



From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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To: rickmorin@earthlink.net
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Edition 11.18	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 5, 2011
 <p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Where flowers bloom, so does hope." - Lady Bird Johnson, from <i>Public Roads: Where Flowers Bloom</i></p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto 20px auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Damminix Tick Tubes®</p> <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> <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> <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> <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> <p>For more details on Damminix Tick Tubes®, please visit their website.</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto 20px auto;"></div> <p>Are you the type of person who looks at the lawn and panics if you see one yellow flower from the dandelion plant in bloom? The dandelion is Mother Nature's best and most adaptable wildflower and it will thrive like no other, even when you routinely mow it down.</p> <p>To the homeowner, it is a pesky weed, to the herbalists a valuable herb with many medicinal uses as well as culinary qualities. The foliage can be used in salads and teas, fresh picked greens are wonderful on a sandwich, and the flowers are used to make wine. Dandelions are a rich source of vitamin A, B complex, C and D, as well as many minerals like iron, potassium, and zinc.</p> <p>So what is the big deal with this plant? Why does everyone hate it and why is there so much money spent by home owners to kill it when it appears in their lawn? The dandelion is more difficult to eradicate than any other plant because of its ability to survive in more adverse growing conditions than anything else growing around it. Gardeners hate this plant and when they try to dig it up and remove it, the dandelion will spread even faster. Unless you remove the entire plant it will return to your lawn. If you break off a piece of the plant and leave it in the soil, all your digging was for nothing. If this is true, then why would you purchase a dandelion digger or weeding tool? Many dandelions have told me that these tools actually help them reproduce faster--they love this invention.</p> <p>Dandelions are a perennial plant; the plant can make seeds without cross pollination, so a flower can fertilize itself. This is where the problem begins for the gardener. Most flowers can disperse seed the day after the flower opens if you mow your lawn.</p> <p>The dandelion seed can germinate in a few weeks after it comes in contact with soil or lie dormant in the soil for years. The dandelion that is bright yellow today will change almost overnight to a white, rounded seed head flower, like a puff ball. Each seed is attached to a parachute-like growth that will carry it far and wide when the wind begins to blow in your yard.</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>Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 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;">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Subscribe to our newsletter!</p> <p>Click here to subscribe, unsubscribe or change your address.</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 0 auto 20px auto;"></div>

Dandelions have many functions in nature; believe it or not the plant was introduced into the Midwest from Europe to provide food for the honeybees in early spring. Look at the dandelions growing in your lawn on a nice day and you will see our native bees collecting the pollen to make honey that is much needed after a long cold winter. Dandelions have the ability to hold soil in place like no other wildflower, preventing erosion because of their tremendous tap root system and wide-spreading foliage that grows like an umbrella, deflecting the heavy rain away.

The foliage of the dandelion is lance-shaped, growing long, up to 12 inches. It resembles a series of teeth, giving its name in old-time France, "Dent-de-lion," which means "lion's tooth." The foliage grows in a whirl or rosette, making a perfect circle of foliage like a bouquet of greens; the flowers emerge from the center of the foliage. The flowers grow on straw-like tubular hollow stems up to 12 inches tall. The flower buds open quickly as the days warm up to reveal a multi-petal yellow flower that is somewhat daisy-like with no center. Each flower petal is 1/16 to 1/8 inch wide and 3/4 to 1 inch long, and each one of these petals can and will make a single seed.

Dandelions will grow in any soil type: sandy or clay-like, wet soil or dry soil--they do prefer a sunny place to grow but will do very well in partial shade. It does not matter if your soil is acid or alkaline but they prefer a slightly acid soil, so if you can lime regularly you will have fewer living in your lawn.

A good friend, former Agriculture Extension man, and longtime turf expert from the O.M. Scotts Lawn Company, Ashton Ritchie, has always told the homeowners he works with that if the lawn is thick and green, dandelions will not become a problem. If the grass is thick, the seeds will not get enough sunlight to germinate and the healthy grass will choke them out if they do germinate. Ashton will tell you that dandelions grow in thin lawns or dead spots where sunshine wakes up the seed and helps Mother Nature to cover the soil with foliage and protect it.

