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Edition 12.15	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 12, 2012
	<p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Spring is a true re-constructionist." ~Henry Timrod</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wet & Forget</p> <p style="text-align: center;">□</p> <p>For over 30 years, people all over the world with some of the biggest cleaning jobs (and the smallest) have been using Wet & Forget. It has been used on big jobs like the building exteriors at Sea World in Florida and small ones like restoring a historic bungalow.</p> <p>Wet & Forget removes moss, mold, mildew and algae stains gently over time from roofs, concrete, brick, siding, tennis courts, awnings, boat sails and wood decks without scrubbing or pressure washing. For your toughest outdoor cleaning jobs, apply some Wet & Forget...then forget it.</p> <p>Wet & Forget is the only product you'll need to solve all your outdoor moss, mold, mildew and algae issues. Not only is it non-caustic and non-acidic, it's also safe for all outdoor surfaces.</p> <p>Wet & Forget is easy to use. Simply apply with a garden sprayer, then sit back and let Mother Nature do the rest. Wet & Forget starts to work gently over time. Results can be seen within days for those less contaminated areas and over several months for more distressed areas. Naturally.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p>Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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>Every day, we are getting closer to beginning to plant our flower gardens, our containers, hanging baskets, and window boxes. This spring, I want you to consider a new sun-loving begonia called 'Bonfire.' (It will also take a bit of shade at the end of the day.) When most of us think begonias, we think of morning or late in the day sun, with shade during the heat of the day...right? Not this plant, as it THRIVES in the full hot sun and it will flower from spring to frost. You can even bring it inside your home for a few weeks in October before putting it to rest for the winter in your basement. This is a keeper!</p> <p>This begonia is grown from a tuber, and if you care for it properly, you can divide it in the early spring every 3 years and make 4 plants from the one plant. It is not winter-hardy like most begonias, so it will need to spend the winter in your cold basement and rest while the snow flies. But when the weather begins to warm up in March, bring it up from the basement, and give it a good drink of water and a bit of Miracle-Gro fertilizer. In just a couple of weeks it will awaken from its winter sleep and grace your home with beautiful foliage that will soon contain flowers, even before you put it back outside for the season. No other begonia can do this.</p> <p>The 'Bonfire' begonia is a new hybrid developed by Tesselaar Plant Breeders from Australia, and they will be available at your local garden center or greenhouse in the late spring when the threat of frost is over. What I like the most about this begonia is the amount of flowers the plant produces during the summer--most of the time you can barely see the foliage of the plant. Can you say: "Eye-popping profusion of exotic-looking bright red-orange flowers?" If so, you need this plant in your yard--and you will need more than one.</p> <p>The 'Bonfire' begonia's foliage is very interesting to look at also, as it is a rich dark green color and the leaves have serrated edges that are highlighted with a red margin. The leaf is one inch wide at the stem and grows 2 to 4 inches long getting narrower as it reaches the tip of the leaf point. The serrated teeth on this leaf are beautiful with the red highlights on them, and-if</p>		<p>Your e-mail []</p> <p>Your name []</p> <p>Their e-mail []</p> <p>Their name []</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Send >>]</p> <p>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent</p>

that was not enough--the veins that run all over the leaf have a bit of yellow in them. Yes, you heard right--3 colors in the foliage. Unusual, almost tropical-looking foliage that loves the sun. Because it grows in the sun, the 'Bonfire' begonia does not get powdery mildew on the foliage as most other begonias do--a real plus, especially during a wet and humid summer. It's too bad that you only see half of the foliage on the plants, because they are covered with flowers most of the year.

Now let me tell you about the flowers on this plant--because they will grow 2 inches wide and 2 inches long. When I first saw the plant from a distance, I thought it was a fuchsia because of the shape of the flowers. These flower petals are long and pointed, and resemble the wings of a bird. They hang in clusters from the strong stems just below the foliage, and the plant has so many branches that the flowers seem to be in layers all over the plant, almost hiding the foliage below them. The more sun the plant gets in your garden or planter, the larger it will grow and the brighter the intensity of the flower color becomes. One more unusual quality about this begonia is its ability to tolerate a strong summer storm. A summer thunderstorm with heavy rain and wind will knock off the flowers off of most begonias but not this one--it's tough!

