

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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Edition 12.14	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 5, 2012
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FEATURED QUOTE :</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Every spring is the only spring--a perpetual astonishment." ~Ellis Peters</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>Protection for Newly Sprouting Spring-Flowering Bulbs</b></p> <p><b>Shake-Away Fox Urine Granules Rabbit Repellent</b></p> <p>The prolific cottontail rabbit (<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>) is one of the target animals for Shake-Away's #1 selling product, Fox Urine Granules. This product, formerly known as Shake-Away Small Critter Granules, takes advantage of the Predator-Prey relationship and the prey animals' genetically programmed instinct of fear to provide customers with a non-toxic, organic method to significantly reduce and very often eliminate pest browsing problems.</p> <p>Through their patented technology, Shake-Away offers the only EPA-registered predator urine-based products in the repellent industry, and works hard to optimize their source animals' diets to maximize the repellency in our source urines. <a href="#">Click here for more information...</a></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>	<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>When I went to college at the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts many years ago, I wanted to learn about flowers. I was fascinated by how every holiday had its own flowers and how it was possible to get them to bloom for that special day.</p> <p>The week I learned how to grow Easter lilies was one I will never forget, because my teacher asked my college roommate, Bruce Dunlop, whose family were florists and greenhouse growers in central Massachusetts, this question: "Mr. Dunlop how do you grow Easter lilies?" He answered, to our surprise, "In a wheelbarrow." The teacher responded "Please explain for those here who have never grown Easter lilies."</p> <p>Bruce explained that if the flowers were not opening up fast enough, he had to put them on a wheelbarrow and move them to a warmer greenhouse so they could grow and open faster. If they were opening too fast, he had to put them on the wheelbarrow and move them to a cooler greenhouse so they could slow down and look perfect for Easter. Because Easter is at a different time each year, it was the most difficult flower crop his family had to grow.</p> <p>Bruce loved all the flowers his family grew in their greenhouse, but the Easter lilies were his least favorite because of the wheelbarrow--and I do not blame him. You may not know this, but some years the Easter lilies are growing under the benches that the poinsettias are growing on top of; it depends on the date that Easter falls on.</p> <p>1) <b>The Easter Lily</b> is the number one best-selling flowering plant for Easter by far. You may not remember this, but less than 40 years ago Easter lilies were tall--well over 3 feet tall--when your parents purchased them. Today, because of growth regulators, lilies come in all sizes. At</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>	<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><b>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</b></p> <p><a href="#">Click here to find Paul Parent</a></p>

that time, when you purchased a lily, the pot had three ferns growing in it because the height of the plant meant that the florist had problems keeping all the foliage on the lower part of the stem of the plant. To keep them looking nice they grew ferns in with the lilies but today, because of hybrids, ferns are not needed.

Lilies are perennial and they will do very well in your gardens, so do not throw them away after the holiday, plant them in your garden. Lilies are unique plants because they have two sets of roots, one under the bulb like most plants do, but as they grow through the soil, they will develop a second root system for support--as the plant does grow 3 to 5 feet tall and needs the extra support. When you plant your lilies, be sure to set them 6 to 8 inches deeper in the ground so that this second root system develops to hold the stem straight up in your garden.

When your flowers open in your home, be sure to pick off the yellow pollen sacks that form in the trumpet flower, as this will help the flowers bloom 2 extra days for you. Keep the soil moist in the pot--never wet--or your bulb will rot. Just dig into the soil to the depth of two knuckles and if the soil is moist, leave it alone for an additional day. As the flowers fade, remove them and keep the plant inside until the weather warms up and becomes frost-free (early to mid-May) before planting. Next year, the plant will flower in July, its normal flowering time in nature.

2) **Tulips** are number two and closing in on first place quickly as many younger people think of lilies as old-fashioned--too bad. The tulips of today are all forced into bloom like the lilies but the varieties chosen are normal late April-flowering varieties, because they don't grow as tall and need little to no staking. The flower color selection is wide and there are many with unusual foliage. They also require less time in a refrigerated cooler to grow.