Dandelions are the most aggressive broadleaf weed in our lawns and do more damage than all the others combined. Dandelions will kill your grass by making its whirl of foliage larger; this will push down that grass plant with a thick sun-blocking umbrella of leaves to smother the grass plant. The bigger the dandelion plant grows, the more grass plants it is able to kill and the more area in your lawn it will control, leaving you with less grass and more weeds

There is hope for those of you who would prefer to have more grass than weeds, and that is with the use of a broadleaf weed control products that can be applied at this time of the year. Mother Nature has divided her plants into two families, the Monocots and Dicots. Grasses are Monocots and broadleaf plants are Dicots. Through garden technology, we have been able to develop weed control products that can be used in our lawns that can control either one of the families of plants without hurting the other. The best time of the year to control the dandelion is now--while the plant is just beginning to develop and most of the flowers have not formed.

It is best to use a combination product that contains a fertilizer especially formulated for the lawn needs and a broadleaf weed killer. The product must be applied when the lawn is moist (morning dew), so the product can stick to the dandelion foliage and be absorbed into the leaf to be taken down to the roots and kill it.

The fertilizer in the combination product will feed the grass plants trying to grow near the dying dandelion plant. This fertilized grass plant will become stronger and will quickly fill in the hole in the lawn that remains as the dandelion dies, preventing future seeds from germinating and replacing it. The product works best if no rain is in the forecast for 24 hours, giving the weed killer time to work properly. Keep pets and children off the wet lawn until the grass dries.

Some common names of these products: if you are on a 4 step lawn program, use Step 2, also called Weed and Feed. Or you can use a liquid weed killer like Weed Beater Ultra, or Weed- B-Gone Max. if you're using a liquid weed killer, an application of straight fertilizer is also recommended.

If you're going to eat the greens, pick them before they flower and while they are young because the foliage will get bitter once it makes flowers on the plant. I always soak the individual leaves in a sink full of cold water for an hour before using them to remove any bitterness and white sap in the foliage. If you treat your grass with weed killers do not eat foliage and do not place it in compost piles.

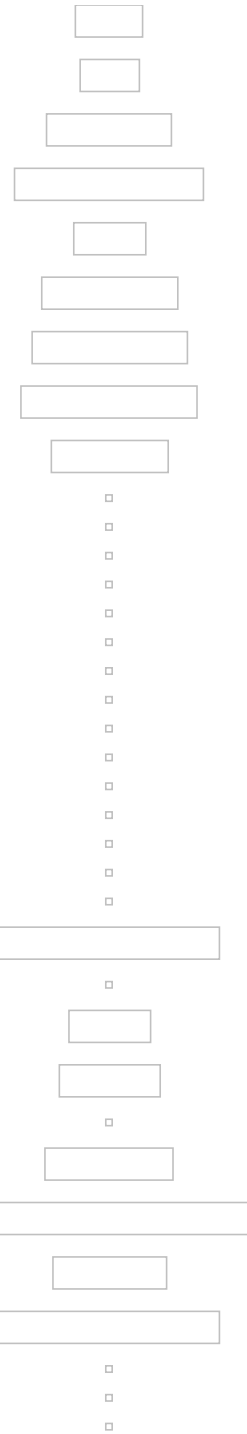
New organic products like corn gluten will also kill dandelion seeds if applied the lawn in the spring and fall season, but will not kill mature plants. New products like Clear Choice from Canada have fewer active ingredients and are less toxic when applied properly. Scotts is working on a new way to kill broadleaf weeds that is all natural by using a naturally-occurring fungus that will kill broadleaf weeds like dandelions without the use of chemicals. Scotts and the Canadian Department of Agriculture are hoping to have this method ready in 2 to 3 years.