The 'Bonfire' begonia will grow in a mound that is wide-spreading and very delicate looking, making it perfect for containers or hanging baskets also. The plant will grow 18 to 24 inches wide and just as tall in one season; if you feed it often and care for it properly, it will grow even larger. Because the plant grows many branches naturally, it will benefit from you from occasional pinching to induce side branches and create a more compact spreading plant. Fertilize every 2 weeks with Blooming and Rooting fertilizer, a 9-59-8 fertilizer formula from Fertlome Home and Garden, for even more flowers and larger plants. The flowers have no fragrance, but they will attract butterflies, humming birds and other pollinators to them because of the number of flowers on the plant.

Your plant will grow beautifully and flower nonstop with minimal care and water. If you're fed up with your New Guinea impatiens' needing water several times a day when the weather get hot, then you are in for a real treat with the 'Bonfire' begonia, as it requires half the water! Keep it moist and prepare for a flower show in your garden. When you plant or repot your begonia plant use a well-drained soil. The better the soil is, the better the plant will grow. Look for the new Black Gold Potting soil for containers as it contains "Waterhold," a new combination of coconut fiber called (coir) and Canadian sphagnum peat moss to help retain moisture longer during hot days of summer.

If you're planting in your garden, be sure the soil has no clay in it and water does not accumulate with heavy rains--think "well-drained." If plants sit in heavy soil and they have wet feet or you overwater the plant, the stems can rot with a fungus disease. Also never use a saucer outside; you want the container to drain freely. Foliage disease is not a problem with this type of begonia and insects are not generally a problem either--but if plants are overcrowded in the garden white fly can become a problem because of poor air circulation around the plant. In the garden, space plants on 24-inch centers; give them room to spread. When planting in the garden, avoid acidic soil, as the plant will do much better in a neutral soil. Avoid planting them in gardens with evergreen plants like rhododendrons, azaleas or blue hydrangeas in them.

If you're looking for something different in the foliage but still want the orange-red flowers, look for 'Bonfire Chocolate-Red' with chocolate/plum colored foliage and the same bright orange-red flowers. For other colors, 'Bonfire Chocolate-Pink' with chocolate/plum colored foliage and soft pink blossoms, or the new 'Bonfire Bright Scarlet' with the traditional green foliage but the flowers are a bright scarlet red.

In October, cut the plants back to 2 to 3 inches from the soil line when the flowers stop coming and put them in your basement for the winter. Set the plants on the floor to keep the soil and roots cool and keep them as far away from the furnace as possible. If you live in an area of the country where temperatures never get below freezing, place them in the garage for the winter and let them rest on the floor--not on a bench. Do not water while the plant is dormant and resting; just forget about the plant until March.

For more information and to find a nursery near you that carries these beauties, go to www.tesselaar.com. Enjoy!

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The *Cosmos* is one of the most beautiful annuals for the garden--and it got its start as a wildflower in the dry wastelands of Mexico, where it still thrives in poor, sandy soil today. This amazing daisy-like annual flower will self-seed, so if you're looking for the perfect wildflower for poor soil and a sunny location, this is your plant. If you're looking for a wonderful cut flower for your garden, if you're building a butterfly garden or want to encourage birds, butterflies and pollinators like honeybees to come into your yard, this plant must be included in your flower collection this summer. Monarch butterflies love this flower-- just a suggestion to attract them to your yard this summer.

Cosmos are delicate flowers with beautiful fernlike foliage that is a medium to dark green in color. The foliage resembles the foliage of the *Asparagus Sprengeri* fern at first glance, and this unique lacy foliage covers the plant from its base to the many flower stems that develop on the plant. The ferny leaf is classified as pinnate, and it will grow 3 to 5 inches or more long. Just the foliage of the plant will give your arrangements great texture and help soften much of the course foliage of other flowers in the arrangement. The plant keeps it foliage all season

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long and very little of this foliage will turn yellow like other traditional annual flowers do. One of the things I like about the foliage is the movement in the garden with the slightest breeze, like a field of grain moving with the wind.

