

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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**To:** rickmorin@earthlink.net  
**Subject:** Paul Parent Garden Club News - April 19, 2012

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Edition 12.16	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 19, 2012
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FEATURED QUOTE :</b> "April hath put a spirit of youth in everything." ~William Shakespeare</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gifts for the Gardener</b> <a href="#">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</a></p>
<input type="text"/>		
<h2>Damminix Tick Tubes®</h2>		<b>Contact Information:</b>
<p>Don't let ticks and Lyme disease hold you hostage inside this spring and summer! Damminix Tick Tubes® are here to let you <i>Take Back The Outdoors!</i></p>		<b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="#">Click to contact us.</a>
<p>Lyme Disease is spread by hard-to-reach deer ticks. You realize the key to protecting against Lyme is controlling your exposure to these ticks, but how? You need an intelligent tick control solution that lets you, your children and your pets safely enjoy the outdoors. Your solution is Damminix Tick Tubes®.</p>		<b>Telephone:</b> (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM) <b>Fax:</b> (207) 985-6972
<p>It is well known that deer spread ticks infected with Lyme disease. However, did you know that these same ticks get Lyme disease from mice, not deer? Damminix Ticks Tubes® rely on the natural nesting instincts of mice to take the battle to source and deliver tick controlling permethrin directly to this host animal and the ticks it infects.</p>		<b>Address:</b> Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043
<p>Damminix Tick Tubes® are biodegradable, cardboard tubes filled with permethrin treated cotton balls. Mice collect the cotton to build their nests. Deer ticks that feed on mice in the Spring and the Fall are exposed to permethrin and killed. All the while, the mice, other mammals and your lands are unharmed and undisturbed.</p>		<b>Regular Phone Hours:</b> Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM
<p>For more details on Damminix Tick Tubes®, <a href="#">please visit their website.</a></p>		<b>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</b>
<input type="text"/>		(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)
<p>Our wonderful garden nasturtiums are native wildflowers found in South America, especially Peru and Bolivia where they still grow on sunny rolling hillsides. Spanish explorers brought them to Europe during the 16th century where they were grown for their flowers. But the custom of eating the flowers comes from the Orient where it is still used for teas, salads and all types of cooking.</p>		<b>Your e-mail</b> [     ]
<p>I always grew the nasturtium for its flowers--as many of us still do today--until 10 years ago. During late March and April, Epcot, at Disney World in Florida has their wonderful flower show, and if you have ever been there during this event, you are in for a real treat. The park is transformed into an incredible garden of flowers and vegetables along with their incredible topiaries and life-sized Disney characters made of flowers.</p>		<b>Your name</b> [     ]
<p>I was fortunate to broadcast the Garden Show there, and after the program I was invited to eat at their flower show breakfast on Sunday morning. Everything you ate had flowers in it...and I mean everything. My favorite was their nasturtium and cheese quiche. Every piece had fresh flowers sunken into the mixture. The pan they used looked like a framed picture of a garden and each flower was sunk into the delicate egg batter, which revealed every flower in the mixture--almost too good to eat but I did and it was good. So next time you cook, try it to watch for the reaction of your family and friends.</p>		<b>Their e-mail</b> [     ]
<p>If you would like to grow nasturtiums in your garden or in containers, here is what you have to do--and you're in for a surprise. Nasturtiums will grow best and flower more in a poor to average soil. If your soil is too rich it will grow large plants with wonderful foliage but few flowers--and I am not kidding, this plant is not to be pampered! The only thing this plant needs is lots of sunshine and plenty of moisture.</p>		<b>Their name</b> [     ]
<p>If you're using a container that had plants in it last year, just clean it up and remove the old dead plants, then loosen up the soil before planting; add NOTHING to it. Push the large seed</p>		<b>[Send &gt;&gt;]</b>  <b>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</b> <a href="#">Click here to find Paul Parent</a>

that resembles a dried-out pea one inch deep into the soil and cover. Space the seeds 4 to 6 inches apart throughout the container; once they germinate and begin to grow, thin to space every 8 to 10 inches. Water well and keep moist if the weather is warm and dry but you do not have to water every day. The best soil is one that is well-drained, and make sure your container is also well-drained, with lots of drainage holes in it and with no saucer under it to hold water--drainage is the key to success.

