

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 10.20	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 20, 2010
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FEATURED QUOTE :

"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden."
~ Ruth Stout

Come see Paul's House!

Join us for the 16th annual "Private Gardens of the Kennebunks" Garden Tour, July 17, 2010 from 10:00 - 4:00. SHINE OR RAIN. All proceeds benefit the prevention programs of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of York County, Maine. Tour nine lovely gardens throughout Kennebunk and Kennebunkport. Advance tickets are \$15.00 before July 1st; \$20.00 July 1st through day of the event. Please call (207) 985-5975 or visit <http://www.kidsfreetogrow.org> for more information!

Gifts for the Gardener

[Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!](#)

Contact Information:

E-Mail:

[Click to contact us.](#)

Telephone:

(207) 985-6972
(800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)

Fax:

(207) 985-6972

Address:

Paul Parent Garden Club
2 Blueberry Pines Dr
Kennebunk, ME 04043

Phone Hours:

Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM
Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM

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Tomato Thrive: Alpha-Bio-Systems

Beneficial bacteria and Mycorrhizal in a liquid concentrate. Microbials release locked away nutrients by breaking down organic matter in the soil. Mycorrhizal strengthens and elongates the root system to allow increased uptake of nutrients and water. The combined results are healthier, more robust plants that are more drought and freeze tolerant. Not a fertilizer but a soil drench; can be applied to existing/established vegetation. Simple to use, add the concentrate to water and water your plants as normal, can also be used in a hose end sprayer application set to

10 TBS / gal.

There are other products out there with THRIVE in the name, be sure to ask for the one by Alpha BioSystems. THRIVE products are only available through your favorite independent Lawn, Garden & Nursery Retailers. You can visit alphabiosystems.com or email info@usethrive.com for a dealer near you.



The Tomato is America's favorite plant in the vegetable garden. The reason it is the favorite is *flavor!* A tomato fresh picked from the garden or purchased from a local farm stand stands out among any tomatoes purchased at the supermarket. The difference in taste, freshness and ripened-on-the vine-flavor cannot be imitated on the truck traveling here on the way from Florida or even Mexico. Other vegetables do also taste different when picked fresh but no other one taste as different as the tomato. Today, garden fresh tomatoes come in all shapes, colors, sizes and flavors. Tomatoes are so versatile you can eat them at any meal, cold or hot they bring flavor to everything we eat from sauces, soups, salads and even condiments.

When you plant tomatoes, select a location with full sun all day long! Soil quality will determine your success with this vegetable, and the more organic material you mix into the soil the better the plant will grow. Chicken manure is better than cow manure, compost is better than peat moss, and a well-drained soil is better than a clay type soil. The plant will grow anywhere but the results will be the difference. Soils should be near neutral so if moss is growing in the lawn near the garden, lime the soil every spring or use Jonathan Green Mag-I-Cal to improve the acidity problem. To check soil acidity, try the new "Soil Stick" from Plumstone Home and Garden Products available at your local Garden Center. Acid soil will cause a black spot called "Blossom End Rot" on the bottom of the fruit, so keep the soil limed and treat the soil--especially in planters--with an organic product developed for the tomato industry in Florida called "Tomato Maker" available at your local Garden Center. Use it at the time you plant or add it around the plant now.

Plant starter seedlings when the threat of frost is over! Cold weather may not kill the plants in the garden but it will discolor the foliage to purple or red. If you see this discoloration on your plants say to yourself, "My plants are now two weeks behind because I got over-eager and planted too early!" In the Northeast, the time is still with the full moon in May! Now for the real tough part when planting tomatoes, "SPACING"! The biggest problem gardeners have is trying to grow too many tomatoes in their garden. Tomatoes will grow better, ripen earlier, have fewer disease and insect problems if spaced properly. The proper spacing is 3 feet by 3 feet in the garden, no closer. If the sun can hit the entire plant, it will grow better and the fruit will ripen sooner. If the air can circulate around the tomato plant better, you will reduce disease and insect problems. Plant fewer tomato plants and get MORE tomatoes from those plants!

Last year we had major disease problems with tomatoes because of the weather and a very large plant grower who supplied the box stores with plants that were grown in unsterilized soil. We all paid the price and tomatoes all over the Northeast died with "Late Blight." To prevent this from happening to your garden this year be sure to add to your garden a new organic bacterium called "Actinovate" from Natural Industries. Actinovate was developed in Texas to control the problem organically. Late blight is also found on potatoes and was responsible for the Irish Potato Famine many years ago. If you planted potatoes last year, be sure to use the same product when planting your seed potatoes this spring. Most important is not to plant in the same area you planted last year and remove any volunteers that develop in the garden, as those plants could be infected with the same disease and create a problem again this year for you. Also "NEVER" water the garden at night or late in the day--and try to avoid using overhead sprinklers.