The flowers are daisy-like but only have eight flat flower petals that resemble the blades of a fan. The petals are all joined at the center of the flower to a soft yellow center that provides much pollen for the many insects attracted to it. As the flower opens, the petals grow upright like a vase but quickly mature and flatten out with a slight cup shape to the ends of the petals. The color of the petals begins very bright and as the flowers mature, they fade with the hot sun, giving you many shades of color on the same plant. Many of the flower petals will develop a circular band of a deeper color around the yellow center, giving the look of an eye on the flower. Each flower will grow 2 to 6 inches in diameter. They come in a variety of soft pastel colors like white, pink, rose and lavender. Like the foliage, the flowers are continually moving with the slightest breeze. As the flowers fade from the plant, pinch off the dead flowers to encourage additional flowers to form on the plant

Cosmos will grow 6 inches to 6 feet tall, depending on the variety you select, and the plant will grow 12 to 24 inches wide. The flower stems of the taller varieties of *Cosmos* will always grow long--12 inches or more--making them just perfect for cutting. The flower buds are just as wonderful as the actual flower on the plant. Long stems will develop on the plant with the flower bud on it. As the buds begin to form, a star-like whirl of 8-pointed triangular leaves appears first on the tip of the stem that is a shiny and metallic green in color. This is quickly followed with a rounded metallic green flower bud that will soon burst open with color. The flower stems will often contain several flowers and buds on them at the same time. This plant will flower all summer long, until the frost arrives.

The *Cosmos* will do best in a full sun exposure but will tolerate a bit of late-day shade. *Cosmos* will do very well when the weather gets real hot, as long as you can water regularly--so always add" Soil Moist Granules at the time of planting just in case you're away on vacation and the weather gets hot and dry. *Cosmos* may have originated in Mexico, but they will not handle drought conditions well. Because they do grow tall, strong winds can become a problem unless they are planted in a sheltered area or near a fence to prevent staking the plants--especially the taller varieties.

Cosmos love a soil that is not acidic ,with a pH of 6.0 to as high as 8.5, so be sure to add limestone, wood ash or Magic-Cal to sweeten the soil before planting. You can plant seeds indoors now or wait and plant directly into the garden in early May, because the seeds germinate quickly--in just 7 to 10 days. Thin the seedlings when they are less than 2 inches tall and keep them moist until they become reestablished in the garden. They will look good planted in rows, in groups or scattered in your garden among other flowers. I like to plant them in perennial flowerbeds, also--to help fill in the holes left by plants that have finished flowering early. When you plant them in a group, the foliage will interlock and the plants will support each other.

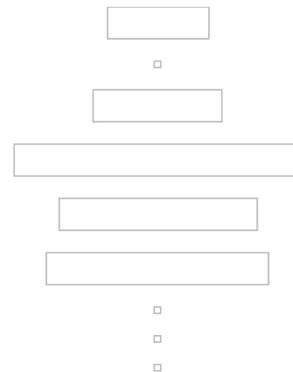
When you plant, do not add compost or animal manure to the garden as it will encourage the plant to grow taller and become top-heavy, forcing you to stake the plants. Fertilize with the new fertilizer called "Plant Thrive" from Alpha-Bio-Science to build a better root system and promote flower bud production without forcing a lot of top growth. This is a Mycorrhizal bacteria fertilizer and totally organic--good stuff and you only have to use it 3 or 4 times a year. If you use a traditional liquid plant fertilizer OFTEN, every other week during the season, the plant will make more foliage than flowers--so remember, less is better for this plant.

If you have a wet season or you water the garden often, you could have a minor problem with slugs on this plant. The best preventative method is spacing of the plants growing around them and good air circulation in the garden. If all fails, use Monterey's Sluggo --a safer way to control the slugs in the garden if they become a problem. Foliage disease is not a problem with these plants unless you water the garden at night--wet foliage on any plant will eventually become a problem.

There is another strain of *Cosmos* called Sulphureus hybrids, so look for 'Sunset' and 'Cosmic Yellow' that are smaller growing--12 to 18 inches tall and 12 inches wide. They have a different look to the flowers, which are single and double petaled, with yellow and orange flowers on them. The flowers look similar to the Coreopsis plant, a wonderful perennial, but do not make a good cut flower and are not as attractive to butterflies and honey bees. The flowers are also smaller--1 to 2 inches across--and the foliage is not as fine textured; it almost looks like marigold foliage early on.

