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Edition 10.17	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 29, 2010
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FEATURED QUOTE :

In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours.

-Mark Twain



Looking for a great gift for Mother's Day? This garden journal helps make planning and organizing easy. This journal, *autographed personally by Paul*, makes a great gift. 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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Wild Flower Farm Eco-Lawn Grass Seed

The Ultimate Low Maintenance Drought Tolerant Lawn!

Eco-Lawn is a blend of carefully selected fine fescue grasses developed by Wildflower Farm. Eco-Lawn grows in full sun, part shade and even deep shade! It is highly drought tolerant once established, and has a beautiful green colour. This seed requires less fertilizing and can

Gifts for the Gardener

[Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!](#)

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Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?

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

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be mown like a regular lawn or left un-mown for a free-flowing carpet effect. Experience what thousands of people across North America already know about Eco-Lawn!

To learn more, visit www.wildflowerfarm.com!

You may be noticing that all of a sudden, the trees are beginning to sprout leaves; the lawn has to be mowed and flowers are coming up everywhere. This is your signal to get out in the yard now and get started (or to continue to build on what you've already done), or you will never be able to keep up with the ever-changing spring season. This week, let us talk a bit about pruning, transplanting and dividing plants in the yard.

Start by looking out your windows to see the outdoors. Is your view restricted with overgrown shrubs and trees? On the warm days can you open the windows to get a breeze inside the house-- or do the plants block the air movement? Looking at the house from the outside, can you see the windows or are all the shrubs growing together like one big long plant? When was the last time you even pruned those plants that grow around your home? Do you even own a pair of pruners or garden shears? If you are overwhelmed, then it is time to get help from your local nursery or garden center. Begin with a picture of your house to show the nurseryman what your house looks like and ask for his advice. Some plants can be pruned and saved while others may have to be removed and replaced. The nurseryman can help you to do the right thing and the time is now, so please do not feel embarrassed that you have neglected your yard: that is what he is there for. As I state on my garden show, "There is no such a thing as a dumb garden question." Gardening is a hobby that you acquire with knowledge and practice, so get ready to learn and have fun doing it.

I want you to remember this: "All evergreens that do not flower should be pruned at this time of the year before the new growth starts to develop on the plant." Such plants as Yews, Junipers, Pines, Spruce, Hemlocks, Arborvitae, Ilex, Boxwood and more, need to be pruned back to control their size so they do not take over their own space and crowd out other plants. Prune to remove broken, dead or overgrown branches now, and when the new growth develops in the weeks to come any holes that formed on the plant will fill in with the new growth. If you wait until the new growth has formed on the plant and then prune, you will remove the new growth that formed and the plant will look like you just pruned it. Also, pruning late means that some of the foliage will have cut marks on the new growth, which will turn brown where the cut leaf scabs over to heal the edge where it was cut by the garden shears. Prune early for a more natural looking plant.

The same pruning principle for non-flowering evergreens should be followed for any non-flowering deciduous plant at this time of the year. Such plants as Burning Bush, barberry, privet hedges, dwarf willows, and more need pruning. I want you talk to your local nurseryman, who will tell you how to prune the plant. Grab your pruners, walk up to the plant and say out loud, "I am doing this for your own good!" and begin to prune. Do not be scared; it has to be done and you can do it.

Burning bush can be cut in half at this time of the year to control size; just prune the plant so it has a natural look when you are finished. Plants do not grow square in nature! If you have privet hedges that are getting too tall for you to handle or the bottom of the plant has no foliage, it is time to prune. You can remove as much as 50% of the top of the plant now to control size. If the lower part of the plant has no foliage, cut the plant to 12 to 18 inches from the ground. Cut it down now, fertilize it and in just 3 years the plant will grow back to 4 to 6 feet tall with very thick foliage right to the ground. Privet hedges should be pruned every year to control the size and help promote foliage right to the ground. Remember, "I am doing this for your own good!"

