

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 12.18	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 3, 2012
	<p>FEATURED QUOTE : "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." - Lady Bird Johnson, from <i>Public Roads: Where Flowers Bloom</i></p>	<p>Gifts for the Gardener Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Fertilome Over the Top II Grass Killer</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulation: Poast herbicide.• Absorbed by foliage and travels through entire plant.• Controls annual and perennial grass weeds.• Will slow or stop growth of weed grasses within 2 days. <p>Over the Top II Grass Killer is a systemic selective broad spectrum post-emergent herbicide that can be sprayed over desired plants listed to control annual and perennial grasses. It can be used on vegetables, gardens, trees, shrubs, ornamentals and ground covers. Always read and follow label directions.</p> <p>For more information, visit the Fertilome website.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p>		<p>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>This wonderful herb is a plant native to the Middle East and Southern Europe. It was brought all over Northern Europe and the British Isles by the Romans, who used it as part of a mixture that was rubbed onto meat to help preserve it. Early European settlers who came to America carried it with them to their new home--and so did the Spanish explorers as they arrived in Mexico. Coriander has been cultivated for over 3,000 years in gardens all over the world; seeds from this wonderful herb were even found in the Egyptian tombs. Coriander is also mentioned in the Old Testament; it is said that when the children of Israel returned to their homeland from slavery in Egypt, that they ate "manna" in the wilderness to survive. Manna was described as being like coriander seeds--and it is still a custom to eat this bitter-tasting herb during Passover to remember the great journey the people of Israel went through so many years ago.</p> <p>Coriander has been used in all types of mixtures for many purposes all over the world. The ancient Chinese once believed it would bring you immortality if eaten regularly with your meals, and--if mixed properly--it would make a wonderful "love potion" as an aphrodisiac. Besides being used for flavoring foods, the best use of coriander seed is to help aid the digestive system, to help relieve indigestion and to help stimulate appetite.</p> <p>Coriander is an annual herb and must be planted every year but if you allow the plant to dry in the garden, it will self-seed and come up everywhere, making you believe that it is a perennial plant. If you're going to start seedlings indoors to transplant into the garden, start the seedling in late March or early April and transplant to the garden when the threat of frost is over--after mid-May. Grow several plants together in a 4-inch pot and thin to 3 or 4 seedlings when you set them out into the garden. Because Cilantro has a "TAP ROOT," it does not transplant well, so set the entire pot into the garden and do not divide the seedlings as individual plants. You can also scatter the seeds and let them come up by themselves as the weather warms up.</p> <p>Coriander will grow best in a sunny garden, as partial shade will force the plant to grow taller--and when you receive heavy rain or strong winds, the plant will topple over. In the sun, the plant will grow up to 2 feet tall if you're not picking the foliage for salads and cooking with it regularly to control the height of the plant. You can pick the young leaves any time you want to use in salads, stews, soup and sauces. The stems are also edible, so chop them up also and use them when you cook, waste nothing on this plant.</p>		<p>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>Your e-mail []</p> <p>Your name []</p> <p>Their e-mail []</p> <p>Their name []</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Send >>]</p> <p>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings? Click here to find Paul Parent</p>

The plant will grow best in a rich soil that has been conditioned before planting with compost--and if you're growing organically, look for Black Gold Compost, as it is an OMRI-Listed organic compost available today at your local garden center, go to www.blackgold.bz for more information. Your soil should also be light and well drained or you will have problems with the root system rotting in the soil. If you have a wet summer or you water the garden often--keeping the soil too moist--the plant production will be compromised and less productive.

The coriander will flower in late June and most of July, producing a delicate pinkish-white multi-petaled flower cluster that will grow flat and to a diameter of 3 to 4 inches wide. The plant will branch out and the entire plant will be covered with flowers, giving the appearance of lace to the garden; the flowers look somewhat like the wild-growing Queen Ann's lace plant. While in bloom, the bees and butterflies will have a field day in your garden. A word of caution for you to remember: if you are growing fennel in the same garden give them space and keep them away from each other because fennel has similar properties to this plant, and your fennel plant will have a hard time producing seed.

The foliage resembles parsley and is sometimes referred to as "Chinese parsley." The smell of the foliage is not loved by all and is very distinctive, that is why many people only grow coriander outside during the summer and not on the windowsill during the winter months. The seed has a very different smell, and when ripe it is delightful, with an orangey scent to it. It is great when used as a spice when cooking. Homegrown seeds are much more fragrant and flavorful than what you purchase in the supermarket, so store them in an airtight container with a rubber gasket to keep in the flavor.