Keep tulips out of the sun and as cool as possible in your home; the flowers will last much longer and the flower color will be deeper. When the flowers fade, cut the stems back to the foliage and plant them as a single clump in your garden--do not separate. Plant 3 inches deeper and condition the soil in your garden before planting. This way, the plant can rebuild the energy it took to make those flowers this year and will bloom in your garden next year.

3) **Daffodils** are next, because of the beautiful nodding flowers. If your florist or garden center did a good job you will be able to choose plants with buds still not open along with those fully open. Daffodils especially the regular tall growing varieties will need staking in a warm home and that is why most shops add stakes and string in the pots. Once only yellow, the daffodils now come in two-tone white and yellow and new shades of pale pink.

If you just want something in a small pot, look for the miniature daffodil called 'Tête-a-Tête,' a wonderful yellow flower that will fit perfect on the coffee table. All daffodils are very hardy and can be planted outside when the flowers fade. Cut back the faded flower to the base of the stem and then you plant like other flowering bulbs set in the garden--3 inches deeper.

4) **Hyacinths** are the king for fragrance for Easter. This amazing spring-flowering bulb comes in white, pink, and deep purple. When young, the flower bud clusters resemble a pineapple with all of their tight buds. Hyacinths must be supported with stakes and string when fully opened, as the flower cluster is so large and heavy it will fall over in the pot. The flower cluster is made up of 25 or more individual flowers that are shaped like trumpets; that is perfect because these flowers are sending out a wonderful fragrance that will fill your home for many days.

If you want a small pot, look for the dwarf type called grape hyacinths, and you can enjoy 3-inch tall flowers resembling drumsticks in deep purple or white, and they are long lasting. Both types can be planted in your garden when the flowers fade--and please remove the flowers and plant 3 inches deeper in the garden.

5) The **Florist hydrangea** is at number five--and I stress *florist*, because these wonderful plants are not winter-hardy when planted in your garden if you live in northern New England. You can re-pot them in larger containers when the flowers fade and grow them on your deck for the summer and watch them grow larger. In the fall place, the potted plant in your garage or cool basement for the winter once the foliage has fallen from the plant.

In February or March, bring in the plant, water and fertilize it, and watch it wake up and bloom in your home. I love this plant because it develops large flowers on strong stems; each flower can be as large as 10 to 12 inches in diameter. The individual flowers have 4 petals in the shape of a cross, and each flower cluster can have 25 or more flowers that create this ball-shaped bloom. The flower color is wonderful, with shades of blue, pink, and lavender. The new hybrids can have several shades of color on the same flower and some will even both blue and pink on them.

Pick plants that still have some flowers, and that have green flowers on them, as you can then enjoy the changing colors as they mature. Florist hydrangeas will last in your home for 4 to 8 weeks--a real plus when choosing flowering plants. These hydrangea plants will dry out easily, so check daily and water as often as the plant requires it; dry plants will show flowers that wilt but will respond quickly when watered.

6) **Florist azaleas** (not to be confused with the hardy azaleas in your yard) are next. These plants are truly a sign of spring. If you can keep them cool, they will flower in your home for a month if you select them with buds still not opened; choose them with buds and a few open flowers when possible. They have great dark green foliage and flowers in shades of white, pink, red and many new variegated bicolor flowers also.

Like the florist hydrangeas, re-pot them in larger pots when they finish flowering, keep on your deck for summer and in the fall place in your garage when the weather gets cold. I have had great results bringing in an azalea during Christmas and watching it bloom for the holidays--or any time during the winter.

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7) **Oriental lilies** are new in last few years--these are wonderful, with the many unusual flower colors. Many varieties to choose from: white with yellow spotting, white with pink spotting, soft pink with deep pink spotting or deep pink with almost red spotting. The flowers, when open, are large--up to 10 inches. They are trumpet-shaped flowers that look intricate because of all the spotting in them.

