for yourself how beautiful cabbage plants look in flower gardens and how big they grow. You will be blown away with what you see. If you really want to see huge cabbage fields, you must travel to China, as they produce almost half of the world's cabbage. China grows 25 million tons of cabbage every year, in every color and variety available for food; in the US we grow only 1 million tons.

Cabbage is a grows quickly, and if you start your seeds now, then set out your seedlings in late April to mid-May (depending on the weather where you live) the cabbage will be ready for harvest in late July. This will give you time to plant a second crop that will be ready in late September to mid-October. Cabbage is a cold weather crop; heat will diminish the quality of the cabbage head if seedlings are set out late in the spring. When you see pansies available at your local garden center it is time to plant your cabbage seedlings also, as they love the cool weather and will get off to a great start in your garden, making a larger head with a better taste to it. Don't worry about late frost; cabbage plants can take it without damage to the plants.

Start your seeds in a special soil designed for seedlings like Black Gold Seed Starter Soil, as it is sterile for better germination percentage, and lightweight, so new seedlings can push their way up through the soil and grow more quickly to be transplanted to flats or individual pots. Start your seeds in a room with temperatures 70 degrees or warmer for the best results. The new plants will form in just 5 to 7 days. Once they produce the first set of leaves, move the seedlings to a cooler room with temperatures 55 to 65 degrees and lots of sunlight. If you don't have enough light, use grow lights over the plants. If you keep the seedlings too warm they will grow fast and stretch, become very leggy and less productive in the garden.

Transplant your seedlings into the cell packs that look like egg cartons (available at your local garden center) or into individual pots when the second set of leaves forms on the plant. Now, wait a week and place the seedlings in your garage or tool shed during the day to help the plant to harden off, which means preparing for the move to the garden and cool weather outside. The cool temperatures will thicken the cells of the plant, making them much stronger and better to adapt to the cold weather in the garden--plus it will keep the plants shorter in height to produce a larger head of cabbage later on in the season. It will take 3 weeks to harden off the plants before they are ready to set out in the garden. If you have a nice day with temperatures above 50 degrees you can set plant outside in a sheltered area for the day and bring it back in the garage at night or build a cold frame with plastic or old storm windows.

Cabbage loves a soil that is loose or on the sandy side. If your soil is on the clay side, add as much organic matter as possible to break up the clay and improve drainage. Light soil will warm up faster in the spring to help stimulate the roots of the plant to get off to a good and fast start. Set your seedling 18 to 24 inches apart in the garden in a single row or planting bed of multiple row block type planting. Before you plant, condition the garden soil with animal manure, compost, or seaweed to help the soil to retain moisture and hold

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nutrients around the root zone of the plant. I also add Dr. Earth Vegetable fertilizer with Pro-Biotic to provide constant feeding to the new plant; it is organic, so all you will need is a second application in sixty days. A 10-10-10 fertilizer is man-made and will need to be applied monthly to give you the same results--and that means 3 applications. Also this type of fertilizer has NO trace elements, microbes, or beneficial bacteria to help rebuild the soil during plant growth and after you have harvested the crop.

If you can apply a thick layer of compost, seaweed or straw over the planting bed once you set out the plants, it will help to retain moisture in the soil during the heat of early summer and you will have to water the plants less. It will also control weeds in the planting bed and keep the foliage clean. At the end of the growing season, till the mulch material into the garden soil to add additional organic matter to the soil for next year's crops.

You can start to harvest the cabbage head when it gets to be the size of a softball or larger, depending on your needs. The cabbage head should be firm and solid when you harvest it. It is easier to cut the head free from the main stem with a sharp knife and discard the outer leaves from the plant. Cabbage will keep for several weeks if kept cool and moist while in storage. It is best to pick cabbage when it reaches the size that will fill your needs, as a half a cabbage in the refrigerator does not keep very well and loses its sweet taste and flavor quickly.

The one major pest with cabbage is cabbage worms, who will eat holes in the outer foliage of the plant during the growing season. The best product to control this pest is Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew by Bonide lawn and garden, because it is natural and contains "Spinosad," a naturally occurring bacteria that kills the worms. You can also use other natural products called Thuricide or Dipel, containing a bacteria known as Bt (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) when the problem first develops--but as the worms grow larger and more numerous these products become less effective. Captain Jack can be used on all types of caterpillar and worms in the garden, as well as thrips, leaf miner on spinach and Swiss chard, beetles, borers, and spider mites. Spray the product at the first sign of a problem on your plants. A second application may be needed in a week to ten days if the weather is wet or you're watering the garden often. Other than that, this is an easy plant to grow in your garden.

The flavor of supermarket cabbage does not begin to compare to the taste of fresh cabbage from the garden. Enjoy!

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This spring, if you're looking to try a fun project in your back yard please consider growing grapes. Grapes for fresh fruit, desserts, homemade juice or maybe if you're adventurous, even make your own home-made wine. Grapes will grow well in most gardens, and with a bit of help from your local garden center or nursery to select varieties that will be hardy in your area, you're on your way. Here are a few things to consider if you want to grow grapes in your garden.

First of all, grapes are pollinated by the wind, not bees, and most varieties are self-fertile, which means that you are more likely to have fruit no matter what the weather is like. Like other fruits, the crop will be better if you plant at least two plants in the same area.