If you're planting directly in the ground, all you have to do is loosen the soil and plant. Water the soil toughly and keep moist but never wet or the seeds will rot in the ground; moist to dry is best. Once the nasturtium seedlings begin to develop, water weekly, unless it rains during the week. A sunny location is best but the plants will tolerate a bit of late-in-the-day shade with fewer flowers on the plant. As in your container, do not condition the soil before planting; during the year you can feed the plant once or twice with a liquid fertilizer like fish emulsion. Do not use Osmocote fertilizer or any other granular organic or chemical fertilizer during the year or it will cost you flowers.

The plant will grow 12 inches tall and just as wide but there are taller growing varieties and even vining types available. You can also start your seeds indoors now in pots to be transplanted later to the garden when the weather becomes more stable and the threat of frost is over. Even a light frost or temperatures near 40 degrees will kill or stunt back this plant, so do not rush the season. Your soil should be around 60 degrees for the seed to germinate--and remember that cold, wet soil equals seeds that rot in the ground!

Once the plant begins to flower, pick the flowers often to force the plant to flower more, so keep picking and don't let the plant make seeds when the flowers fade and die off.

The flowers are showy, interesting looking and the colors are bright. Each flower has five or more flower petals that resemble a wide-open trumpet. In the center of the flower, look for a three-carpelled ovary. The flowers will make one seed in each ovary or three seeds per flower--unusual. In the center of the flower, you will see a funnel-shaped nectar tube ending at the back of the flower like a spur. This nectar tube is constantly visited by butterflies, pollinator insects and hummingbirds.

The leaf is very unusual and resembles a shield that was used during the days of the Greek armies. The stem of the leaf is attached in the back of the leaf and right in the center of it, not on the end of the leaf like most plants. The leaf is deep green with cream white veins that start from the center and work their way out to the edges of the leaf resembling a star. Leaves will grow 2 to 4 inches in diameter on long stems that hold the leaf upright like a plate being balanced on a wooden stick. The leaves will move with the slightest breeze and they often hold several drops of water after a shower or being watered, as they are slightly cupped--unique.

All parts of the plant are edible, the leaves, flowers and the seeds. The leaves and the flowers both have a slight peppery taste--almost like watercress--and the flowers are added to a salad for the wonderful color it provides with the mixed greens in it. If you pick the unripe seed that is still green, it can be pickled in warm vinegar and used to replace capers, with a strong peppery taste. Flowers can also be used in stir-fry cooking and make a wonderful garnish for your buffet table when placed on everything from salads to fish, meat and even desserts. The chef at Disney told me he sprays the flowers with fresh orange or pineapple juice to give them more flavor and to calm down the peppery flavor.

Did you know that if you plant nasturtiums in or near your vegetable garden, the plants will attract aphids away from the garden vegetables onto them? Nasturtium leaves are like a magnet to aphids--and with a bit of luck the bugs will stay off your vegetables and move onto the nasturtium plants. You should also plant or place pots of nasturtiums near the cabbage family of plants to distract the white butterflies that bring you cabbage loppers and eat the foliage of the plant. The white butterfly will lay the eggs under the leaf and when the eggs hatch there will be not enough food to support them and the life cycle is shortened, killing the green cabbage worms.

Slugs also prefer nasturtiums to any other flower if you have a shady garden, so use them as a sacrificial plant to keep your hosta foliage clean and hole free. Slugs will collect around the plant, making it easier for you to find them and place your slug bait.

So you see, nasturtiums are more than just a pretty flower--they are also a tasty food, a garnish for your special meals and organic insect control for the garden. This spring, plant nasturtiums--the plant that needs little to no care, and enjoy!

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Broccoli is a vegetable that either you love...or you don't. It's a vegetable that can be eaten fresh out of the garden, raw in salads, is great for dipping or cooked a hundred different ways to fit your taste buds. It's also one of the few vegetables that you actually eat the flower buds of the plant before they mature to flowers. This unique vegetable will do best when planted early in the spring when the weather is still cool to cold, so don't wait to plant them when the weather is ready in mid-May for your tomatoes--plant them now. At this time of the year, it's too late to start broccoli plants from seed, so plant seedlings available at your local nursery or garden center. But you should buy a package of seeds for a fall and early winter crop--and I will tell you about that fall crop after we talk about the summer crop.

