

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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To: rickmorin@earthlink.net
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Edition 12.17	Paul Parent Garden Club News	April 26, 2012
	<p align="center">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p>In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours. -Mark Twain</p>	<p align="center">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p>Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p>
<p align="center">Dr. Earth Rose & Flower Fertilizer 5-7-2</p> <p>Dr. Earth Rose & Flower Fertilizer produces remarkable results because nutrients are released quickly, yet continue to feed for several months. Ultra-premium scientific formula provides optimum levels of primary essential plant nutrients, including micronutrients and multi-minerals. ProBiotic® ensures that organic nutrients are thoroughly broken down and then released in the soil for plant roots to absorb them as they are needed.</p> <p>Infused with ProBiotic®--consisting of "Seven Champion Strains" of beneficial soil microbes and eight select strains of ecto & endo mycorrhizae--which contributes to drought tolerance, enhanced nutrient availability, and increased plant performance. The Dr. Earth® probiotics are a most complete "broad-spectrum" bio-active package designed to work synergistically with the raw organic nutrients that make up the Organic 3™ formula. This spectacular blend builds soil health, promotes superior flowers and roses with larger and more abundant colorful blooms.</p> <p>For more information, visit the Dr. Earth website.</p>		<p 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 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>One of the most delicious vegetables you can grow in your garden is the globe artichoke--and, yes, you can even grow them in Maine where I live. This wonderful vegetable is native to the Mediterranean--possibly Sicily--and has been enjoyed for several thousand years, starting with the Greeks and Romans. Records show it was first grown for food in Naples, Italy during the mid-fifteenth century and slowly spread all over Europe where the climate was warm. During the 15th century, it was grown in France because of its reputation of being an aphrodisiac. In the early 16th century, they were a popular vegetable in England but it was the French Colonists who took them to North America in the 1800's. By the early 20th century, it was being grown in California as a major crop--and that is where I first saw them being grown on large farms by the thousands.</p> <p>In California, the globe artichoke is a perennial vegetable, but in the colder climate of the Northeast it is grown as an annual. The first year I grew the plant I set it out in mid-to-late May with my tomatoes and peppers, thinking the artichoke was sensitive to the cold because I had seen it growing in California. I found starter plants at a small greenhouse where they grew it as novelty plant. They had no idea how to grow the plant or if it would actually make the wonderful flowers-- but the foliage was stunning looking, so I thought I would give it a try. The plant grew beautiful foliage but it never made the edible flowers for me. My gardening books had little to no information about how to grow this plant, so I gave up until one day I was at Lake Street Garden in Salem, New Hampshire when I came across the plant again.</p> <p>It was late April and the plants were outside on the benches with broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and the other cold weather crops. My curiosity was rekindled and I asked to speak to the</p>		<p>Your e-mail []</p> <p>Your name []</p> <p>Their e-mail []</p> <p>Their name []</p> <p align="center">[Send >>]</p> <p>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent</p>

owner. Tim Wolf came out of the green house to greet me and told me how to grow this wonderful plant here in New England. Tim told me that in a cold region you have to trick the plant when the plant is about six weeks old to flower the first year. You must convince the plant that it is two years old--and the plant will make flower buds. Tim told me that if you grow the plant in a warm greenhouse and plant it out when the weather has warmed up and is ready for tomatoes, the new seedlings will grow only foliage like they do in California. I said, "yes, and that is what has happened to me in the past--just foliage."

The secret is to grow the plant in a cool greenhouse with your other cool weather vegetables and the cold treatment will make the seedling behave like a two year old plant that is ready to flower. Temperatures during the hardening off period should remain below 50 degrees but above 35 degrees so the plant does not freeze. This cold treatment will need to continue for 12 to 14 days to initiate the plant to flower the first year--without this treatment the plant will only make foliage. Also, you must set out the plant while the weather is still cool; that is why he had globe artichokes for sale early in the season at the same time as the normal cold weather crops like broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, leeks and onions--which are one of Lake Street's specialties, with many common and unusual varieties of onions seedlings.

Tim also convinced me to grow my onions as seedlings rather than the onion sets or bulbs and to my amazement the onion seedlings grew faster and larger than the onions sets I grew for the last many years. So if you like onions, plant seedlings from a soil flat like you do tomatoes and get ready for a big surprise this fall.

Globe artichokes will grow best in a soil on the sweet side from 6.5 to 8.0 pH, so be sure to add wood ash or Magic-Cal to the garden before planting your artichokes. The plant will grow a large and deep-growing root system. This is easier with a sandy type soil or one that has been conditioned with a lot of organic matter. Heavy soils that contain clay could be a problem and slow the growth of the plant. Dig your compost, animal manure, or sea weed kelp up to 12 inches deep in the soil before planting for the best results, because this plant is also a heavy feeder. Fertilize the plant *monthly* with a good organic fertilizer for slow feeding like Dr. Earth vegetable food with Pro Biotic or Vegetable Tone.