In 2010, a new hybrid came out and was named the flower of the year. *Cosmos* 'Rubenza' is a wonderful easy-to-grow plant that will flower all summer long right up until frost. This plant is like the traditional *Cosmos* except that it is the first dark, ruby-red flower of its type. As the flower matures, it will slowly fade to the outstanding rose-red color that earned the plant the coveted "Fleuroselect Novelty Award." The plant will grow to 3 feet tall and 18 inches wide with the wonderful *Asparagus sprengeri*-type foliage and 3 to 4 inch diameter flowers. Expect great cut flowers from this plant and enjoy the unique ruby-red color hard to find with cut flowers today. It's not too late to order seed to direct plant in the garden or start indoors if you go to www.harrisseed.com for more information and pictures of the new hybrid. Also, red flowers attract hummingbirds to your gardens...and this plant will also attract the neighbors to see what you're growing that is different this summer. Try it--you will like it!

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The blue Hubbard squash is a native squash from South America that got its start in this country in the late 1700's. The town was Marblehead, Massachusetts. It was the first to grow this new vegetable, which is said to have come off a ship sailing from the West Indies that was heading back home with some of these unusual vegetables the crew had found. Some said the Sea Captain, Knot Martin, brought the seeds home with him after a voyage exploring the world for new food sources and plants and gave the seeds to a local gardening friend Elizabeth Hubbard.

A Marblehead historian, Louise Martin Cutler, tells of her great aunt Sarah Martin--the sister of Captain Knot Martin--who actually developed the squash. Sara and her sister Martha were well known gardeners in Marblehead. Sara was bashful and timid and entrusted the seeds to her friend Elizabeth Hubbard. If Sarah had not been so shy, the squash would be known today as the Martin squash.

Blue Hubbard squash is very easy to grow, and even if you neglect the plant, the vine will produce squash for you. Blue Hubbard squash needs to be planted from mid-May to early June as seed directly in your garden--or you can start a few seedlings in pots 3 weeks before the threat of frost is over where you live. This wonderful winter squash takes a long time to mature and most years it will not be ready for harvest until it's time for a killing frost. It usually takes 3 months to form good fruit.

Harvest when the skin has hardened and you're unable to mark the skin of the squash with your fingernail. The squash must also have time to prepare for storage and I suggest that you keep it outside in the sun for a couple weeks until the stems begins to dry up. Bring inside during this time if the weather gets cold (your garage is ok) at nighttime. Do this, and it will keep until January or February very easily. Before you put the squash into your basement for the winter, wash the skin of any winter type squash with a 10% bleach and water bath to improve winter storage quality.

Blue Hubbard squash is a staple for Thanksgiving at my house, and because it is so large, I cook it all and freeze what we do not eat in freezer bags for later use--a great treat as a cold winter's evening meal. I like the looks of this squash; great color silver gray, unusual shape with points on both ends, lots of lines and depressions, and they grow big--making them perfect for a large family gathering like Thanksgiving. I also use them in displays with pumpkins until Halloween or Thanksgiving, before cooking them or storing them in the basement for the winter. They will keep best on the floor in your basement--not on a table--and as far away from your furnace as possible. But don't keep them in your garage in very cold weather, as they will freeze and go bad. I also think I enjoy dropping them on the cement floor of the garage to break them open--it's easier than trying to cut one open to clean it out and peel off its tough skin for cooking.

I would describe blue Hubbard squash as a squash with bright orange flesh. It is also a bit dry, so add some milk and lots of butter when preparing after cooking it, so you can better enjoy its nutty flavor and fine mild texture. This is a big squash with thick walls and a starchy and flaky flesh filled with flavor that will melt in your mouth. You can also roast the seeds as you do pumpkin seeds in the oven with salt.

Plant blue Hubbard squash in a garden with full sun all day and if you're tight for space in the garden, plant it at one end of the garden and let it run out of the garden onto the lawn. The better your soil is prepared, the more squash the plant will produce, so be sure to add lots of animal manure, seaweed kelp or compost every spring before planting. The squash plant will grow best if the soil is on the acidic side 5.5 to 6.5, so be careful not to lime the area every year.