Broccoli is a vegetable that prefers a soil a bit on the acid side to neutral; if you apply wood

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ash or limestone to the garden every other year the plants will do quite well. They are heavy feeders and will quickly deplete your garden soil of Nitrogen in just one season unless you fertilize them monthly with a good organic vegetable garden fertilizer. Broccoli should never be planted in the same location of your garden every year. Rotation of the location in the garden will keep this wonderful vegetable productive and will give the soil a chance to rest and rebuild the soil fertility. Adding compost to the garden soil--leaves, animal manure or seaweed--in the fall of the year will help to rebuild the quality of the soil by spring for other types of vegetable plants.

If you have tried to grow broccoli in the past--or other cold weather crops such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage or collards and have had problems with small or stunted growth, hollow stems or stems that crack or split open, you have a problem that is easily solved with an application of Borax detergent powder. Soils that are on the acidic side or are low in organic matter, such as compost or animal manure are usually deficient in Boron. In the spring before planting add compost and use Jonathan Green Magic-Cal to sweeten the soil.

If the fertilizer you are using does not list Boron on the package, just add Borax detergent to your garden at the rate of 2 pounds per 1000 sq. ft. of garden and till to a depth of 6 inches deep into the soil. Boron deficiency is also responsible for corn that has discolored foliage, stunted growth and is light in color; also look for poor corn kernel development on the cob of the plant. Vegetable garden fertilizers like Vegetable-Tone or Dr. Earth Vegetable fertilizer with Pro-Biotic are complete fertilizers and will solve your problem with a Boron shortage in your garden.

Broccoli loves a well-drained soil with lots of organic matter like compost, animal manure, or seaweed added to the garden every year. This helps to hold moisture around the plant roots during periods of high heat during the summer. If your soil is heavy and on the clay side, conditioning is necessary to help root development and prevent root rot problems if the season is a wet one. Adding Garden Gypsum will also help to break up the clay in the soil and improve drainage. If your soil is on the sandy side also use Soil Moist granules at the time of planting to help hold moisture around the roots, all you will need is a good pinch per plant.

Select a full sun location in the garden for the best yield but the plant will tolerate a bit of shade. Space your plants 18 to 24 inches apart, with 2 feet between rows. If you're planting in a block, try to stagger the rows so plants have more room to grow. Once the plants are established in the garden and growing well, water them weekly to help the plant produce side shoots once you have picked the large terminal head of broccoli. A well-fed and watered plant will produce 1 to 2 inch mini heads all summer long. Pick those mini heads often and if some should develop yellow flowers, cut and remove them from the plant--or the plant will go to seed and production will stop, especially when it gets hot. Broccoli will keep over a week in a food storage bag in your refrigerator, so pick often until you have enough for a meal and then cook or just eat them raw in your summer salad. Pick your broccoli when the flower buds are small and tight for the best flavor.

Broccoli is a great source of sulforaphane, (a compound that can help prevent some types of cancer) and antioxidants that help protect the body from other disease. It is also low in saturated fats and cholesterol. Broccoli is full of vitamins like calcium, iron, potassium and a good source of protein.

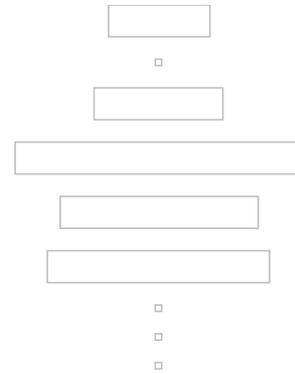
Some problems you might encounter are: **cabbage looper**--a small green caterpillar insect that is easily controlled with the new natural insecticide called Spinosad that is safe for all pollinators in your garden. A soil insect that I had problems with in the past called the **root maggot** is easily controlled with a new insecticide for the vegetable garden soil is called "Garden Eight Granules for the Vegetable Garden"; just apply in the hole around the roots at the time of planting and the problem is eliminated. This same product will also control **cutworms** when you sprinkle it around the plant after planting and it is safe and very effective, as cutworms love the cold crops vegetables when planted at this time of the year. Both of these vegetable garden insecticides are available from Bonide lawn and Garden at your favorite garden center or nursery. Once you apply the product, water the garden well to make them effective and protect your garden plants. If you have **wire worms** in your potatoes, radishes, or turnips this product will control these pests when added to the soil around the seed when planting.

