

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 12.21	Paul Parent Garden Club News	May 24, 2012
	<p>Featured Quote:</p> <p>"I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright." ~Henry David Thoreau</p>	<p>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;"><input type="text"/></p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">EarthBox Container Gardening System</h2> <p>G-R-O-W...Grow, Grow, Grow! That's exactly what your plants will do in an EarthBox®! Poor soil conditions and small backyards are no match for the EarthBox®.</p> <p>Now it's easy to garden anywhere--even on balconies, porches, and rooftops! Anyone can enjoy delicious homegrown veggies, fruits, and herbs grown in an EarthBox®.</p> <p>A sustainable product that uses less water and fertilizer, the EarthBox® will grow bigger and tastier plants faster than a conventional garden--with virtually no effort and zero guesswork! Great results, no matter what color your thumb is.</p> <p>For more information, visit the Earthbox 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>The tomato is America's favorite plant in the vegetable garden. The reason it is the favorite is <i>flavor!</i> 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 others 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 and soups, to salads and even condiments.</p> <p>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" that is available at your local garden center. Use it at the time you plant or add it around the plant now.</p> <p>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, and 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</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?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent</p>

and insect problems. Plant fewer tomato plants and get MORE tomatoes from those plants!

In 2009, 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." We again had problems last year. To prevent this late blight 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 Actinovate 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 disease from last year 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 began, 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!

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The number one selling late spring, early summer flowering shrub is the lilac. As you drive around town, look at the homes you pass by and you will be amazed how many of them have lilac in their yards. These plants are magnificent; they are easy to grow and the flowers they make will fill the air in your yard with a delightful fragrance. What a wonderful plant to add to any garden that has lots of sunshine. Sunshine is the main demand for this plant and the more it receives the more flowers it will make. They will grow in a partial shade but flowers will be far and few apart. Do not fool yourself; if your yard does not have sun most of the day, plant a different shrub.

Lilacs are deciduous and will lose their foliage during the winter months. The leaves grow 2 to 5 inches long, oval in shape and dark green to blue green in color depending on variety you select. The foliage is not known for fall color and is rather dull. If we have a hot and humid summer, the plant can develop Powdery Mildew on the foliage. This problem is controlled easily with Serenade organic fungicide if you begin treating the plant in early July, knowing you had a problem in past years. Powdery Mildew does not kill the plant but if it happens every year, the plant will develop fewer flowers each year. Irrigation systems that wet the foliage regularly can also cause the same problem, so adjust the sprinkler heads. A fertilizer that contains mycorrhizae bacteria will help to prevent the problem as it doubles the root system size in just a few weeks and reduces stress to the plant. Granular products like Bio-Tone or Dr Earth Shrub fertilizer must be worked into the soil, to contact the roots to do the job. The new liquid Plant Thrive Mycorrhizae, can just be watered into the soil.

Lilacs are multi-stem shrubs that, depending on the variety, will grow from 6 to 15 feet tall and wide. They grow in a mounding habit with stiff upright growing branches. As the plant ages, the lower part of the plant will have exposed stems with little foliage. When young and actively growing, many suckering shoots will develop at the base of the plant. I have had great luck keeping the plant full by removing half to three quarters of these shoots. The shoots that remain will in time flower as the older branches slow down, producing fewer flowers. You can also dig some of those shoots in April or May and transplant them to a new garden to start new plants. The flowers develop on the tips of the branches growing 3 to 7 inches tall and pyramidal shaped. You can cut the flowers on short 12 to 18 inch stems and place them in a vase of water for the home; the fragrance is just wonderful. Pick early in the morning before the sun gets too hot and remove some of the leaves to prevent wilting. If stems are thicker than a pencil, split them in two at the base of the stem -- this cut will help the flowers get water easier and faster. Keep them out of the sun and if it is hot in the house add ice cubes daily to cool the flower down.

Lilacs love a sweet soil and should not be planted in gardens that have rhododendrons or azaleas growing in them, as those prefer an acidic type soil. If you apply limestone, wood ash or the new Jonathan Green Mag-I-Cal lime substitute in the spring and fall, the flowers soon cover the plant. Lilacs will also grow better if you can keep the grass from growing under the branches right up to the trunk of the plant. Cut out all the grass under the plant, making a small mulch bed. I have found that if you plant flowers under the lilac, you tend to water the plant more, as well as fertilize the flowers and this will help the lilac plant to make flowers buds during the summer for next spring flowers. Feed plants every spring with a granular fertilizer such as Plant-Tone or Dr. Earth Shrub fertilizer. A well-fed plant has fewer problems with disease during the summer also.

If you should notice a single branch die in the clump during the summer, check the base of the plant for small holes in the trunk -- it could be a lilac bores. Usually this is not a major problem, but the branch should be removed and the plant treated with Bayer Tree and Shrub systemic insecticide. Prune as the plant comes into bloom in the spring. Any non-blooming stems in the

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lilac should be cut back to 4 feet tall and fertilized in the spring. During the summer, the stem will produce foliage and in just 2 to 3 years, it will be flowering. Remove as much as 1/3 of the non-flowering stems each year to control the height and size of the plant.

