

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 4:43 PM
To: rickmorin@earthlink.net
Subject: Paul Parent Garden Club News - May 13, 2010

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Edition 10.19	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 13, 2010
	<p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"In order to live off a garden, you practically have to live in it." ~Frank McKinney Hubbard</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 style="text-align: center;">Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· A superior blend of fish bone meal, feather meal, kelp meal, alfalfa meal, soft rock phosphate, fish meal, mined potassium sulfate, humic acid, seaweed extract, PRO-BIOTIC seven champion strains of beneficial soil microbes plus Ecto and Endo Mycorrhizae. <p style="text-align: center;">Primary Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Feed tomatoes· Summer vegetables· Winter vegetables· Herbs· Root crops· Established vegetables· During transplanting <p style="text-align: center;">Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Contains PRO-BIOTIC Seven Champion strains of beneficial soil microbes plus ecto & endo Mycorrhizae· More abundant crops· More nutritious and tasty		<p>Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Trains of the Colorado Rockies Trip</p> <p>Join us for a journey into the grand landscapes and fascinating history of the American West.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">Home About Paul Paul's Recipes</div>

vegetables

• 100% natural and organic

This summer, when you sit on your patio or deck, would you love to have a flowering shrub to look at that will bloom all summer long and attract butterflies and humming birds? Impossible you say, but there is such a shrub--the butterfly bush. If you have a sunny spot in your yard that is a bit protected from the winter winds, you're ready to plant. The butterfly bush will grow from five to ten feet tall and just as wide. You can prune to direct the size of the plant in your yard or just let it grow. This beautiful flowering shrub will grow in almost every yard. It adapts to your needs in the landscaping you planned for your yard. Use the plant in a perennial border, plant several in a row for a privacy hedge or place one on the corner of your deck to bring nature closer to you, as the butterflies will feed on its nectar all summer long. Did I tell you it is also fragrant and the plant will flower from June to first frost?

The butterfly bush is an old fashioned shrub once cherished for tranquility in the garden. The new cultivars have brought it back into style today and if you like flowering shrubs, this is the plant for your garden. The butterfly bush will grow with long arching branches much like the forsythia shrub does. The branches are slender and create a mounding look to the plant. The leaves are long and slender--4 to 8 inches long, and the color varies from gray-green to dark green in color, with a soft and silvery and soft underside. The leaves, which hold onto the plant well into the fall, do not have any fall color change.

The fragrant flowers develop in June and resemble miniature lilacs. The first flower can be as long as 10 inches long and last on the plant for 3 to 4 weeks. When they fade, prune them off and two side shoots will develop with blooms 6 to 8 inches long. Prune them off again when they fade and now the same branch will make 4 flowers 4 to 6 inches long. The more you clean the plant the more it will flower. Butterfly bush flowers come from white, pink, lavender, red and purple.

Butterfly bush will come in a pot, instead of dug from the ground, as the plants do not transplant well. When you plant it, do not try to move it around your yard; plant it and leave it alone. Plants do best in a well-drained soil that you can keep moist or a rich loam type soil. Plant the Butterfly Bush with compost and organic fertilizers. Water two times a week until established; it will take 2 to 3 months for the plant to be well rooted. When it gets hot, the plant will grow fast and requires more water. Once established, in the second year the plant will tolerate heat and drought conditions. If the plant can get a little shade at the end of the day, I have noticed more butterflies on the plant.

In the spring, cut the plant in half to encourage new growth, unless you want it to grow large for privacy hedges. All plants will require spring pruning to remove dead branches and cleaning of the plant after winter. Never prune this plant in the fall. Fertilize in spring only--never in the fall--or it will not begin to harden off the growth and prepare for the winter. The butterfly bush also will not tolerate wet soils or road salt so keep plants away from the side of the road. The best place to plant it is where you spend your summer relaxing. It is also a great plant to put near the vegetable garden, as the flowers will attract honey bees all season long. Having more bees near the garden means better pollination and more vegetables to harvest. The flowers come on long stems and make a great cut flower for the kitchen table, lasting a week or two. Plant one or two this spring and find out why the plant is called the butterfly bush--you will think that the plant is moving in your yard. Enjoy.

If you have a spot in your yard for a small flowering tree, look at the flowering Golden Chain tree. This unique tree will grow 15 to 20 feet tall and 10 to 15 feet wide. During mid May to mid June, it develops golden yellow chains of pea-shaped flowers like grape clusters 6 to 10 inches long. The flowers have a slight fragrance, especially on a warm day with no wind. When most people see the Golden Chain, they think it is a yellow wisteria tree, as the flowers are quite similar and both plants bloom at the same time. This is a spectacular landscape tree for small areas on your property. The Golden Chain does best when planted in a sheltered area away from winds and bright winter sunshine.

The first thing you will notice is the bark of the tree, which is smooth and olive-green. The younger branches are almost shiny and olive-green. As the tree ages, the color darkens and loses its shine. The Golden Chain grows upright when young and does not spread out until it has been in the ground 5 years or more. The foliage is as unique as the leaf and is classified a trifoliolate that develops in three segments. The foliage is blue-green right up until fall, with little fall color change. The Golden Chain does best in a cool climate where summers seldom stay in the nineties for a long period. Extremely hot summers will discourage flower bud production.