One last tip for you, add a fertilizer that contains Mycorrhizae Fungi when planting this spring. This new technology in gardening will help to develop plants that will out-produce anything you ever had before. The plants will require less fertilizer and water, and will also have fewer disease problems. Look for Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer, Bio-Tone or the new liquid Vegetable Plant Thrive from Alpha- Bio-Systems. Two years ago before the Late Blight problems, I had to use a shovel to get the tomato plants out of the ground in the fall because the roots were so big. That year 28 tomato plants gave me enough tomatoes in the fall to fill two wheelbarrows for sauce, relishes and the neighbors. Mycorrhizae Fungi is the future today for all of your gardens!



The number one selling flower at the greenhouse is the Impatiens, once called the Busy Lizzie or Impatience Lucy. This is because it will grow in the shade where color is difficult to find during the summer months, but if watered enough it will grow in part sun garden also. Impatience have been around for a long time -- since the 17th century -- but not widely grown until the 18th century. Then during the 1960's things changed to make the Impatiens what it is today. The big change was the development of dwarf types of Impatiens for the garden, which led to the discontinuation of the

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once 2 to 3 foot tall growing annual that fell over with heavy rain. The other problem was seed germination for the greenhouse grower because as the seed aged, the germination percentage declined by as much as 50%, making the plant cost more. Back in the Sixties, the Impatiens came only in white, salmon and pink but today red, orange, lavender, bicolor and even double flowering types are available.

The garden Impatiens has rounded or lanced shaped foliage, dull green when matured, bronzed colored when first developing on the plant. New hybrids have variegated green and white leaves. The soft green, fleshy stems are filled with water and not very strong but are more than able to hold up the beautiful flowers. Impatiens are related to Jewel-weed, a native weed or wildflower. The flowers have 5 flat faced petals, with a small hole in the center of the petals. Showy flowers 1 to 2 inches across continually develop on the plant from spring to a frost in the fall. On the back of the flower is a spur that will develop into a seed capsule that, when fertilized and ripe, will explode and send seeds flying all over your garden. This explosion of seedpods also gave it the name "Touch Me Not" before Impatiens. It is not uncommon to find new seedlings developing at the base of established plants. In the fall, dig up seedlings and bring them indoors for the winter on a sunny windowsill.

Impatiens will grow best in a rich soil that is well drained and kept evenly moist at all times. If the soil dries out, the plant will wilt and the leaves will turn yellow and fall off. It will recover when watered, but some of the beauty is gone. The plants need fertilizer every other week when using a water-soluble fertilizer such as Miracle Gro, as they require heavy feeding to stay in bloom. I use Osmocote pellet slow release fertilizer when planting as it will continue to feed the plant all summer long, even when I forget to feed. I still use Miracle Gro for the extra push of color. At the time, you set plants out into the garden, do yourself a favor and add a pinch of Soil Moist to each hole. Soil Moist will expand and hold 200 time its volume in water for the plant. It will last all summer and helps keep plants strong during those days when you cannot get water to the plants fast enough .

Impatiens will not tolerate cold weather, so set plants out when frost date is safe and nighttime temperatures stay in the 50'S. Water your plants in the morning rather than at night as powdery mildew and leaf spots can be a problem if leaves stay wet all night long. If possible, keep plantings away from in-ground lawn sprinklers systems, as they tend to give plants too much water.

Impatiens is a great plant to invite butterflies, hummingbirds and pollinator insects into your yard. Try planting among shade loving perennials like hostas, bleeding hearts and ferns, just to name a few. Impatiens will make a great plant for edges of walkways, on your terrace, in window boxes, and planters and they do great in hanging baskets. Try them in mixed planters with lobelia, wax or tuberous begonias and coleus. Enjoy.



You may not have heard of this plant before, but once you hear about it and see it at your local Nursery, you will want one for your garden. The plant, called the Red-vein Enkianthus, has many desirable traits, making it a wonderful plant to enjoy as it changes during the season. I got to know this plant when I first started working in the nursery industry over 40 years ago. I was in college and during my first summer home, I worked at a nursery in Scituate, Massachusetts called Kennedy's Country Gardens. The owner of the nursery, Bob Kennedy, loved this plant, and every home he helped to design managed to have one. Enkianthus grows in the sun or the shade; it grows upright and narrow making it a perfect plant for small areas and flowers during June. In the sun, the bees love the flowers.

Enkianthus will grow 4 to 6 inches each year, sometimes more. The way it grows is interesting: 4 to 6 inches of smooth red stem and the foliage on the tip of the stem. The leaves are oval--nothing special--but arranged in a group like an umbrella on the tip of that stem. In late May, the flower buds develop under the leaves and open during June, lasting all month in your garden. The flowers are beautiful and resemble large lilies of the valley with creamy yellow, bell-shaped blooms with red veins running in stripes down the bell. Where the bell opens at the bottom of the flower, it is all red and the top of the bell is green. When in bloom, the plant has the appearance of small umbrellas sheltering clusters of colorful bells under them. It is not as showy as a rhododendron in full bloom but when it's in bloom you'll know it, and love the show it makes in your garden. You can also use the plant as an accent plant in a long perennial border or rock garden. Finding flowering shrubs for the shade can be difficult and a real challenge, but this one is a real find for your shady gardens.