Plants that flower should be pruned as the flowering cycle begins to finish. As soon as you see that the flowers are falling from the plant, or the once brightly colored flowers start to fade, start pruning. If pruned as the flowers fade, rhododendrons will make new growth on old branches because of dormant buds that are on the plant. The new growth always develops after flowering; if you can prune early, the plant will have time to make the new growth and still have time to make flower buds for next year. As your forsythia begins to drop flowers, use your hand pruners to shape the plant. PLEASE do not cut them in a round or square shape like some of these fly-by-night landscape companies do. Forsythia is a plant that is enjoyed for its beautiful arching branches. When pruned properly, new shoots will develop from the base of the plant to help thicken the plant and replace older non-flowering branches.

If you have lilacs, I want you to look at the plant and cut back non-flowering branches to 4 feet from the ground. I cut back half of the non-flowering branches each year to encourage flowering and to control the height of the plants. Make the cut with lopping shears or use a saw for thick branches. What remains will look like a stick, but in just a few weeks small shoots will develop on the sides of this stick, making new growth that will fill in the plant. In just two years the plant will make flowers that are now at eye level where you can see and smell them. If the ground around the plant is covered with small shoots remove 50% to 75% of them so the energy helps the remaining shoots to grow better. You can also dig clumps of these shoots and transplant them to start new plants. To encourage flowering, apply Limestone or wood ash to lilacs every spring.

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If you have always wanted to move plants that have grown large from their present position, NOW is the time to move them. Rhododendrons, azaleas, and most evergreen plants are easily moved at this time of the year. These plants have a fibrous root system so the roots are numerous and the soil ball will hold together better for you when you move the plant to a new location. Dig a circular trench around the plant and keep as much of the roots as you can handle. Wrap the roots and soil with burlap and tie it up with rope to move it to the new location. Plant with compost, soil additives and keep moist for the next couple of months.

If you have property with wild-growing birches and pine trees, now is the time to transplant them into your yard from the wild. The plant is still dormant and will adapt to the move much more easily now than when the new growth develops and the weather gets warm. With less stress, the plant can adjust the amount of new growth to the amount of roots still attached to the plant. The first year you move the plant, expect little to no new growth, as the plant is putting all its energy into developing new roots in the new garden. The following year you will see normal growth develop on the plant. When you dig plants at this time from the wild, expect a 75% or better survival rate.



This also the best time to divide your perennials in your garden. Such plants as hosta, daylily, phlox, lupine, lily of the valley and more love the move when small and the weather is cool and wet. Less stress and they will quickly adjust to the move. This is a great time to dig and swap plants from your garden with friends and neighbors. If you have plants that have taken over your garden, it is now time to clean them out and replace them with new and exciting plants. Iris are best divided and cleaned now to prevent borers and increase the flowers that develop. Big clumps of ground-cover-type perennials like Ground Phlox are best divided as soon as they finish flowering. Use a garden spade and split them into clumps and dispose of any dead parts of the plant. If you are dividing multi-stem plants like hosta or daylilies, dig them up from the garden and pull them apart with your hands. A plant divided in groups of 3 to 5 plants per division will develop and flower much faster.



This also the best time to move rose bushes to a sunny location and clean them. Kneel on the ground to examine the plant for shoots that develop below the graft or the swollen growth on the stem that looks like a fist. Almost all hybrid roses are grafted; at times, the rootstock that it is grafted on will try to take over the rose that you actually want. These shoots, called suckers, will rob your plant of all food, killing it. Any shoots below the graft should be removed from the plant any time you see them. If you have not yet pruned your roses back this spring, do it now. Remove any dead or broken branches and then cut the plant to 18 inches from the ground. This cleaning and pruning will stimulate new growth and more flowers for you this year. Roses love to be fertilized; the most productive rose is fed every month.