This squash has a large root system, so before you plant, blend your soil conditioners in a 3 foot circle around where the plant or seeds are to be set into the ground and work it into the soil the depth of your shovel or garden fork--about 12 inches deep. This squash loves the HEAT; I had my best crop the year I used black landscape fabric over the soil to help warm the garden soil and keep out the weeds. Also, try not to walk near the seedlings, as the roots will develop faster and larger if the soil is not compacted by you walking in the garden.

If you're going to start seeds indoors plant in pots 3 to 4 weeks before last frost or direct seed into the garden 1 inch deep. Seeds will germinate in 7 to 10 days--faster if the soil is warm and moist. Don't rush the season, as seeds will not germinate properly if the soil is cold and wet. This squash loves water, so rather than planting on top of a hill pull the soil in the area around the seedlings and make a ring of soil like a saucer to help hold more water for the roots. If your soil is limited, use the new Grow Point Garden Water Saver--it works wonderfully, and I had great luck with it last year in my garden. Visit www.grow-point.com for more information. Plants will need 3 to 5 gallons of water a week per planting ring if it does not rain until the foliage covers the ground around the roots, also the more moisture the more squash.

Fertilize every other week with a liquid plant food or monthly with a granular organic plant food like Garden Tone or Dr. Earth Vegetable fertilizer with pro biotic, as this plant loves to be fertilized often. Add some of the granular plant food directly into the planting hole and blend it well before planting. Once the flowers begin to form on the plant side, dress the plant monthly. If you're using a liquid plant food, saturate the ground well where the shoots have developed and apply it directly to the foliage also, as it will be absorbed directly into the foliage for faster results. Winter squash is a heavy feeder and if you feed regularly, you will be rewarded with additional squash.

If the weather gets wet and the leaves begin to turn white, they are developing powdery mildew; this can be controlled organically with Serenade Garden Fungicide. NEVER water the garden at night. NEVER. Always water first thing in the morning when you grow any type of squash.

Vine borer can be controlled by covering the stem with your old panty hose for the first 3 feet of the vine, just wrap them with the nylon as the plant grows. And one final pest is the squash

bug; it can be controlled with a very effective and safe product called Garden Eight; use as directed or as the problem requires.

Finally, I have great news for those of you who love blue Hubbard but have a family too small for a 25-pound or larger squash. A new hybrid blue Hubbard squash called 'Blue Magic F1' has been developed for smaller families. 'Blue Magic' is a small blue Hubbard squash that is more size-friendly for today's smaller family. It has the same qualities as the larger types, with great taste, a fine flesh, nutty flavor and great winter keeping qualities. This new plant is semi-vining and will take up less space in your garden but it will produce many fruits that will weigh only 4 to 6 pounds each! For squash seeds go to www.Harrisseed.com, because seeds are not available in any seed racks this spring. You still have time to order and plant indoors or directly in the garden and you will enjoy the smaller size. Try it you will like it--if you like blue Hubbard squash, it's just the right size. Enjoy!

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Mevagissey

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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.

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This Week's Question

What members of the grass family (Poaceae) can be (and often is, in many countries) used as construction material? (Note - we aren't talking about thatching a roof--we mean for the actual building.)

This Week's Prize:

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Last Week's Question:

Iceberg lettuce was originally called "crisphead" lettuce. How did it get its present name?

- A. It was the only lettuce that would grow in Alaska
- B. It was a feature at the Iceberg Salad House in Boston
- C. It was found growing on an iceberg in the Arctic
- D. California growers used to ship it covered with crushed ice
- E. Most of it grows below ground

Last Week's Winner:

Tom Smith

Last Week's Answer:

D. California growers used to ship it covered with crushed ice.

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.

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- 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: Sloppy Joes

What You'll Need:

- 3/4 pound ground round
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon prepared mustard
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 12 buns or rolls

Directions:

- In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook the ground round, onion and green pepper until beef is browned, stirring to crumble.
- Stir in tomato sauce, tomato paste, mustard, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, salt, sugar, oregano and pepper; reduce heat to medium-low.
- Cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Spoon 1/4 cup beef mixture over bottom half of buns or rolls, cover with top half.

Yield: 12 servings



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