If the dandelions are out of your lawn and growing on the side of the road, smile because they are one of Mother Nature's Wildflowers and have a purpose in nature--ENJOY.

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When spring finally arrives, one of the most anticipated events is the disappearance of the snow on the ground and the arrival of warmer weather. The grass begins to turn green and our spring-flowering bulbs poke out of the ground with wonderful flowers. Not to be outdone, our trees also wake up with their branches filled with flowers to brighten up our gardens and to help motivate us to get back into our gardens and work with the soil again. No tree does a better job to get us back into the garden than the flowering pear, when its branches are covered with hundreds of snow white flowers for several weeks in the early spring.



Did you know that the flowering pear of today is the result of an experiment that failed? More than fifty years ago, the fruiting pear tree was having and is still having a problem with a disease called "fire blight," bacteria that will turn the new growth black almost overnight and kill that growth just as fast. The idea was to develop disease-resistant varieties by using breeding stock to help make plants resistance to the disease. The experiment failed but the resulting plants that were developed brought us a new flowering tree for our landscape use.

Today "fire blight" is treated with a fungicide called Bordeaux Mix that was developed in France to help prevent people from stealing grapes on plants that grew on the side of the road as they walked by the vineyards. Bordeaux Mix made the grapes taste bitter until washed and people stopped picking the grapes. The new people-repellent was also, to the wine growers' surprise, a wonderful disease preventer on the foliage and helped the plant produce more grapes with fewer problems.

The flowering pears are trees that grow broad and pyramidal. This shape made the plant perfect to use as a street tree, along the border of a parking lot, and perfect to plant in the grass strip between the street and the sidewalk. The branches grow upright so they do not interfere with cars parking near them and people walking on the side walk. These plants were also perfect for smaller yards and gardeners who wanted flowering trees. Unlike many of the flowering crabapples tree varieties, these flowering pear trees have no foliage diseases and the plants' foliage looked good all year long without spraying, so their popularity grew quickly.

Flowering pears have dense-growing branches, and when the foliage forms on the plant, it will be very thick and often difficult to see through, making a wonderful tall-growing, narrow wind break or sound barrier tree. The foliage is shiny, 1.5 to 3.5 inches long and wide, dark green, oval with a pointed tip and it often has a wavy leaf margin, giving it much character. In the fall, the dark green foliage will turn shiny orange to red in color and last on the tree for several weeks before falling.

In the spring the plant will be covered with small, snow white flowers 3/4 to 1 inch in diameter that grow in bunches on the branches. These flower buds begin pale pink first, before changing to a white flower; before the flowers change to all white, the two colors are very noticeable on the plant. The new leaves begin to form as the flowers start to open but do not distract from the plant and most of the time are not noticeable.

The entire tree is covered like a snow storm with white fluffy snow; these flowers will last for several weeks before falling to the ground, covering it like new fallen snow. The tree is often visited by honey bees in the spring when they are busily gathering pollen to make new honey after the long winter. The flowers are not easily blown off the tree like the flowering cherry's are with a good spring rain storm. The color stays fresh and clean right up to the time they fall from the tree.

Some varieties will make a small fruit, pea to marble size but the fruit does not create a mess in your yard or side walk like the flowering crabapples will make. Birds and small animals will eat the fruit during the winter, so if you're looking for a clean tree, this is for you. The bark of the tree is green-gold when young but will mature to gray with time. Small spots are also noticeable on the branches, like freckles on a redheaded child. The bark is smooth and often shiny--especially when young. The color of the bark and the interesting branching structure makes the plant nice to look at even during the gray days of winter.

Flowering pears will grow best in a rich humus soil with moisture during the summer, but once established will do well in any soil as long as it is well drained. Flowering pear, when used as a small street tree, will tolerate road salt--a real plus when you want color on the side of the road.