The plant needs sun all day, eight hours or more for the best growth and flower bud production. If you can add a thin layer of compost or straw around the plant--1 to 3 inches thick--during the summer, it will help to hold the heat in the soil longer, increasing the growth of the plant. You can also use black landscape fabric to warm up the soil faster in the spring, and then straw. The plant will grow wide, so space your plants 2 feet apart when planting in the garden. The foliage is beautiful and resembles a giant silver dandelion in your garden that grows in a whorl of flat foliage about a foot high. The leaves are all notched and nothing else in your garden looks like it. You can even plant one or two in your perennial flower bed for great contrast, and allow the flowers to open for unique color and wonderful dry flowers later on in the fall season.

During the summer months, water the globe artichoke plants heavily and often for the best growth and flower buds. If your soil is on the sandy side, use Soil Moist water holding granules like I do to help retain moisture in the garden soil. Your flower buds will be ready for harvest in August; they form on a tall stem that will grow up to 3 feet tall. If you fertilize and water correctly the tall stem will also make several smaller side flower buds that are just as tasty but smaller in size. Last year I had one plant that made one large terminal bud and 5 side buds that were ready to pick about 2 weeks after I harvested the main flower bud.

Cut the flower bud when the scales around the bud are still tight and waxy looking, but before the scales at the base of the bud begin to lift from the tight bud. If you do not pick the flower buds when they are ready, it will prevent other flower buds from maturing on the plant and flowers will form. The flowers are wonderful for arrangements, they also dry well, and they are loved by butterflies and bees. I always grow one plant just for the flowers, as they resemble a giant thistle bloom with rich deep purple flowers.

Sometimes the plants can have a few aphids on them but a quick spray with a tomato vegetable garden dust or spray will solve the problem. Insects and disease are not a problem with this plant; for the last 4 years mine have been clean and trouble free. Pick up a plant or two for a real treat in your garden and grow something that no one else in the neighborhood will have in their garden this year, globe artichokes. If I can grow them in Maine, just imagine what you can do in a warmer climate. You won't be sorry, so enjoy.

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If you're looking for a sure sign that spring has arrived, look no further than the candytuft perennial flower coming into bloom in gardens right now. Candytuft is an unusual perennial because it is evergreen even in Northern gardens. The foliage resembles a very dark green, flatted needle 1/8 to 1/4 inches wide and 1 to 2 inches long, which has a wax-covered appearance all year long. This foliage will grow in a mound that often spreads over the garden as wide as 2 feet in diameter and 6 to 12 inches tall. The foliage often pokes through the snow during the winter, giving you a sign that there is still life in that frozen soil where flowers once stood.

As the weather begins to warm up during April, the flowers begin to open slowly with the changing weather. Before long the entire top of the plant is completely covered with hundreds of icy white flower clusters; in New England, it is common to see those flowers last well into June in most years. Each flower cluster is made up of 25 or more small 4-petal flowers. The

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flower cluster can grow as large as 2 inches in diameter. The flower clusters look like delicate lace and look almost like snowflakes covering the rich deep green foliage. Another unusual quality about the flowers is that they don't look dirty as the plant begins to lose its color and fade.

Once the flowers fade, the plant will begin to make new growth a bit lighter in color at first, but it will quickly darken up as it matures. If your plant is beginning to become too large and losing its compact-looking growth (or sometimes even losing its foliage in the middle of the plant) the spring is the best time to cut it back. Just pull the foliage together and cut the plant back by 1/3 to 1/2 its current size as soon as it finishes flowering. The new growth will quickly develop and fill in the plant, keeping it compact and growing in a mound. This is a plant that should never be pruned in the fall. If you prune in the fall, you will remove all the flower buds and lose the spring flowers. The plant will not die with a fall pruning but if the winter is open with little snow cover, you could have additional winter damage due to the ends of the branches being cut back late in the season. Do the pruning every 2 to 3 years to keep the plans full and compact growing.

The plant stems almost look like they are woody and are often just as shiny as the foliage, a real treat for a front row or border plant. Candytuft will look great all year in your garden and is very clean looking, with no foliage spotting or disease problems to spoil the appearance of the plant. I just love this plant in a rock garden, on top of a short stone or wooden retaining wall, as it cascades over the structure, softening it. When planted en masse, it will also make a wonderful ground cover for all seasons. I like to plant the candytuft along a walkway for early color; if you pull back the foliage in the fall and plant tulips or daffodils in-between the individual plants, you're in for a real treat in May, as the spring-flowering bulbs push through the white flower carpet of the candytuft; their flowers look even more beautiful blooming above the white mound of candytuft flowers.