When the flowers begin to fade and you can smell the orangey scent of the seeds be careful and pick the flower stems. Place them in a large PAPER bag (never plastic, or the seeds will develop a mold on them) and in just a few days the seeds will begin to fall from the flower, dead. Keep the bag in a warm and dry place like your garage until the seeds fall and are ready for harvest, and then store in your airtight container in your kitchen until you're ready to use them.

Cilantro is related to caraway, dill and fennel. All require the same growing conditions but they need their own space in the herb garden to keep their unique flavors. Plant other types of herbs in-between them, and each year when you plant, try to rotate their position in your garden to give the soil a chance to rest. When you grow herbs in your garden it is important to feed the plants regularly with a good slow-release fertilizer to keep the plant growing properly--or it will go to seed early and stop producing foliage. I like Vegetable -Tone or Dr. Earth Vegetable plant food with Pro Biotic as both are organic, and contain microbes to help make the fertilizer work more effectively and keep the plant productive and not going to seed early.

Insect and disease problems are minimal. During wet weather--or if you water the garden late in the day and the foliage stays wet at night--aphids can become a problem. Water the garden early in the morning so the foliage has a chance to dry off with the sunshine. If insects do become a problem, use "All Season Oil" or another natural product designed for the vegetable garden on the foliage because you are eating the foliage often and you do not want insecticide residue on the foliage when you eat it.

If you're going to grow herbs in your garden, get yourself a good herb gardening book and read about them before you decide what you want to grow in your garden. Learn how to grow them and what they need to thrive in your garden, also how to harvest and store them properly until you're ready to use them. A few years ago, I planted an "Italian Seasoning Herb Garden" and selected the herbs that were listed on the back of the box. That was the year I made my best homemade fresh spaghetti sauce ever--from scratch. I used all my own tomatoes, peppers, onions and--of course--the fresh herbs from my garden. Give it a try this summer--you can do it too, and enjoy flavors you never tasted before in your cooking. Enjoy!

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I grew up in Maine, a state recognized for superior potato production. I still live there today and my favorite vegetable is the potato--no matter how you cook them. My mother grew up in Bangor, Maine and she often told stories about her life as a child, and how potatoes affected her life. She told me that every spring when the season was right to plant, all schools were closed for a few days so everyone could get out into the fields and prepare for the planting season. My mother's first job--at age SIX--was to pick the rocks that she claimed grew during the winter in the potato fields. She also said that often there were more rocks in the spring than there were potatoes in the fall some years. The children picked the rocks and placed them in piles so the men could come through the fields with the tractors and pick them up and discard them, making the planting and maintenance easier.

In the fall, when the potatoes were ready to be harvested, all the schools were closed again for a week or more for the potato harvest, and she then picked the potatoes and placed them in barrels for the men to collect. Today, in many areas of Maine a similar process still exists so the farming families can harvest the crops while the weather is favorable-- the work is much easier with the help of new hybrid farming equipment but still a lot of work. Growing up, the first thing my mother did when she came home from work was fix the potatoes for supper and she often said that if she did not eat potatoes every day she would have the shakes. So you had better believe I ate a lot of potatoes growing up!

Many years ago, my parents' families both came from Canada to Maine because of the opportunity in textile mills, shoe shops and farming. Both my parents told stories of friends'

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families who also came to America because of the big potato famine in Ireland--and also in search of a better life for their families. My dad told me that in the mid 1800s, a terrible blight hit the potato crop in Ireland and over a million people died of starvation in just a year or two. The problem was that Ireland grew only ONE kind of potato and this blight destroyed everything in its path, due to a wet spring after the potatoes were planted, they rotted in the ground. Because the potato was the major source of food and income for most of the people in Ireland, many families lost everything to the great famine. Then social, political and economic problems hit the nation and entire families left Ireland to go to America and other parts of the world. Just a few years after the famine, the population of Ireland dropped by one half due to emigration in an attempt to escape the Great Famine in Ireland.

In America, botanists worked very hard on this problem--trying to stop the disease on the potato and end the starvation for the Irish people. Luther Burbank, a well-known horticulturist and farmer, developed a new potato he called the 'Russet Burbank' potato; his efforts are credited to introducing a blight resistant potato for the people of Ireland. Because the soil in Ireland was so rich and the climate was perfect for the production of potatoes, its people grew most of its land in potatoes. The average family had one acre of land and they were able to feed and generate income enough for a family as large as 10--but the potato blight destroyed everything and entire families died. Now you know a little bit of history about the potato, so let me tell you how to grow them in your garden.