As with any new planting, be sure to add compost and animal manure when you set out your tree in your yard. If your soil is on the sandy side use Soil Moist granules to help hold moisture around the newly developing roots to help get it off to a good start and add mycorrhizae to speed up root development. Mycorrhizae will increase the new growth on plants that do not seem to be growing as quickly as you want them to. Look for Plant Thrive from Alpha-Bio-Systems or Nature's Solutions at your local garden center--not sold in box stores.

Flowering pears will normally grow 25 to 35 feet tall and 20 to 25 feet wide but new narrow-growing varieties are now available that stay just less than 15 feet wide--great to use as sidewalk trees or to create a wall of privacy in narrow areas between homes or buildings. The tree does best in full sun but will tolerate a bit of shade in the summer. If planted in a lot of shade, you will not get as bright a fall color and the plant will not grow as thick as it would in the sun.

Insect and disease problems are few and the plant requires little to no maintenance during the year. If you can fertilize in the spring and fall when young, with Plant Tone fertilizer or Dr. Earth Tree fertilizer with Pro-Biotic, you will see more growth, and the feedings will help produce more flowers the following spring. Always make a mulch barrier 3 to 4 feet in diameter around the plant to prevent damage when mowing or weeding; use bark mulch 3 inches thick to control weeds and help hold moisture around the roots during the heat of summer.

Check with your local nursery for the new varieties and for the size you want the plant to grow, especially if you want narrow growing types. Flowering pear will make a wonderful gift for Mother's Day also! Enjoy.

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When I first started working in the nursery industry back many years ago, I always enjoyed opening the doors of big trucks full of freshly dug trees and shrubs in the spring. Opening those heavy doors of the truck was like unwrapping a present on my birthday; I could not wait to see

what was inside.

One late April morning, as I opened the doors of a truck, I was greeted with the fragrance of a plant that I will never forget; the mayflower viburnum. I quickly climbed into the back of the truck to find where this incredible fragrance came from, and was greeted with several rows of snowball-shaped flowering plants.

I bent down to get a better smell of the flowers and yelled, "what is this plant?" My boss, Bob Kennedy at Kennedy's Country Gardens in Scituate, Mass., just smiled and told me, "that is Korean spice viburnum." I was hooked, and so will you be when you smell the flowers of this wonderful deciduous spring-flowering shrub.

I remember that we placed them near the front door of the garden center and that by the end of the weekend all the plants were gone. I was so disappointed because I never got the chance to purchase one that year, but the following year I got to choose first, for my mother on Mother's Day.

The fragrance of the mayflower viburnum is spicy-sweet; when planted in your yard, it will fill the yard with its fragrance. When planted near a window up against your home, be sure to open that window on nice days to let the fragrance inside for a real treat. The flowers are 2 to 3 inch diameter snowball-shaped flower clusters and the flower buds are red to pink in color. As the flower buds open, the flowers change to pure white; the flower cluster has all three colors at the same time.

The flowers develop on the tips of the branches. Each flower is 3/4 inches wide and trumpet-shaped. Each flower cluster can contain as many as 50 individual flowers in the cluster. When the flower buds first open, the flower is light pink color.

This wonderful viburnum will grow 4 to 8 feet tall and just as wide but if you prune the plant when the flowers fade you can control the size of the plant very easily without affecting the flower production for next year. Viburnums make the flower buds on the new growth made during June and July, so prune as the flowers fade to control the size of the plant. This also the best time to cut back plants that have overgrown their place in your garden.

When you prune your plants back, be sure to fertilize them to encourage new growth for next year's flowers. I like Plant-Tone or Dr. Earth All-Purpose fertilizer with Pro-Biotic especially in the spring time. If you do not have room for this big growing plant look for the compact variety called Viburnum carlesii 'Compactum,' found at larger nurseries only and it will grow only 2.5 to 3.5 feet tall and wide.

The foliage is 2 to 4 inches long, oval and almost rounded on the tip of the leaf. The leaf is a dull dark green, nothing exciting, until the fall, when it will turn bright red to wine-red, almost as nice as a burning bush/euonymus. The fall red leaf is also dull red, with no shine to it.