If you do not have this wonderful perennial in your garden, your local nursery will have them available right now. The plant will grow best in a sunny location with 8 hours of direct sun or more--it will also tolerate a bit of light shade but produce fewer flowers. This wonderful plant will grow in average soil but the better you condition the soil before planting, the better it will grow and flower for you. Use compost, animal manure, peat moss or seaweed kelp--and if the soil is sandy, add a pinch or two of Soil Moist granules to help retain soil moisture during those hot and dry summer days. If your soil is heavy and clay-like, use all of the above but substitute garden gypsum for the Soil Moist to help open up the heavy soil to improve the drainage. Wet soils will encourage root rot problems during wet springs.

If you want to divide the plant, spring is the best time to do it. If you like this plant, buy a package of rooting hormone and root the cuttings you pruned off the plant in the spring--it is very easy to do. You can also plant seed to make new plants; the spring is the best time to sow them, when the mature plant finishes flowering and the ground begins to warm up.

If your garden is in a windy location, add a bit of bark mulch 1 to 3 inches thick to insulate the soil during the winter. This mulch will also keep out the weeds in the garden and help hold the water in the soil during a hot and dry summer. Fertilize the plants in the spring as the flowers begin to fade to help stimulate new growth and bud development for next spring. I like Flower-Tone or Dr. Earth Rose and Flower Fertilizer with Pro-Biotic, as they are both organic slow-release fertilizers.

The early spring, the flowers are wonderful for the early honeybees and butterflies that are looking for food during April. These same flowers will help to motivate you to get back into the garden early and prepare the garden for what is yet to come. I also like the reflection in the garden when we have a full moon in the spring sky; your garden just seems to glow in that moon light.

Your local nursery will have several varieties that grow at different heights and diameters. When you set out the plants, give them room to grow as they will spread; the plants should be spaced 1 to 2 feet apart if you want a solid border. I love to alternate the candytuft with other ground cover type perennials like basket-of-gold (*Aurinia saxatilis*), with their golden yellow flower that bloom at the same time. Also very nice is the Dianthus 'Cheddar Pink,' forget-me-nots with pink, white or blue flowers, or the ground phlox with white, pink, red, purple and bi-colored flowers for adding wonderful texture to the garden when in bloom or just to enjoy the different foliage of the plants.

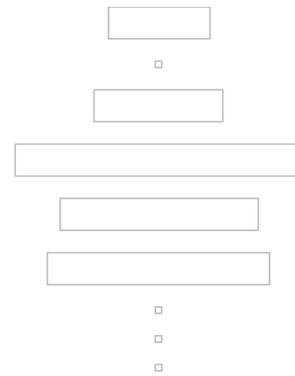
Candytuft also blooms when bleeding hearts, peonies and coral bells come into flower and it makes a great understory plant around them. If you have a large shrub and tree bed with dogwood, saucer magnolias or flowering crabapples this will make a great flower to plant under them for additional color early in the season. So, this spring think about candytuft for color, with a long blooming season of sparkling white flowers that will motivate you to get back in the garden and enjoy your love of gardening again. Enjoy!

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Because of the warmer than normal weather this spring, I have a few more things that you should be aware of that must be done ahead of schedule--the sooner the better. We are about 2 to 3 weeks ahead of schedule right now.

#1 In the perennial garden, it is time now to treat the soil around your hybrid lily bulbs for that red beetle called the Asiatic lily beetle. This insect pest is a major problem with your hybrid lilies--and they are now beginning to arrive on your plants. They start as a small red,



rectangular beetle that will eat holes in the foliage of the young plants. Soon they will lay rows of yellow eggs on the underside of the lilies' leaves--look for them, and if you see them, pull off the leaf and destroy it.

These eggs will hatch creating a slug-like creature that is covered with a black film--actually "poop"--as protection against predators while it feeds on your lilies' foliage. In time, it will turn into the red lily beetle and start the process all over again. As the foliage is eaten, the beetle will also dig a hole into the stem of the lily and eat his way down to the bulb and destroy it. The only product to stop this insect is called "Tree and Shrub" and is available at your local garden center. Mix one ounce of the product per gallon of water and apply over the plant and soaking the foliage and the soil around the roots. I use a quart of the mixture for a clump of 3 to 5 bulbs and the product will protect the plant for the entire year; other products only last for a month, not long enough. Go to www.bayeradvanced.com for more information.