Today's gardener has many varieties of potatoes to choose from: early, mid-season and late harvesting types. Potatoes now come in white, yellow, red or purple flesh or skin color and are used for baking, boiling or frying. With proper care, you should be able to produce one to two pounds of potatoes per each foot of row in your garden. So let's begin with your soil. It should be fertile and well-drained, as a heavy soil that is not well drained will produce fewer potatoes and those potatoes will be misshapen and of poor quality. If your soil is rich, well-drained and lighter, you can plant earlier in the season with increased crop production, and those potatoes will store longer after harvest without spoiling.

Potatoes prefer a soil that is on the acidic side with a pH, of 5.3 to 6. If your pH is higher than 7, your potatoes are more likely to develop "scab," a potato disease that will destroy the crop. A quick soil test in the spring will tell you how to adjust the soil pH to better grow potatoes before you plant. If you cannot lower the pH below 7 and you want to grow potatoes, look for the famous 'Russet Burbank' seed potatoes, as they are scab-resistant.

What is a seed potato and why should you use them? A seed potato is a specially raised potato that will produce a better crop for you. Never use potatoes from the supermarket, as they are treated with a product to help prevent sprouting while in storage. They will eventually germinate but because of the treatment, the production will be less. Look for certified seed potatoes at your local garden center or feed and grain store. When you choose your seed potatoes, select small to medium sized potatoes with at least 1 to 2 eyes or sprouts on them, and plant them whole. If you use large potatoes and cut them into pieces for planting it will take energy to heal the cut surface and produce a protective scab, resulting in less energy for growth of your crop. Dip the cut side of the seed in garden sulfur to help with the healing process to prevent rotting once planted.

Plant your seed potatoes when your soil reaches 50 degrees for the best germination. Dig your trench 6 to 8 inches deep and just as wide and then add a slow release organic fertilizer such as Vegetable-Tone or Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer with Pro Biotic at the rate of one pound per 10 feet of row to your trench; add it as you would add rock salt on ice. Now work the fertilizer into the soil in the trench about 2 inches deep with a cultivator. Keep the seed potatoes away from the fertilizer you have applied. Plant your seed potatoes 8 to 12 inches apart in the trench, with 3 feet between rows of potatoes.

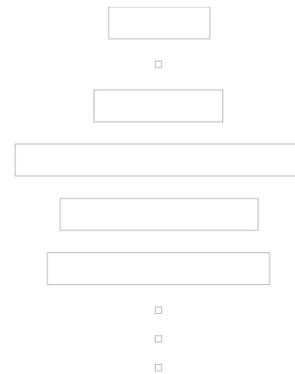
Now fill the trench with the remaining soil and be sure to mark the planting bed with stakes to prevent walking on them. You want to prevent damage to the tender sprouting shoots and compaction of the soil--remember, loose soil means more potatoes! Once the shoots develop and grow to about 6 inches tall, add soil around the shoots and create a mound of soil down the entire row of plants. Now sprinkle the same amount of fertilizer on the ground in two bands on each side of the row and work it into the soil again keep fertilized away from the plant and mix well in the soil. You should pull some of the soil from the walkway 3 times during the year as the plants continue to grow taller and create a mound of soil 18 inches tall and just as wide to help encourage additional potatoes to form in this mound of soil. New potatoes will develop on the stems of the plant that grow in the mound of soil. NEVER use any form of animal manure around your potatoes, as it can encourage scab disease to develop in your garden.

Water weekly as the weather gets hot and keep the soil moist. If you see potatoes forming above the ground, be sure to cover them with soil as green skin on the potatoes will contain a toxic alkaloid called solanine and it will make you sick if you eat the skin, so cover the potatoes or be sure to remove the green skin when peeling your potatoes.

Potatoes are usually harvested at the end of the growing season when you have had a frost or if the foliage has dried up due to a hot dry summer and lack of watering by you. Dig carefully, so as not to damage the skin of the potato so it will keep better and longer for you. Once dug, place them in a cool dark area like your basement once you shake off the excess soil--do not wash the potato before storage.

The only major pest is the Colorado potato beetle and it is easily controlled with the new Natural insecticide called Spinosad from Fertilome or Captain Jack from Bonide. The beetle is bright orange-red with spots. It will lay a row of yellow eggs under the leaf that will in time hatch and produce a slug-like creature that will also eat the foliage. Spray whenever you see a problem, as these products are all natural and not toxic.