The single strong stem can contain 5 to 9 flower buds and flowers on them, so choose the plant with mostly buds so you can enjoy them as they open. Pick off the pollen sacks to extend the flowering time and remove the faded flowers to keep the plant looking beautiful. Oriental lilies can also be planted in your garden when the flowers fade--you must plant them 6 to 8 inches deeper than they are in the pot right now. They will flower again next year during July-August in your garden; like the Easter lily they are very hardy. I almost forgot...they are very fragrant--a wonderful bonus to enjoy in your home this Easter.

8) **Martha Washington geraniums** are hybrid geraniums that flower during early spring to mid-summer. This plant blooms during short days and when the temperatures are on the cool side. When the weather warms up and the days get longer, they will grow foliage and prepare for next year. They begin to flower in February and last well into June, with multi-colored petals.

The flowers come on short stems, in clusters. The flowers can get as large as two inches each, making that flower cluster up to 6 inches in diameter. The flower does not look like the traditional geranium, nor does the foliage--as the foliage is more gray green and ruffled. This is a great flowering plant if you have a sunny window and a cool house. Many different flower colors are available; these flowers are two-toned, with shades of white, pink, crimson, purple, and lavender.

9) **Rieger begonias** are wonderful plants that you can keep well after Easter and plant in your garden to enjoy flowers right up until frost. Use them in planters, window boxes, hanging baskets, or plant them in the ground. The foliage is medium to dark green and shiny; the flowers develop on stems that grow 6 to 8 inches long on top of the plant, making them very visible and showy. Flowers come in shades of white, pink, red, yellow, and lavender.

The flowers develop on a strong stem like a chain of flowers, and they open one at a time often covering the plant. As they fade, pick them off. If you can fertilize them regularly, the flowers will continue to develop all year long. Caution: if you keep them inside as potted plants, never spray water on the foliage or a white powdery fungus will form on the foliage. Outside, the rain is not a problem. In the pot inside, keep the plant moist and never wet, or the stems can rot at the soil line; outside is not a problem. This begonia is a great flowering plant, with wonderful flowers that will last a long time inside or outside of your home.

10) **Calla lilies** are fairly new to the potted spring collection of Easter plants. Wonderful and easy to care for, they flower for several weeks. The bulbs are not winter-hardy so if you plant in your garden they must be dug up and stored in your basement for the winter. I prefer to keep them in pots during the summer months, allow them to die back in the fall with a frost and the store them in the basement in the pot for the winter. In March, bring the pots back upstairs, water and fertilizer and watch them come back to life for you to bloom during June and July on your deck or patio.

The calla lily looks much different from the traditional lily, as there is no main stem. A cluster of elongated foliage that grows about a foot tall will emerge from the pot; it is clean-looking and shiny. Individual flowers will form at the base of the foliage and grow just as tall as the foliage on strong stems. The flowers look like a cupped hand with a little surprise inside; once just white and beautiful, the new hybrids come in shades of pink, white, yellow and lavender. The flower is a bit waxy looking and almost cup-shaped.

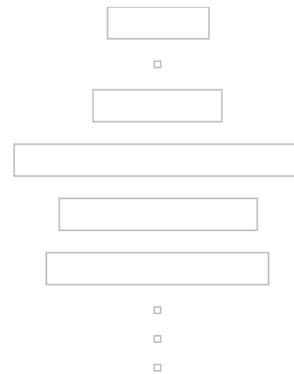
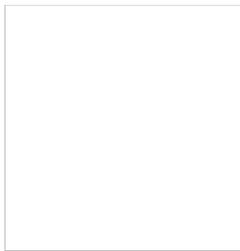
There are also some new hybrids with variegated foliage and taller-growing varieties with larger flowers. The Easter varieties are small types and fit just right on your dining room or coffee table. As the flowers fade, remove them and fertilize the plant regularly to give it energy to make new buds for next year.