Enkianthus will grow 6 to 10 feet tall, but can be pruned easily to control size and kept at any height you want. The plant will spread 3 to 4 feet wide when mature, but I have seen them wider, so prune to keep narrow. When you plant, be sure to condition the soil with compost or peat moss in the hole. Plants will do best if the soil is acidic, rich in organic matter, moist and well drained. When the Landscaping Crew at Kennedy's planted shrubs, all the plants had a handful or two of Milorganite fertilizer added to the hole and worked into the compost. This gave the roots a little push for better root development. Water weekly, for the first year right up until the fall season. Enkianthus will do better if you cover the soil around the plant with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch. This helps to keep the soil cooler during periods of high heat during the summer and once the ground freezes in the winter it stays frozen, preventing root damage.

In the fall, you will see changes happening to this plant and you will like it as the foliage changes from its blue-green color to yellow, then orange and finally to bright red. If the plant has more sun, it has more color, but in the shade it is less vibrant but still beautiful. Plant where azaleas, rhododendrons, mountain laurel and hollies are planted in your garden beds as they will require the same type of growing conditions. Fertilize with Holly-Tone or Acid Adoring fertilizer in the

spring of the year.

When the plant begins to bloom, cut some of the long flower stems, place them in a vase of water and enjoy the flower in your home. As a cut flower, it will last for 2 to 3 weeks on the kitchen table when mixed with other flowers or all by itself.



Is there a shrub that will grow anywhere? How about a sunny or shady location, along the side of the road, or where salt is in the soil because of the snowplow or how about under large trees to create a privacy hedge? There is one plant than can do all this and more: the shrub called the Bridal Wreath Spirea. This shrub is one of the most popular plants in the American garden today. Because the plant can tolerate very cold weather with temperatures to minus 30 below Zero, it is grown as far north as Canada. During the month of May, there is no plant that outshines the Bridal Wreath's show of color. Plan your wedding around the flowering time for the perfect outside garden wedding complete with white flowers for the occasion.

Most shrubs and trees go through periods of not flowering because of weather, soil fertility, moisture, light, care, or all of the above, but the Bridal Wreath just keeps on flowering every May like clock-work, no matter what you do to the plant. The Bridal Wreath grows like a fountain of branches filled with white flower clusters in the shape of a small flower bouquet. The foliage is about 1 inch long, looks like a small-elongated maple leaf, blue green in color. The flowers develop after the plant opens all the leaves after a long winter rest. The flowers are on short 1-inch stems above all the leaves. The flower bouquet is made up of 15 to 25 individual 4-petal white single petal flowers in the shape of a ball or a handheld bouquet. The center of the flower is yellow but not noticeable until you look at the flower closely. The flowers are very durable and will stand up to the wind in your yard, unlike most other plants. The flowers will last on the plant 3 weeks or more depending on the weather (hot weather shortens the blooming time).

Bridal Wreath will grow 6 to 8 feet tall and 10 to 12 feet wide, sometimes more. If the plant is getting out of control, wait to cut it back until it has finished flowering in early June. Please do not cut it back into the shape of a ball or you will lose the beautiful shape of weeping branches. Rounded shape plants belong at Disney World, not your yard. Your yard is as real as Disney's make believe! Cut each branch back as much as 50% with hand pruners, not hedge shears to keep the plant looking natural. If pruned after flowering, the plant should make a foot or more of new growth and flowers for next year's spring flower show.

Bridal Wreath will grow very well in a shady location, even under trees or in the back of a tall building. When you plant, be sure to add compost or animal manure to the soil when conditioning. If the soil is dry or sandy, add a couple of tablespoons of Soil Moist to help keep the roots moist so they can develop properly and quickly. Once the plant is well established and growing on its own in the yard, it will tolerate dry soils. If planted in the sun give it extra room to grow. When using it in hedges, be sure to space the plants six feet apart and be sure to stay back from sidewalks or it will quickly block the walkway and require frequent pruning. Fertilize in the spring with Plant-Tone or Dr Earth Shrub fertilizer. Water 2 times a week for the first couple of months and then weekly until the fall season arrives.

If you like the Bridal Wreath Vanhouttei and want more, look for the Spirea prunifolia, as it is a double flowering white variety. It is not as large-growing, but by itself in a garden, it is striking. Also look at the Dwarf variety called 'Snow Mound,' growing only 3 to 5 feet tall and perfect for a small garden bed. Enjoy.



This Week's Question:

What does the name of the Hydrangea tell you about its care?

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:

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

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

Last Week's Winner:

Cindy Boland

Last Week's Answer:

Asparagus

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:

Banana Spring Rolls



This is wonderful served with vanilla ice cream!

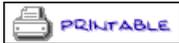
Ingredients:

- 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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