The Golden Chain will grow best in a soil with good drainage and on the sandy side. When planting, be sure to add lots of organic matter such as compost and peat moss. If the soil is sandy add a bit of "Soil Moist" in the hole to help hold moisture during hot and dry spells. Soil moist is a product designed to retain water and hold it for the plant use. For the average tree, add 2 to 3 tablespoons in the hole when planting--when it gets wet, it will swell 200 times in volume and hold water for the new roots that develop. This product will stay active in the soil for 3 years, helping new roots that develop grow quickly.

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Small growing trees traditionally have a small root system. To encourage a larger root system to eliminate seasonal stress, add a little bit of fertilizer that contains Mycorrhizae microbes when planting. If the tree is already planted, use the new Plant Thrive from Alpha-Bio Systems that contains the first liquid mycorrhizae for established plants in your gardens and planting beds. Just water the soil around the plant and in just 30 days the the root system of the tree will double in size. When trees develop these oversize roots they will develop more flowers for spring bloom and stay healthier.

In the Northeast, plant the Golden Chain called "Laburnum-Vossii" for a better form, a more dense growing habit, and bigger flower clusters that can reach up 12 inches long. Like other small trees, when planted it should be staked for the first year to prevent the wind from moving the tree top and breaking new roots that form in the ground. Water the tree 2 times a week for the first 3 to 4 months. Fertilize spring and fall with Plant Tone organic fertilizer. Plant Thrive should be applied every spring when in flower to help make more buds for next year.

When planted in the lawn, the Golden Chain tree should have a mulch bed to grow in. Keeping the grass away from the trunk of the tree helps prevent damage to the trunk by your lawn mower. Two to three inches of bark mulch also help to keep moisture around the plant from evaporating during hot weather. Plant summer annuals around the tree in the mulch bed for great color all summer long. When you fertilize the flowers, the tree is also fertilized, making it even stronger.



One of my favorite summer-flowering hardy bulbs is the liatris, a cousin to the aster family. It's not a daisy shaped flower but a tall growing spike that is covered with feathery flower cluster. Most spike-type flowers bloom from the bottom to the top of the stem, but not this plant. The liatris blooms from the top of the spike down, giving you the advantage of removing the spent flowers by pruning the top of the spike off. If you clean the flowers this way, the color will continue for several weeks in the garden or as a cut flower in a vase. The bulbs sold in the spring look like a hairy crocus. Flowers will develop during the summer the first year planted and the bulbs divide in the ground, spreading into a large clump every year. Best of all, you do not have to dig them up in the fall and store in the basement like the gladiolus--plant them and forget about them.

The liatris is a type of wild flower which was discovered in 1804 by Lewis and Clark near the Missouri River in South Dakota. Most of us think it is a Dutch Bulb but it is a true American plant. In 1980, the florist industry discovered that the plant could be forced in the greenhouse and so the cut-flower industry had a new flower to add to our arrangements at any time of the year.

Plant liatris 3 to 4 inches deep and 3 inches between bulbs. Clusters of 5 or more bulbs will give you the best show of color. The foliage grows on the base of the stems to the flower buds and resembles the foliage of a hybrid lily, except much finer--almost like grass growing out the side of the stem. Plant in full sun. Because the bulb is so strong, it will grow in soil that is average to rich as long as it the soil is well drained. Unlike most plants, if the soil is too good the plant will become floppy and need staking. This is one plant that you can just dig a hole, place the bulbs in, cover and forget about them. Once the plant is established, little care is needed, plants can tolerate drought, and can live in the garden undisturbed for years. I fertilize them when I feed all my other perennials in the spring with an organic fertilizer that contains mycorrhizae, such as Plant Thrive. Mycorrhizae are bacteria that, when combined with fertilizer, help the plant to make more flowers. If the clumps get too large, dig them up in the fall or early spring and divide them.

The liatris flower spike will grow 2 to 3 feet tall and bloom during mid-summer. The flowers come in several colors white, pink, violet, mauve and purple. Insect and disease problems are few with this plant. Plant in perennial borders with full sun as this plant loves the sun and does not perform well in shady gardens. When planting bulbs be sure to plant several bulbs in the same hole so you can cut from the clump and the missing flowers will not be noticeable. Remember that this plant makes a great cut flower. Flower spikes will bloom for several weeks in the garden or in a vase of water. You can also cut them while they are in bloom and dry them easily.

This is also a great plant to attract butterflies and beneficial insects into your yard. If you have a wildflower garden or meadow garden, this is a great plant to plant randomly there. Now the best part, the cost of these bulbs is ten to twenty cents each and they multiply every year. Also, they are not eaten by rodents like crocus bulbs are. The liatris plant is almost indestructible, so if you have a friend who cannot grow flowers, this is the best plant to get them back into the garden again. Once they see how easy this plant is to grow, they will try other flowers and enjoy their gardens again.