During the holiday, enjoy your potted plants in the foil or plastic pot cover that they come in, as they should be water-proof and not cause damage to your tables. But be sure to water the plants OUT of the pot cover in your sink and allow them to drain completely, before replacing the cover, as a pot cover with water in it can rot the roots of the plant.

Once the holiday is over and all the company has left, dispose of the pot cover, as it will block the sunlight from hitting the foliage and this foliage will turn yellow or brown. All bulb plants to be set outside should go out 2 to 3 weeks after flowering to give the plant time to use the energy from the sun to mature the foliage and help it make buds for next year--especially if the weather outside is cold. Plant them and fertilize with Osmocote and care for them like any perennial you have in your garden now. Non-bulb plants should be fertilized monthly during the growing season in your home or on your deck.

Enjoy the holiday, and after the feast take a walk around your yard and talk to the spring flowers that are now beginning to emerge from your garden. Encourage them to come out and make your garden as beautiful as the dinner table was. From our family to yours: Enjoy Easter!

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Easter is the first and most important flower holiday of the spring season, so after this long winter, let's choose the right flowers for your dinner table this year. Everything outside is brown, pale green and rather dull looking, so let's dress up the inside of the house with pastel-colored flowers from the florist. A few magnolias and forsythia are beginning to come into bloom outside but can you imagine what a vase or two of fresh-cut spring flowers will do to cheer up your spirit inside your home!

My son Jason, who in my opinion is the best floral designer/wedding designer in the state of Maine and beyond, works at the largest and oldest florist shop in Portland, Maine--called "Harmon's and Barton's." He has given me these ideas to share with you so you can select the best combination for your dinner table this Easter Sunday.

Whether you're going to do it yourself or have it done for you, Jason wants you to remember these tips to keep your flowers beautiful and longer lasting in your home.

- First, always use a clean vase and a bit of bleach in the water when cleaning, as this will guarantee that an old vase you're using will be sterile to start.

- Always put a fresh cut on the end of the stems of the flowers and the greens you are using. Keep the leaves of the flower out of the water, as this will encourage bacteria to form in the water plugging the water uptake tubes in the stems shortening their life.

- Always use a flower preservative in your water in the vase.

- Always use cool water in the vase to help refresh flowers you purchased from the florist.

- Check the arrangement often and add water to keep the vase full at all times.

- If your home is warm, add ice cubes instead of water to help slow down the flowers from opening as quickly.

- Always keep the arrangement out of the direct sunshine and away from heat sources, as these will make the flowers open faster.

- Always keep the arrangement out of a drafty area as cold air can damage the blooms.

- If your arrangement is in a floral foam in your container, be sure to add water daily as this foam will dry out easily.

- One last thing--if you're using candles in your arrangement, keep an eye on the candles; the flame is hot.

Jason's picks are: fresh-cut tulips, wax flowers and freshly picked greens in a vase. If you're not familiar with wax flowers, you are missing a wonderful cut flower that is at its best at this time of the year--replacing baby's breath. Wax flower is a shrub-like plant that makes pale pink waxy looking flowers with 4 petals; these flowers develop in clusters up and down the stem. The flower buds are like a round bronze-colored button, and often the plant contains buds and flowers at the same time. The flowers are small, about 1/2 inch in diameter, and almost look square--like the dogwood tree flowers that will soon come into bloom in your yard. They are also long lasting and, like baby's breath, complement the major flowers you picked for the arrangement. Use solid or mixed color tulips, whichever you like the best.

Jason's second choice is Oriental lilies, wax flowers and fresh-cut greens in a vase. Oriental lilies come in many color combinations and are truly striking. The flowers stems will have several 4 to 6 inch trumpet shaped flowers on them, as well as buds for the future. The buds are also colored like the flowers and can be 4 to 6 inches long, resembling a pod ready to burst open. The flowers are very fragrant, and this combination will make a large arrangement for a big table. If you pick off the pollen sacks that develop inside the open flower, your flowers will last longer in the arrangement. If you're looking for "WOW !!" this should be your choice.