If you want to grow a fall crop of broccoli, purchase your seeds now, as they will not be available later--and save them until mid-July. Start your seeds in a flat of seed-starter soil at mid-month; the seeds will germinate in about a week. Set out seedlings when the plants develop 3 sets of leaves--and plant them 12 inches apart in the garden, as this fall season crop will only allow you to harvest one large head per plant due to the length of the season. If the fall weather is nice, you may be able to harvest some additional side shoots but plan for nice large and tasty heads by late September or early October.

Some wonderful varieties to look for are 'Packman F1', 'Premium Crop F1', 'Saga F1' or 'Mariner F1', as these varieties will produce an abundance of side shoots all summer long and a large fully formed terminal head in the spring and fall season.

Keep plants away from plantings of pole or snap beans and strawberries, as they do not get along very well. Good companion plants are bush beans, lettuce, cucumbers, beets, and carrots. Now...do not forget to rotate your crops with another vegetable other than the cold weather crops and the plants in the cabbage family the following year; give the soil a chance to rest, and rebuild itself naturally. Enjoy!

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This spring has brought us unusual weather with lots of early warmth but a lack of moisture. Records have been broken in every state with the heat and that has excited all of us gardeners but the lack of rainfall is and could be a major problem in the weeks to come. Our flowering plants are blooming ahead of schedule--in many cases, the bloom time has been affected. Hot weather shortens the flowering time on plants and if our ever-changing weather pattern gives us a couple days of cold, some of our flowering plants are damaged by frost. My magnolias were hit by the frost last week, and half the flowers were damaged; how about your plants?

Here are a few things you can do to help your flowering trees and shrubs to stay in bloom longer this spring. If you have a plant in bloom right now, get out your sprinkler and water them to lengthen the blooming period, as a plant in flower requires more water than one not in flower. When your plants finish flowering they will begin to make the new growth and the foliage for this year. If the soil is dry--as it is right now--that new growth will be less. Less new growth limits the plant's ability to repair any winter damage it might have suffered--including the snowstorm we had this past October. Less new growth means less fruit or berries on your plants in the garden. Less new growth affects the plant's ability to make energy to fight off disease problems and replace any damaged foliage if insects become a problem. Get out the hose and start watering right now because every state from Maine to Florida is 5 to 8 inches of rainfall below normal since January. (So where are those April showers?)

If you have put down a lawn fertilizer or a fertilizer with crabgrass control, it will not be effective unless you water the lawn! You must change the dry granular fertilizer and crabgrass control product to a liquid so it can create a barrier to kill the crabgrass seed before it germinates. The dry fertilizer will just sit there on top of the soil and not feed the grass. You need to water right now or the lawn will not thicken, preventing future weeds from developing in the lawn, and the crabgrass will germinate and begin to grow with this heat. For this to become effective, we need at least one inch of water per week during April and May. If your grass does not get off to a good start in the next few weeks and the weather continues to stay dry, your lawn will not be able to develop a deep root system and when July arrives be prepared for a brown and weedy lawn. Just a warning--get out the hose and water now!

This weather is wonderful for working in the garden and preparing it for planting all types of perennials, shrubs, trees, roses, groundcovers, vines and some annuals and vegetables but be careful and think before you plant those tented plants. This past week I made a big effort to visit as many greenhouse, garden centers and The Big Box stores as possible and I am SCARED for you because The Big Box stores are selling you plants that ARE NOT READY to be planted yet. I want you to think before planting this spring, it is only April 19 and in the Northeast there is a very good possibility that we will have a killing frost in the next two or three weeks.

