

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 12.19	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 10, 2012
 <p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE : "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>Happy Mother's Day</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>Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">For Our VIP Garden Club Members Only:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div data-bbox="204 1413 448 1653" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 100px;"></div><div data-bbox="459 1496 790 1747"><p>Use the Promo Code: Paul Parent When You Place Your Order Here--and Get \$5.00 OFF Your Order. (Note that the promo code is on the last page of the order form, but don't worry--it's there!)</p></div><div data-bbox="801 1413 1045 1653" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 100px;"></div></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p> <p>(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)</p> <p>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 style="text-align: center;">Bayer Advanced Season Long Weed Control for Lawns</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Click here to find Paul Parent</p>

purchased by the bag when you purchase your plants at the nursery. Fertilize spring and again in the late fall with Dr. Earth organic Rhododendron fertilizer with Pro Biotic or Holly-Tone with Bio-tone nutrients.

Blue hollies will look great in your foundation planting; they can also be used to create an evergreen hedge or barrier. Plant them en masse with other evergreens like rhododendrons, azaleas, andromeda, mountain laurel and other small-leaf ilex plants. The foliage is great for holiday decorating indoor or out and it is long lasting when kept in a vase of water. Now, don't forget that the fruit should be seen on the plant: so place a plant or two where you walk to and from the house daily and enjoy. Those berries are also enjoyed by your songbirds, so place a plant near your feeders and a window to watch the bluebirds, catbirds and mockingbirds enjoy them during the winter months when food becomes scarce. In the early spring, the robins and cardinals will feast on them when they arrive to your home in the early spring.

The best of the blue hollies for you to select are as follows: The original 'BLUE BOY' and 'BLUE GIRL' hollies offer good cold hardiness but need to be sprayed with Wilt Pruf or Wilt Stop in the late fall of the year if they are exposed to a lot of wind. When planted in a sunny location, this is necessary for the first couple of winters only.

'BLUE MAID', 'BLUE PRINCESS' and 'BLUE PRINCE' hollies are newer hybrids introduced in 1972 and are more cold-hardy. They all tend to grow more pyramidal naturally; grow to become dense and compact growing plants with deep green foliage. 'Blue Princess' is the most widely grown and the hardiest of the three.

'BLUE STALLION' is the newest male hybrid and flowers longer than the other male hybrids, increasing the chance for heavy berry production. The plant also grows faster than the other male plants. The foliage has more of a purplish color during the winter months and lacks prominent spines on the leaf, no points.

'CHINA BOY' and 'CHINA GIRL' are more bush types; they will grow as wide as they grow tall. The foliage is dark green with little blue to it. They are hardy to -20 degrees and they will tolerate more heat than other varieties of blue hollies. Both plants look great in a foundation planting and the leaf is larger and longer than the other varieties.

When you're doing a bit of planting this spring and summer, please consider these wonderful new hybrid hollies in your garden design. The blue holly family has everything you want in a plant for the garden: great foliage, flowers and fruit. Enjoy!

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When I was growing up in central Maine, my parents always had a very large vegetable garden because they had five children to feed and they both love to garden. My mother always found room for flowers in the garden and around the yard. But one year my parents had the driveway asphalted, and as a border around the driveway my dad built a small wall garden made of cinder blocks so my mother could have additional room for the flowers she loved so much in the holes of the concrete blocks.

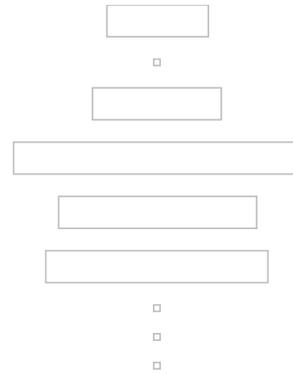
It was a family project, and the boys moved the cinder blocks from the car to the edge of driveway while my dad set them in place. We then added the soil behind the cinder blocks to give them additional strength and more room to plant flowers before the asphalt trucks showed up to install the driveway. My sisters and mother filled the holes with soil that had been conditioned with peat moss and cow manure--and when the driveway was installed, she was ready to plant her new garden.

She came home from the greenhouse the following weekend with a new plant for her and she called the flowers she purchased "cockscomb." She told us that the flowers would look like the hat on top of the rooster head and that in the fall she could pick them and dry the flowers to use in a vase for the winter inside the house. The flowers she planted that spring were the talk of the neighborhood because of their unusual shape and the wonderful bright colors of the flowers. This spring, plant a few cockscombs in your garden and you will see why my mother loved them so much.