Grapes are available in the spring as an actively growing potted plant from your local nursery. Or you can buy plants bareroot (no soil around the roots) from catalog companies and they will ship them to you in the mail while the plants are dormant in the early spring. If you buy plants from a catalog company, make sure plants are for your growing area--and once you receive them they must be potted or planted immediately, or the roots will dry out and you will lose the plants.

If you have a choice, always select varieties that are seedless. These plants are kid-friendly and it's easier to process the fruit for juices, fresh fruit, and desserts. Go on the internet and look up fruit and berry catalogs to get more information on variety choices, taste, uses, and hardiness for your area.

Now let's look at the soil in your yard and see if it will grow grapes. The roots of the grapes grow deep and wide in the soil and are able to thrive in most soils. The exception is heavy clay types that hold a lot of water and hold that water for a long time. Soils that are well drained, sandy, and stony or dry out quickly will grow grapes, as long as you can provide water during the heat of summer. The best soil is one that is well drained and fertile; if your soil is not, you can condition your soil before planting this spring to help the plant grow better.

Dig a big hole 2 feet deep and 2 feet wide and fill with conditioned soil to help get the plant off to a good start. Once the plant gets established in the prepared soil it will adapt to the soil around the plant easily. Grapes grow best in a soil with a PH of 6.0 to 7.5 so adding lime around the planting bed yearly will help the plant to perform better. It will take 2 to 3 years for the grapes to really produce, so be patient, as they can last for 25 years or more in your garden.

Several years ago I was in France and our group visited a vineyard. To our surprise, the entire vineyard was covered with 2 inches of stone as mulch. The stone mulch kept weeds out but it started the plant growing 2 weeks earlier in the spring for a head start on the season and extended the fruit-ripening season by 2 to 3 weeks in the fall for sweeter tasting fruit. The results were a better tasting wine--and they could sell the wine for more money. Better profit with the crop. If you live where the season is short, you may want to try this on your plants after you plant them this spring or on established plants in the garden.

The location to grow grapes has to be **full** sun; stay away from areas that are set low on your property, as they may be frost pockets. The location should have good air movement but stay away from strong, windy areas. Keep grape plants away from areas where you have in-ground irrigation, as constant irrigation on the foliage **will** cause disease problems and encourage insects on the plant.

Watering is important; grapes newly planted or grown against a wall will need regular watering during the spring and summer. Grapes grown on wire trellis or arbors, as well as those grown in the open areas, will require less water. Grapes need regular feedings in the spring, but do not get carried away or the plants will grow too rampant and you will have just vines. In the spring, check plants often to make sure birds do not make nests in vines or they will eat your fruit when the grapes are ripe. I did not do this when my grapes got established and one year the birds ate the grapes, not me!

Now get yourself a good fruit and berry garden book that will explain how and when to prune the grape vine. The pruning will depend on how you grow them, on what type of device such as an arbor, fence, or on wire support. It will also depend on the type of grape you chose to grow--for fruit, cooking, juice, or homemade wine. Like anything else it will take some work and time but is well worth the effort on your part. Insect and disease problems are minimal if you follow these rules. Read the fruit and berry book now before you plant in the spring so you know what you are going to experience. Have Fun!

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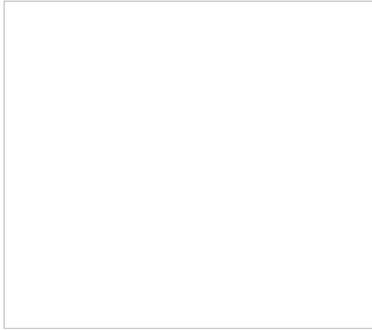
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Alaska trip

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**Paul Parent will be hosting a tour that includes:**

- Vancouver, BC
- Butchart Gardens--55 acres of floral display!
- Cruising the Inside Passage:
- Ketchikan
- Icy Strait Point
- Juneau
- Skagway
- Hubbard Glacier Cruising
- Seward
- Scenic Drive to Anchorage
- Denali National Park
- Fairbanks City Tour, a tour of the Gold Dredge # 8 and a cruise down the Chena river on the Riverboat Discovery Sternwheeler.



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**This Week's Question**

Which of the following is **not** a member of the nightshade (Solanaceae) family?

- A. angel's trumpet
- B. eggplant
- C. pepper
- D. petunia
- E. sweet potato



**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:**

Which of the following is not a garden pest?

- A. Bats
- B. Lizards
- C. Spiders
- D. Toads and Frogs
- E. All of them are beneficial in a garden

**Last Week's Winner:**

Arleen Belval

**Last Week's Answer:**

E. All of them are beneficial in a garden.

**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

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## Featured Recipe: Slow Cooker Beef Stew

**What You'll Need:**

- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 can beef broth
- 1/2 cup red wine or water
- 2 lbs. beef for stew, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 can (14-1/2 oz.) diced Italian-style tomatoes
- 3 large carrots, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning, crushed
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 cans (16 oz. each) white kidney beans (cannellini), drained
- 

**Directions:**

- Mix tomato soup, broth, wine (or water), beef, tomatoes, carrots, Italian seasoning and garlic in a 3-1/2 quart slow cooker.
- Cover and cook on low for 8 to 9 hours (or 4 to 5 hours on high).
- Stir in beans. Turn heat to high and cook for 10 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings



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