If you have been growing potatoes for a long time, there is a chance of an insect called the wire worm. It is copper in color and looks like a piece of wire about 1 inch long and 1/8 inch



thick. It will drill holes into the potato and destroy the crop, often found in the potato but not very common. Last year Bonide did develop a new pesticide that will control the problem, called Garden Eight granules, and it must be added to the soil at the time of planting. So, now we have a product for a serious but rare problem with this crop--but most of us won't [need this product unless we had the problem last year!](#)

Good varieties to try are:

'**Superior**' a large potato and early-season.

'**Kennebec**' a medium potato, mid-season and good winter keeper.

'**Russet Burbank**' medium to large potato late-season and good winter keeper.

Also '**Red Pontiac**' a red skinned potato, late-season and stores well.

'**Yukon Gold**' a yellow flesh potato, late-season, buttery tasting and a good winter keeper

And for the fun of gardening--the '**All Blue**' with blue flesh--a late-season, small, finger-shaped potato.

Enjoy!

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It's May, so keep your eyes open; enjoy the garden but watch out for possible problems. Think prevention this spring; ask questions--NOW--about the problems you had last year before they possibly return. If you're planting something new--and you should--ask about the plant you selected and how to care for it. Things happen fast in your garden, some good and some not so good. Stay on top of things, enjoy the ride, and don't be scared to ask for help. Remember NO gardening question is DUMB!

#1

This week, I want you to get out the peony cages and get them in place to prevent possible damage, as the flowers develop they will be large and heavy. A good rain and wind could destroy all your hard work and shorten your enjoyment. If you're purchasing your first peony plants, invest in the inexpensive wire hoops to help hold up the flowers; it will be money well spent. When the peonies finish flowering, move the cages to the delphiniums and when the delphiniums are finished, use them on your fall mums or asters.

Always plant peonies shallow, because they will not flower if you do not. Dig in the soil near the stem of the plant with your finger. You should be able to feel the crown of the plant in the ground at a depth of one knuckle of your finger--anything deeper means no flower. Next, if your flower buds form and turn black and dry up there are two possibilities for this problem. If just the buds dry up, you need the common ant in your garden to eat the soft waxy film that grows on the bud to protect it against the dry wind and sun. As the ants eat the waxy film, the bud expands and grows larger--eventually flowering. To get ants on the flower bud, take a tablespoon of grape jelly, cover the buds with it, and then dump the rest on the ground around the plant. The smell of the grape jelly will draw them to your plant; they will clean the buds for you and flowers will form. Keep all insecticides away from the plant during this process so as not to hurt the ants. If the bud and the first leaf turn black, you have a disease that has hit the plant. Use a good fungicide like copper or Serenade Organic Fungicide as soon as you notice the buds forming on the plant.

#2

Sunday, I started to notice small tents of webbing in the trees, a sure sign that the tent caterpillars are arriving now. If you are able to break the netting with your garden hose water pressure or a long pole, the caterpillars will have nowhere to hide during wet weather and will all die when they get wet and cold. If that does not work, use the new natural insecticide called Spinosad from Fertilome or Captain Jack from Bonide. It will do the trick and will quickly kill them without hurting beneficial insects or the birds; it's also great for all caterpillar insects--even in the vegetable garden. Again, it's all natural and a disease of caterpillar type insects like the old B.T. product--but much more effective, especially on the larger and more mature caterpillars.

#3

Daylilies and hostas are beginning to grow now, and this is a great time to dig them up and divide the large clumps into smaller clumps. If you do it now, it will not affect the flower production of the plant for the summer months, and the new clumps will double their size by the end of the summer. Be sure to plant them at the same depth they were before you dug them and condition the soil with compost or animal manure before planting them in their new home. When you divide perennials or move plants around the garden in the spring, use a new fertilizer called "Thrive." I have been talking about this product with Mycorrhizae in it for the past couple of years. Your root system will double in size in just a month, transplant shock will be little to none and the new roots the plant develops will be incredible, helping your plants quickly get established before the heat of summer arrives. This is new technology at its best, and you will have more flowers on young plants when it's used at the time of planting because of the faster growing root system.

#4

If you have ornamental grasses it is now time to cut them back to 12 inches from the ground. By removing the old dead growth from last season now, you will encourage the new foliage to develop faster and the new growth will look much nicer with the old growth removed. If the clump of ornamental grass has grown large, this is also the best time of the year to dig it up and divide it into smaller clumps. Dig up the entire clump and get as many roots as possible, shake off as much soil as possible so you can see the roots and then split the clump with a

garden spade or hatchet. What you want is a clump about 4 to 6 inches in diameter; the splitting is best done when the clump is laid on its side so you can divide easily with lots of roots. Condition the soil with compost and manure before planting and keep the new plants moist until you start to see the new grass develop.