Cockscomb is a member of the Celosia family. Back then there was only one variety to choose from but today the new hybrids are just fantastic and come in different styles. Let me tell you about the Celosia family so you will know what to expect in your garden. The word Celosia means in "burned" Greek, because of the fiery flower colors the plant produces--in brilliant shades of yellow, orange red, pink, salmon and cream. There are two major varieties in this family of plants--the Cockscomb and the Plumed Celosia.

The Cockscomb Celosia is found in the Cristata hybrid group. The flower is a tight rounded and curled flower that resembles a rooster comb, fan shaped; the newer varieties resemble a head of cauliflower and are more rounded. The flower is actually a flower cluster and it consists of hundreds of tiny blossoms caused by a mutant gene in the plant that causes FASCINATION, giving the flower a fused and flattened look to it--to me the top of the flower looks like a brain. The flower will grow in the shape of a V or a fan, growing taller and wider as it matures but it holds its color all summer long--never fading like other flowers. The sides of the flower seem to be covered with feather-like petals giving the plant much character. The V shaped varieties are called Bombay hybrids and the cauliflower or rounded types are called Kurume hybrids.

The Plumed Celosia will grow more like a central plume and is surrounded by a series of many other upright growing plumes that develop on this main plume, so a big plume with smaller plumes growing all over it. The plumes will grow up to 6 inches tall on long sturdy stems,



making a wonderful long lasting cut flower for summer arrangements or drying later in the season. Some newer varieties of the Plumed Celosia have clusters of individual plumes or flame-shaped flowers on them, and many gardeners call this type the Feathered Amaranth.

Grow the Celosia family in a full sun garden, but it will tolerate a bit of late day shade. They love a rich soil and they will grow larger and produce more flowers if you condition the garden with compost, seaweed kelp or animal manure before planting. These plants must have a well-drained soil to thrive or the roots will rot if you have a wet summer or soil that is heavy. These plants love the heat and humid weather and that is why they did so well in the cement blocks, as the cement held the heat all summer long. These plants also do very well in large containers and will complement other flowers when planted in a mixed flower container.

When you select plants for your garden look for young plants, even plants with no flowers on them yet, as plants that have become pot-bound often stay stunted and will not flower as well. Most greenhouses carry the standard types of Celosia in limited colors, so try them, and if you like the plants this year, go to a catalog such as Harris Seed Co. next year for the newer varieties and new colors--even individual colors of the same type. Harris Seed Co. has the new Kurume types with the rounded flowers and a new variety called 'Celway' that looks like fireworks exploding during the Fourth of July.

Celosia comes in many heights--from the dwarf hybrids that mature at 6 to 8 inches tall to the giant that will reach three feet or more in height. If you start plants from seed next year, start them six weeks before the last frost date and you can grow all the new hybrids that will give your garden a special look. Once you plant the seedlings, fertilize with Flower-Tone or Dr. Earth Flower fertilizer every 6 weeks or use Miracle-Gro every other week to produce better-looking plants and more flowers.

Insects and disease are not a problem with these plants; they stay clean without much care from you. I like them in groups or cluster in the garden rather than in rows, as the color is more effective and showier (unless you are using them to line your flower border). The taller varieties are best for drying in the fall of the year. All you have to do is cut the plant at ground level, strip the foliage off the plant and hang them in small bunches in a warm and dry building like the garage or tool shed. They will be ready to arrange in 3 to 4 weeks or less. Best of all, the colors do not fade, especially the red flowers-- they will last almost indefinitely in your home as long as you keep them out of direct sunshine. Enjoy!

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Tarragon is a native herb to southern Europe. Its species name, "dracunculus" means, "little dragon" in Latin. Some say that was because of its fiery flavor, some that the shape of the roots resembles a dragon; it was also thought to cure the bite of serpents and mad dogs. It was brought into England at the end of the 16th century and it was present in the garden of Henry VIII. Records from that period in history also tell that Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon for the reckless use of tarragon. As herbs go, it is said to be friendly to your head, your heart and your liver. No herb garden is complete without tarragon, for the flavors it will bring you.

The first thing you need to know is that there are two types of tarragon, French and Russian-- and they are very different. The most popular (and infinitely superior in taste) is the French, because of the very strong flavor found in the foliage and stems of the plant. French tarragon is a half-hardy perennial, which means if you live in a cold climate during the winter there is a very good chance it will not survive. It will produce tiny yellow flower heads that are insignificant and if you live north of Maryland the seed will not mature on the plant due to the cool summer weather; it loves the heat. If you have a cool summer, it will not flower!

The foliage is unique growing 1 to 2 inches long and only 1/4 inch wide, long and narrow. These leaves are smooth, dark green in color, flat, pointed tip, and they grow alternating on its stem. If you have a nice summer and you care for the plant, it will grow up to three feet tall and spread out as much as 18 inches wide. The plant produces many branches, almost like a miniature shrub, and there is no main leader--just a wonderful soft and airy looking clump of beautiful foliage. Tarragon has a wonderful creeping habit in the garden as the tall growing stems develop on the carpet of green. The foliage is also rich in vitamin A, niacin, calcium and iron.