If you love color, Jason recommends an arrangement with mixed spring flowers in a vase. This is a combination of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, German iris, fresh-cut forsythia and pussy willows with fresh cut greens. These will brighten up any table they grace this Easter. When you use many spring flowering bulbs, add ice every day to keep them cool and longer lasting. Cut spring flower bulbs in arrangements are at their best at this time of the year!

Roses and hybrid lilies are a classic combination at this time of the year and if you're looking for bright pinks and reds for your dinner table, this should be your choice. Both flowers have tall stems and fragrant flowers. Add some baby's breath or wax flowers with a few greens and your table will be the talk of the meal. You can also select white or yellow roses in place of red and change the pink Oriental lilies to the white varieties with yellow spots in them for a wonderful spring look.

Tulips and multi-bloom miniature roses will also create a festive arrangement when you add wax flowers and fresh greens to the arrangement. Instead of one big rose flower per stem, think of a cluster of 5 or more one inch roses on every stem. Like the big roses, they also come in many colors and I personally think they will last longer in a vase of cut flowers. The smaller rose flowers are the queen of all flowers at any time of the year and they complement the spring-flowering tulips, which are the king of flowers in the spring time. Roses and tulips are a perfect combination to put in the middle of the table for Easter.

Jason also wanted to give you an additional choices, so he wants you to look at the Alstroemeria lilies, which have a cluster of small 1 to 2 inch lily-like flowers that grow in clusters on the top of a thick stem. Flower colors are wonderful and range from white to red

with every color in-between. They are long lasting and available all year long.

Gerbera daisies are wonderful 3 to 4 inch wide daisies with many layers of petals on the flower. The stem is as thick as a pencil and displays the flower very well when mixed with other flowers. The daisies come in many pastel colors just perfect for this time of the year with shades of yellow, pink, orange, white, red and lavender.

Carnations are still very popular at this time of the year, but look for the new and exciting bi-colored varieties with two or more colors on the same flowers and of course the wonderful pastels--yellow, pale pink, white and lavender.

Snapdragons will add dimension to your arrangements with their beautiful spike-like flowers with many pastel and bicolor blooms. If you want a bit of height and character, this long lasting flower is for you to add to your arrangement. Snapdragons will be available all year long also.

One of my favorites is the calla lilies; at this time of the year they are at their best and they are beautiful. The flower looks like a waving hand and they can be used all by themselves in a vase with fresh greens and, of course, wax flowers. The pure white flower is truly striking--they do come in other colors but for Easter the white is top shelf all the way.

All flowers will make your table beautiful; it's up to you to decide, so visit your local florist or Jason and celebrate the holiday with color, fragrance, and a sign that **winter is over!** Happy Easter!

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Mevagissey

## 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.

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### This 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

**This Week's Prize:**

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**Last Week's Question:**

A drug made from the bark of *Cinchona succirubra* was first used in European medicine in the 1600s, and is still used around the world today. What is the name of the drug?

**Last Week's Winner:**

Mary Beth Morrison

**Last Week's Answer:**

Quinine

**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
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- 6 three year journal pages
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- 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:

### Banana Spring Rolls



This is wonderful served with vanilla ice cream!

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large bananas
- 8 (7-inch square) spring roll wrappers
- 1 cup brown sugar, or to taste
- 1 quart oil for deep frying

#### Step by Step:

- Preheat the oil in a deep-fryer or large cast-iron skillet to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
- Peel bananas, and slice them in half lengthwise, then crosswise into fourths.
- Place one piece of banana diagonally across the corner of a spring roll wrapper, and sprinkle with brown sugar to taste.
- Roll from the corner to the center, then fold top and bottom corners in, and continue rolling. Dip your finger in water and brush the last edge to seal. Repeat with remaining banana pieces.
- Fry a few banana rolls at a time in the hot oil until evenly browned. Remove to paper towels to drain.
- Serve hot or cold.

Yield: 8 servings



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