#5

Hydrangeas can be pruned at this time if the plant has begun to make new growth. If your plant grew tall and fell over last summer, you can cut back the individual stems back by as much as 1/3 to 1/2, as long as there are new buds below the cut you will be making. I always leave 3 to 4 sets of buds on each stem to insure flowers for the summer months. All dead stems should be removed and the plant should also be fertilized with Plant-Tone fertilizer for a wonderful 3 to 4 month slow feeding. Your blue hydrangea should also be fertilized with the new Blue Hydrangeas soil conditioner that will improve the color of the flowers and keep them nice and blue during the summer. For pink hydrangeas, be sure to add limestone, wood ash or Magic-Cal to keep the color pink or the acidity in the soil will change the plant color to blue. Add 3 inches of mulch around the plant to hold moisture during summer heat.

#6

Broadleaf weeds are in their glory right now--and no matter how well-kept your lawn the dandelions (these are the king of lawn weeds) will pop up. If you're using a combination fertilizer and broadleaf weed killer, be sure the grass is wet before applying it to the lawn so the product can stick to the foliage and do a better job. Also, be sure that your lawn sprinkler is off and no rain is predicted for at least 24 hours after you apply the product to give the weed killer time to move into the plant and destroy it. If you just planted grass seed, this cannot be done until the fall or the weed killer will hurt the new sprouting grass plants. Liquid broadleaf weed killers like Weed Beater Ultra from Bonide can also be applied at this time, but be careful when applying near ground covers. Only apply when the weather is calm and--like the powder type-- when there will be no rain for 24 plus hours. Tough weeds like violets, creeping Charlie and ajuga will need a second application of Weed Beater Ultra in 7 days to destroy these strong weeds completely.

#7

Bring out the birdbath and give it a good wash before you fill it up with water. As the birds arrive to your yard, they will appreciate a good drink and wash in their summer home--your yard. Keep the feeders filled with fresh seed and the suet feeder also. If you have a birdhouse, be sure to clean it out to keep the new tenants healthy and problem free. If you have young children, have them cut up some old yarn into 12-inch long pieces and scatter them on the ground near the feeders and birdbath to help the birds make a better nest. Also, bring out the patio furniture so you can enjoy your yard, sit back, and relax for a moment as the yard begins to take shape. It's never too early to start the grill and enjoy a hot dog or burger after a hard day's work in the yard and garden. The winter is over, so enjoy your yard and garden.

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Mevagissey

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This Week's Question

Which number would indicate pH neutral soil (neither acidic nor alkaline)?

- A. 1
- B. 3
- C. 5
- D. 7
- E. 9

This Week's Prize:

Espoma Bio-tone® Starter Plus
All Natural Plant Food Enhanced with Bacteria and Mycorrhizae

- Microbe-enhanced all natural plant food
- Includes both endo and ecto mycorrhizae
- Grows larger root mass to help plants establish fast
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Last Week's Question:

Only one type of bee dies after it stings. Which bee is it?

Last Week's Winner:

Jim Kieras

Last Week's Answer:

The honey bee (specifically the female worker honey bee).

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Bio-tone® Starter Plus

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

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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
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- 5 garden detail sheets

• 5 graph paper pages for layouts

• 5 photo pages, each holding four 4x6 photos in landscape or portrait format

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Featured Recipe: Lavender Shortbread Cookies

What You'll Need:

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp. culinary-grade dried lavender flowers (They have to be natural, not sprayed)
- 1/2 pound of butter (Use margarine if on a low cholesterol diet)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup ground rice (or rice flour)
- Pinch of salt
- Extra sugar and culinary-grade dried lavender flowers for final touch

Directions:

- Put the lavender and sugar in a blender, mix until thoroughly combined-- approximately 10-12 minutes.
- Cream butter and the sugar with a mixer until fluffy (do not overbeat).
- Sift together the flour and ground rice (or rice flour) and salt. Put that with the combined butter and stir until small lumps form.
- Put the dough on a board and knead it until it forms a smooth ball. Roll into a log shape and wrap in plastic then chill for approximately 1 hour.
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line two baking pans with parchment paper.
- Cut the chilled log into 1/4" slices and place on the baking sheet. Bake for 20 - 25 minutes or until a nice golden brown.
- Remove from the oven and place on a cooling rack, sprinkle with extra sugar and lavender flowers, then enjoy!



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