Some bugs that terrorize your garden need to be treated now with insecticide. Hemlocks, for example, have a white cottony insect that will live on the underside of the needles near the tip of the branches. This bug is called Woolly Adelgid and if not controlled, it will kill your trees in just 3 to 4 years. Use Bayer Tree and Shrub now. If you have hybrid lilies and you have noticed small bugs that look like the lady bug on them, eating holes, **you have a problem and must act now**. This is the Asiatic Lily Beetle and has several generations that will first eat holes in the foliage, then drill into the stems to feed on the bulb below ground, killing it quickly. Treat NOW with Bayer Tree and Shrub at the rate of one tablespoon per gallon of water. Use a quart of product for every 3 to 5 lily plants in the garden. To prevent Birch Leaf Miner on your birch clumps, also use Tree and Shrub at this time. The same product will control the leaf Miner on Columbine when applied now to keep the plant clean. Look for directions on the bottle label for each of these insect problems.

If you find ticks on yourself when working in the garden, treat your garden and lawn with the new all Natural Flea and Tick Organic spray from Eco Smart. This Organic control product is recommended by the state of Maine Disease control center after many tests in all type of conditions.



If you have asparagus growing in your vegetable garden and grass is a problem, now is the best time to kill the grass, ask for a new product called *Over the Top 2*. Your local Garden Center can get this product for you if they do not carry it already. After a wet spring, you may have moss or mold growing on your fence, patio, walkways, or on the shingles on the north side of the house. While the problem is just starting, treat with the all organic *Wet and Forget Moss and Mold Killer*. Just spray and forget it and it will clean the surface in just a few weeks, keeping it mold free for up to a year. It also works on your roof if moss is growing up there. Moss on the roof is slowly digging roots into the shingle and soon water will get into your home, so kill it now.

A little bit of work now will give you hours of enjoyment later. Enjoy!



This Week's Question:

Which expensive foodstuff is obtained from crocus flowers?



This Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

- Contains Myco-tone® mycorrhizae
- For all indoor and outdoor containers.
- In 4, 8, 16 qt., 1 and 2 cu. ft. bags.

[Click Here to Answer](#)**Last Week's Question:**

What popular fruit was once thought to be poisonous in Britain and North America?

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

Last Week's Winner:

Glenn Dochtermann

Last Week's Answer:

The tomato

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:**Chicken Mole Tortilla Casserole****What You'll Need:**

- 1 (10-ounce) can chicken broth
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (adjust more or less to taste)
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 10-12 oz can diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 3 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil (or to 1/4 inch in skillet)
- 9 corn tortillas
- 3 3/4 cups shredded jack cheese
- 3 cups cooked chicken
- white or Spanish rice
- slivered almonds

Step by Step:

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- Place 2/3 cup chicken broth in a large microwavable measuring cup, and heat until simmering, about 2 minutes; add raisins to broth to soften.
- In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat; add onion and sauté until translucent.
- Turn heat to medium; add garlic, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon and cayenne, stirring for 30-60 seconds or until spices begin to toast.
- Add chopped red pepper and softened raisins and stir for 1-2 minutes, until pepper is soft and flavors have begun to fully meld.
- Add canned tomatoes, chicken broth and peanut butter; add chopped chocolate and stir until combined. Turn heat down to low so chocolate does not burn.

- Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring constantly, careful to not burn chocolate. Remove from heat and cool slightly, about 5 minutes.
- Place into blender and purée until smooth; set aside, covered. (Can be frozen at this point for later use.)
- Wipe skillet clean. Pour vegetable oil into skillet, to a depth of about 1/4 inch, heating over medium-high heat.
- Fry tortillas, one at a time, just a few seconds on each side. Transfer tortillas to paper towels to drain.
- Butter or nonstick spray a shallow, 2-quart casserole dish; place 3 prepared tortillas, overlapping as necessary, along the bottom of the dish.
- Layer 1 cup of chicken atop tortillas; ladle about 1/4 of the sauce onto the chicken.
- Add about 1 cup shredded cheese and top with 3 more tortillas.
- Layer 1 cup chicken, 1/4 of the sauce and 1 cup shredded cheese.
- Top with remaining tortillas, chicken, mole sauce and cheese.
- Cover casserole with foil coated with nonstick spray face down.
- Bake at 350° for about 30 minutes. Cool chicken tortilla casserole slightly before serving.
- Garnish with sliced almonds and serve with white or Spanish rice.

Yield: 6 servings



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