In my many years of gardening, I have never grown eggplant. My father never grew it in his garden and our family ate everything that he grew, but never eggplant. When I think of eggplant, I think of it as a traditional Italian vegetable (you know -- Eggplant Parmesan?). But you'd probably have a hard time thinking of any other recipe that would use eggplant, right? Eggplant is an unusual looking vegetable, like a squash with a shiny smooth skin and no seeds inside. The traditional eggplant is black or purple---and I cannot think of any other vegetable that I have eaten that is black or purple. New hybrids are white, rosy-pink, lavender, and purple with white stripes. This still adds no appeal to my fresh picked vegetable plate.

So I decided to research why my dad never grew eggplant and why we never ate it. My dad was

French Canadian, a head chef for a gourmet restaurant in Scituate, Mass called P. J. Country House, for many years. He was written up in the Boston Globe by food critic Anthony Spinnazola for several recipes he develop using all types of fresh fish and a Canadian crepe stuffed with chicken and more.

The first sentence of one of my gardening books gave me a hint. "To grow eggplant you'll need to outwit pests, especially in the North and protect the eggplant from the cold." That gives a quick answer, as we lived in Auburn, Maine and could never plant any warm climate vegetables until Memorial Day, if we were lucky. The next sentence said, "Eggplant will sulk in cold soils and long periods of chilly weather can injure plants, and frost ends their season." This plant called the eggplant was one vegetable that had no chance of growing in the family vegetable garden because of the weather requirements to start with.

Here is a list of what you will need to do to grow eggplant in your garden. The soil should be fertile and well drained. Add additional organic matter such as compost or animal manure every year before planting the garden. Eggplant is a hungry plant; one inch of organic matter is REQUIRED. Pre-heat the soil with black-colored plastic mulch at least two weeks before planting the garden. Cut a hole in the black plastic mulch and insert plants. Because the plants are young and accustomed to a warm greenhouse, it would help plants adjust to the garden if you could place bricks or stones in a circle around each plant to help collect heat during the day and release it at night. You can also cover the plant with floating row cover cloth to help keep plants at 60 degrees if the weather should get cold. You could also grow the eggplants in pots, move them outside during the day and back inside at night. Are you kidding me--who has that much time on their hands?

Water plants regularly but never use overhead sprinklers. Wet foliage will allow disease and insects to spread more quickly, so add water directly to the ground, not on this fussy little plant! Fertilizer is required regularly, but be careful not to add too much Nitrogen or the plant will make a lot of leaves and little to no fruit. Fish emulsion is the best fertilizer when used every two weeks, or you can side dress every month with a balanced organic fertilizer. Eggplant must be staked in the garden so fruit does not touch the ground, or it will flatten and lose its shape. Try cages to keep plants growing upright and prevent sunscald of the fruit, because the foliage shades the fruit preventing sunburn problems. If you want fine flavor from your eggplant, harvest them while they are small and young, about half grown. Shiny skin fruit is desirable; if the skin is dull it will be bitter and woody tasting. The plant has sharp spines on the stems so be sure to wear long sleeve shirts and gloves to harvest the fruit. Sharp spines sound dangerous to me just to harvest a few vegetables from the garden. Cut the stems with a sharp knife and be sure to leave one inch of stem attached to the stem to help keep the fruit from drying up before you use it. Eggplant, once cut from the garden, must be eaten within the week or it will go bad!

Another book recommended keeping the floating row cover cloth on the plant all year to help hold heat around the plant and keep bugs off the plant. Bugs love eggplants and if there is only one Colorado potato beetle in your entire garden, it will be on the eggplant. Flea beetles, aphids, tomato hornworms and many other bugs love this plant too.

My dad loved to work in the garden more than cooking, but this plant required too much time and work with little results. When he finished caring for the five of us kids, the garden was his refuge but eggplant was more work than the five of us kids together. Now potatoes--that's a vegetable! Grown in our Maine climate, little to no work, high return without all the fuss. Potatoes come baked, mashed, boiled and fried but not Parmesan, I like that. George Hampson, of beautiful Cape Cod, this story is for you and my dad. Plant potatoes and buy eggplant.



This Week's Question:

Which edible member of the Lily family can grow up to 10 inches in a single day?

This Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Potting Mix



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

[Click Here to Answer](#)

Last Week's Question:

Where did the sunflower originate?

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

Last Week's Winner:

Paul Himmelman

Last Week's Answer:

North America

One winner per question - we choose winners from the list of those who answer correctly. Winners must be newsletter subscribers. We'll ship you your prize, so be sure to put your address in the

form in case you win!

FEATURED RECIPE:

Strawberry Spinach Salad



Ingredients:

- 2 bunches spinach, rinsed and torn into bite-size pieces
- 4 cups sliced strawberries
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds

Step by Step:

- In a large bowl, toss together the spinach and strawberries.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, sugar, paprika, sesame seeds, and poppy seeds. Pour over the spinach and strawberries, and toss to coat.

Yield: 8 servings



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