#2 If you have Canadian hemlocks, I want you to check them over really good, especially on the tips of the branches, for a white cottony-looking growth on the underside of the needles. This is an insect called the "wooly adelgid" and this pest must be treated right now or you could lose your hemlocks in just 3 years--even trees with a trunk up to a foot in diameter and 50 feet tall. The wooly adelgid is laying eggs now and will soon begin to suck the energy out of your tree, quickly killing entire branches of your tree. The tree does not have to be sprayed, a real good thing for large trees! Just mix the product according to the directions and pour the mixture around the base of the tree trunk and the roots will take the product to the problem and protect it for the entire year. Use Tree and Shrub insecticide as it is the only product that will do the job systemically without spraying. You can do this yourself and save hundreds of dollars without hiring someone to do it for you. Look for the new generic Tree and Shrub made by Bonide at www.bonide.com or by Fertilome at www.fertilome.com and save up to half the cost on the product, especially if you need large quantities of it.

#3 Ticks are beginning to appear in the lawn and around your garden. The best way to control them is to kill them on the host--the mice that live around your home. Ticks begin their life on the common mouse that lives in the woods, tall grass, under your tool shed or even in the stone wall on your property. If you have children, pets or you spend a lot of time in the yard and are noticing ticks--it's time to use the wonderful and safe product called Dammanix Tick Tubes. The product is a cardboard tube like a paper towel tube filled with cotton and a mild pesticide called permethrin. All you have to do is place the tubes under the tool shed, near a stone wall in the tall grass or in a wooded area--and the mice will do the rest. They will collect the cotton from the tubes and use it as bedding.

As the ticks begin to mature on the mice, they will come in contact with the insecticide and die, preventing them from developing potential problems like Lyme disease. The product is approved by the EPA, and it is environmentally friendly, because you're not treating all the grass area on your property with pesticides, just targeting the host--the mouse. It proven effective, safe--and it works. Check out their website at www.ticktubes.com for more information and destroy the ticks before they have a chance to create a problem this year.

#4 Because of the mild winter, the ground never froze like it normally does most winters--and that means a possible major problem with Japanese beetles this summer. You can treat your lawn with the traditional soil pesticides or, if you want to stay organic, look for the new Canadian-raised soil nematodes. Nematodes are microscopic creatures that we have in our soil right now but the winter weather kills many of them off with the cold. These creatures will feed on soil insects like the Japanese and Asiatic beetle grubs living in your lawn and garden--and they won't hurt the earth worms.

The Canadian Company is called "Environmental Factor," and it has developed nematodes that are more cold-tolerant; they are able to raise them in large quantities and place them in a hibernation stage until you apply them to your lawn and garden. Most other companies who sell nematodes package them and these nematodes must be applied to the lawn in a 30 day period or they will die. But Environmental Factor has developed new way to keep them dormant longer, and also keeps their product refrigerated at all times, so your local garden center will have them in a small refrigerator supplied by the company to guarantee freshness and results. This product works fast and you get results in weeks, not months or years like other products that cause a disease of grubs (like milky spore), and it is more effective. If you have ever seen the TV show "Shark Tank," this company is working with a Canadian version of the Shark Tank in Canada--a big honor when you are chosen. Go to www.environmentalfactor.com for more information.

#5 Now that your spring flowering bulbs are beginning to go by, be sure to remove the faded flowers (but NOT the foliage) so the plant does not use its energy to make useless seeds and instead uses that energy to make a stronger bulb and flower buds for next year. Now is the time to also feed them with a good organic slow-release bulb fertilizer like Dr. Earth Bulb food with Pro Biotic or Espoma Bulb-Tone. You can remove the foliage in 4 to 6 weeks, so the plant can have time to rebuild its natural energy for next year.

#6 Now is time to fertilize your roses and perennials to help promote new growth and flower production. They should be fertilized every 4 to 6 weeks to keep them productive. Bark mulch around the plants will help them to stay weed-free all summer long and they'll better able to retain soil moisture as the hot days of summer arrive. Check the foliage often to stay ahead of insect and foliage disease problems. If you have questions or problem with the plants, call your local garden center for advice--don't wait this year, stop the problem early before it gets out of control. Now is also the best time to plant new roses--while the weather is cool and the selection is numerous. Fancy or new varieties always go first, so pick your plants while the selection is good. If the plant is new to you, ask questions about the plant to make sure it's right for you. Now get to work--it's spring and the time is right to do these things in your yard!

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Last Week's Question:

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

Last Week's Winner:

Diane Rowe

Last Week's Answer:

Bougainvillea

Last Week's Prize:

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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!



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- 2 large pocket pages
- Sheet of garden labels
- 5 garden detail sheets
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- 5 photo pages, each holding four 4x6 photos in landscape or portrait format

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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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