During the summer the plant will grow very thick and dense, making a wonderful plant for spring birds to build a home in. The branches and stems are soft gray, and the plant can make as much as a foot of new growth each summer. The branches grow in all directions, giving the plant an interesting shape during the winter months, and those branches are stiff looking. The plant is strong and can handle some heavy snow load, but not ice, so keep it away from any roof line with no gutters.

All viburnum varieties love a fertile soil with lots of organic matter in it. They prefer a well-drained soil with no standing water, but will do great in a sandy soil if you can water during the heat of summer. Plant in full sun to half a day of shade. The plants will also do great under tall growing trees with high-limbed branches on them.

When you plant, be sure to add lots of organic matter, Soil Moist if soils are on the sandy side, and mycorrhizae for fast root development and better than average growth the first spring and summer. Mulching around the base of the plant really benefits the plant during hot days of summer to help keep it cool, hold water around the roots, and keep weeds away from the newly forming roots.

Viburnum can be used as a single focal point plant in the back of a perennial garden for early color during the month of May; this would brighten up your perennial garden because not many perennials are showing color yet. If your windows are high off the ground, it will make a great foundation plant against your home. If your windows are less than 5 feet from the ground, you will have to prune every year to prevent the plant from covering up the bottom of your windows.

This is a great plant to plant along a tree line on your property or in tree clearings for early color. If you have a deck or patio that you use during May, this plant is perfect to enjoy on those warm afternoons, but it blooms too early for decks around swimming pools. You can also use several plants in a row for a privacy hedge during the summer to block off the neighbor's view into your yard, or plant and let grow without pruning to soften a large blank wall or side of a garage. I love this viburnum when you plant it near the spring flowering dogwood, especially the pink varieties.

Insect and disease problems are minimal, so little to no maintenance is needed except for pruning to control the size of the plant. The plant will sometimes form small clusters of fruit during the summer that will turn from green to red then purple-black and are often eaten by the birds living in your yard. The berries are not very showy and because of the dense foliage not usually visible on the plants.

This mayflower viburnum plant is hardy to -20 degrees. It will flower every year if you fertilize it and water when the summers get hot and dry. Its main qualities are very fragrant flowers that last several weeks and the bright red fall color. It is easy to grow--and if your mother loves plants like lilacs, hyacinths, and roses for their fragrance, she will love this wonderful spring-flowering plant that will bloom on her special day--Mother's Day. This could be the plant that will make you her favorite and her garden extra-special. Enjoy.

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Looking for a great gift for Mother's Day? 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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This Week's Question:

Why don't botanists consider a strawberry to be a true berry?

[**Click Here to Answer**](#)

This Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Seed Starter Mix



- Contains Myco-tone® mycorrhizae
- • For all seedlings and cuttings.
- Promotes Root Growth.
- In 8 and 16 qt. bags.

Last Week's Question

If you were in England and had aubergine on the dinner plate, what would you be eating?

Last Week's Winner:

Sharon Davenport

Last Week's Answer:

Eggplant

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Seed Starter Mix

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!

Happy Mother's Day!



Featured Recipe: Chili con carne

What You'll Need:

- 1 pound ground sirloin
- 6 ounces sweet or hot Italian sausage
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped green pepper
- 8 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 bay leaves
- 1-1/4 cups beef broth or Merlot wine
- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes, undrained and coarsely chopped
- 2 (15-ounce) cans kidney beans, drained
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

- Remove casings from sausage. In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, cook the sausage, ground sirloin, onion, green pepper and garlic until sausage and beef are browned, stirring to crumble.
- Add chili powder, brown sugar, cumin, tomato paste, oregano, pepper, salt and bay leaves. Cook for 1 minute.
- Stir in beef broth (or wine), tomatoes and kidney beans; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
- Uncover and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Discard the bay leaves.
- Sprinkle each serving with cheddar cheese.

Yield: 8 (1-1/4 cup) servings



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