The Russian tarragon is very hardy, as it originated in Siberia. It is hardy to zone 3--Canada. It will also grow much larger--up to 4 feet tall with a spread to 18 inches wide. It also flowers if you have a nice warm season but few of us see flowers on the plant. The foliage is more coarse and the plant does grow faster in the garden but it has one major drawback, as the foliage it produces has practically no aroma or flavor. If you buy tarragon from seed, it is most likely the Russian type. French tarragon is grown from division or rooting cuttings. When you go to the nursery or garden center for your herbs this spring, be sure to crush a leaf or two of the tarragon plant to determine which type you have. French tarragon foliage that has been crushed will have a smell similar to aniseed; Russian tarragon sadly has no smell.

Now is the best time to divide your tarragon in the garden if it survived the winter. Just dig up the underground runners and pull them apart, do not cut the plant. You will notice a small nodule or bump on the underground stem and you want to place the runner with some roots and nodules in pots or back into the garden until they root. The nodules will produce new shoots this year. The same can be done in the fall if you have real French tarragon and you want to bring it indoors for the winter to save the plant from the killing cold of winter. If you're rooting cuttings in pots, be sure to use Seed Starter soil, as it is sterile, well drained, rich in organic matter and airy

for good drainage preventing rotting of the roots. Place pots in a bright window with good air movement and water sparingly to keep soil moist but NEVER wet. If you live in a cold climate, you must cover the tarragon plant with several inches of salt marsh hay or straw in the late fall to keep plants protected during the winter months.

Plant tarragon in a garden with sun ALL DAY LONG--it's a must if you want to grow this herb. This plant loves the heat, so if you can plant near a stone wall, fence, or building for added protection from the wind. Look for the hot spot in your garden or you can grow it in a container filled with good potting soil on a hot and sunny patio or deck and then it move indoors in the fall for the winter for additional fresh foliage to cook with when the snow flies. Container grown herbs of all types do best in a soil that is as much as 50% compost blended with your soil, the better the soil the better the plants will grow. One last thing with potted tarragon grown indoors; never water at night as this plant does not like wet soil--the roots will rot easily, so morning watering only.

If you start with a rich soil when planting tarragon, you will not have to fertilize often. If you are accustomed to fertilizing often (and you should NOT), your foliage will grow fast and the leaves produced will have poor flavor. Feed at the time of planting with a good organic granular fertilizer or seaweed kelp and again a couple time with a liquid fertilizer like Miracle-Gro or Blooming and Rooting fertilizer during the year and that's all. Tarragon has one disease problem called rust, so when you purchase plants inspect the underside of the leaves for possible small round rust spots. If you see spots do not purchase the plant, and if you have this problem in the garden, dig it up and dispose of it. Do not replant tarragon in the same spot where you had problems before or they will return. This is not a common problem but it does happen.

You can harvest the foliage from early summer to fall. If you're drying the leaves for storage, be careful not to bruise or rip the leaves when drying or you will lose some of the flavor. The best way to preserve the foliage with the best flavor for the future is to pick the sprigs of foliage, place them in a freezer bag and freeze them until you're ready to use them. The foliage will last all winter and keep the flavor strong until you pick the leaves off the sprig when you need it.

Use tarragon when you cook meat, fish, egg dishes or salads. Tarragon is known as one of the best herbs when cooking chicken and root crops like carrots, parsnips, turnips and beets. When I think of tarragon, I think of stuffing, sauces and gravies--how about you? If you have never used fresh tarragon before make room in this year herb garden and your family will be in for a real treat when you use it in the kitchen fresh from the garden. You won't be sorry, so get ready for the compliments. Enjoy.

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Mevagissey

A Customized Gardening Tour of England and the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show

Paul Parent hosts a tour that includes the Wisley Gardens, the Chelsea Flower Show, Tower of London, Roman Baths & Pump Room, Riverford Organic Farm, Garden House, Rosemoor Gardens, Lost Gardens of Heligan, Village of Mevagissey, Stonehenge, the Wilton House Garden Centre and more.

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This Week's Question

What is the meaning of the name "hydrangea"?

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
- Promotes bigger blooms
- Reduces transplant loss

For more information, [see the Espoma website.](#)

[Click Here to Answer](#)

Last Week's Question:

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

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

Last Week's Winner:

Steve Pond

Last Week's Answer:

D. 7

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!

Are you looking for a great gift for a gardener (or yourself)? 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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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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