It is too early to plant most vegetables unless they are considered "cold crops" like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, onions, lettuce and some seeds like peas, spinach and beets. The only flowers that are safe to plant now are pansies, Johnny-jump-ups and violets. Geraniums will be killed or stunted so please do not fall into the box store trap; WAIT until the time is right to plant them! If you want to purchase a hanging basket, it must come inside your home at night; it may not die but you will lose the new flower buds, or your plant will be damaged and lose the ability to perform properly for you later--WAIT! Don't even think of planting tomatoes, peppers, vine crops, impatiens, marigolds, and herbs like basil and parsley, it's too early!

All I can say is, "shame on you Big Box Stores for taking advantage on the new gardener and some gardeners who should know better." These gardeners will feel that they have done something wrong, become discouraged and never try to grow perennials or roses because they failed with the easy-to-grow annuals or vegetables. Customer service at its worst!

What you should be doing now is pruning your roses and fertilizing them to help get them off to a good start when the weather stabilizes. Clean all your perennial beds, divide those that need to be divided and fertilize them also. Set up your peony cages; fasten the vines to the trellises and if any plants need to be moved, now is the time to move them--unless they are in flower. It's also time to fertilize your spring flowering bulbs like tulips, and daffodils--especially those that are not flowering--with Bulb-Tone or Dr. Earth Bulb Food with Pro Biotic. When the flowers begin to fade, be sure to remove the faded flowers--but not the foliage for at least a month after they bloom.

Your clematis and lilacs need to be limed--or use wood ash from your fireplace or wood stove to help keep the soil sweet and encourage more flowers and strong growth. Use Jonathan Green Magic-Cal to help control and eliminate the moss that is trying to take over your lawn and garden. Did you know that acid soils, that have moss growing in them, will have more weeds growing in them, because weeds prefer acid soil? Annual and perennial gardens, vegetable gardens, planters and your flowering shrubs and trees should be limed every other if you want the most flowers from your plants, acid soil will limit their ability to make flowers!

Edge your flower and shrub beds and cover them with 1 to 3 inches of bark mulch or compost to help control weeds and prevent the hot summer sun from drying them out. Start pruning your privacy hedges right now--before the new growth covers the plants--to control their size and help keep them nice and thick; "remember, pruning stimulates new growth on all plants." Non flowering plants like burning bush, privet hedges, barberry and evergreens like hemlock, arborvitae, holly, boxwood and yews will look better if pruned before the plants begins to grow, because you're not damaging the foliage and the new foliage that forms will fill in holes in the plant made by the damage of snow and weather. At this time of the year, you can cut back these plants by 25 to 30% to control their size--and when the new growth forms, they will

look like they were never pruned.

Visit your local nursery and ask for help if you're not sure what to do, as these people are trained and experienced professionals who love to garden and want to share their knowledge with you. Look at the new shrubs, trees, and plants in their yard and I am sure you will find something that will excite you about gardening this year. Remember there is NO dumb gardening question, as we are always learning about the new plants and the new garden-related products to help them grow and stay insect and disease free. Please, this year think about what you want to do and then ask help to do it right the first time, not doing this is "Dumb."

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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

This popular tropical plant was named after the French Admiral who discovered it in Brazil in 1768. What is the plant?

#### This Week's Prize:

Bio-tone® Starter Plus  
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Last 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.)

**Last Week's Winner:**

Steven Rothert

**Last Week's Answer:**

"Bamboo. I lived in Okinawa, Japan and watched them use it for everything."

**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:

### Simple Crustless Broccoli Quiche



This is a simple and tasty dish that's a cross between a quiche and a fritatta. Feel free to throw in your own variations: other vegetables, other cheeses, ham or bacon or even crab.

What You Need

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half cream
- 1 cup Swiss cheese, grated
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon white pepper

**Step by Step:**

- Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- Blanch the broccoli, saving the stems for soup (If you are using frozen broccoli, thaw it first).
- Beat eggs and cream, then add the cheese and mix well.
- Stir in the broccoli, salt, garlic powder, nutmeg, and pepper.
- Pour into a nine-inch quiche pan and bake for about 30-35 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Yield: 4-6 servings



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