Today lilacs come in many colors from white to pink, lavender, purple, red and even several varieties that are bi-colored. Common lilacs seem to be the most fragrant but the newer French Hybrids have more colors to choose from, bloom later in the season and have different leaf texture. If you have a small yard, look into the dwarf types that will grow up to six feet tall or when pruned, can be kept at 4 feet. If you are looking for summer color for your yard, look at the Japanese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata*). This plant is a small growing tree 20 to 25 feet tall and 15 to 20 feet wide. The tree lilac flowers during June and early July with white flower clusters. The flowers grow 6 to 12 inches tall and are not as showy as the bush type of lilac, but are still beautiful. Summer flowering trees are rare and this tree is wonderful to look at. The bark looks like a cherry tree: smooth and spotted. The flowers are not as fragrant as the bush type lilac, but it has a scent similar to that of the privet hedge plant. Care for the tree type lilac the same way you do for the bush type. This plant is also very hardy and will grow when temperatures drop to minus 30 to 40 degrees.

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All gardeners are brought to the act of gardening by a moment of crystalline clarification: a childhood moment at lake's edge where the moonlight bounces off of the water; a hike through the woods when a sudden shaft of sunlight illuminates the soft lime green of a moss bed; a field trip to the botanical garden where exotics make you heady with their fragrance, and the colors and textures surrounding you make you feel as if you're in the center of an Impressionist painting.

A gardener has the ability to recreate these moments; we have only to plant a silvery night garden, keep a Phalaenopsis orchid on our desk at work, and fill every available nook and cranny with annuals and perennials that will color our world. Even those new to gardening can have that woodland paradise in their own back yard by planting a moss garden. In fact, since moss thrives in shade, it's the perfect substitute for a lawn that you've had difficulty in keeping healthy due to lack of light! Large shade trees such as maple, oak, or ash often are challenges to the quest for a uniformly green lawn. Here moss is the ideal replacement for turf grass.

If you are a sufferer of grass allergies, get rid of the watery eyes, itchy throat and sneezing by planting pollen-free moss. Our gardens should be our sanctuaries, our at-home vacation spots that give us assuagement from our daily stresses. The color green has been proven to reduce stress, and moss provides the widest range of vibrant, revitalizing greens in Nature. As the Japanese have known for centuries, moss gardens add serenity and a timeless quality to your garden that will result in eliciting a calm, contemplative state of mind.

An increasingly desirable, low-maintenance alternative to grass lawns, moss is also perfect for rock gardens, water gardens, ponds, fern gardens, or as an unusual ground cover in shady areas. With over 15,000 species of moss growing on Earth, these easy-to-grow plants are bryophytes, non-vascular plants that do not produce flowers or seeds, and are easily planted on rocks or bare soil. With rhizoids rather than roots, they don't ask for much when you are choosing where to plant, and in return provide erosion control and rapid reproduction. Moss is not affected by temperatures, other than to slow its growth during the hottest and driest months of the year. In fact, moss can dry out and remain dormant until the next rain, seldom dying completely. It is because of this that sphagnum moss covers 1% of the Earth's surface!

Here we will examine four kinds of moss, each of which will thrive in a different venue.

Fern moss (*Thuidium*) is a medium green moss that is perfect for heavy foot traffic. Low-growing, it will tolerate some dappled sunlight, but loves the shade. Perfect for beneath vined pergolas.

Cushion moss (*Leucobryum*) is the choice for your planting beds, with its light green color that sports a silver-white cast. It grows well in sandy soil, and will tolerate some partial sun, but does not take well to being trod upon.

Form with multiple text input fields and checkboxes.

Haircap moss (*Polytrichum*) prefers medium shade and well-drained soil. It anchors with fibers that function somewhat similarly to roots, and is an upright grower with a bright green color.

For your rock garden and as an accent to your water features, the moss that you remember from your woodland walks is the rock cap moss (*Dicranum*). Medium to dark green, it needs full shade, and grows on rocks and boulders.

If you are planting your moss in an area where there will occasionally be patches of full sun, use the *Bryum* moss, the moss most commonly found on walls or in sidewalk cracks, or *Grimmia* moss, another more sun-tolerant variety. A good guide is to check out your own property, find where the moss is growing, and that will tell you where conditions are optimal.

You can buy moss, but there are less expensive ways of accruing it: transplant from your own property, from public property such as sidewalk cracks, or check with your neighbors to see if they might be willing to part with some of their moss. Dig it up with a flat shovel, ensuring at least an inch of soil beneath the moss mat. If removing it from rocks, use a putty knife. To this gardener, the most amusing way to plant your moss garden is to take a clump of moss, crumble it into your blender, add 2 cups of buttermilk and 2 cups of water, and blend at the lowest speed until thoroughly mixed and the consistency of a thin milk shake, adding a little water if necessary. Paint this mixture onto rocks, or simply pour it on the ground where you'd like your moss to grow!

As with any planting, first prepare the site. Eliminate all grass before planting your moss-- glyphosate-containing herbicides will kill the grass. Clear all debris such as twigs and leaves, raking clear the soil with an iron rake; then tamp the soil down, as moss objects to loose soil. Simply lay down the moss, tamping firmly once again, water well for 2 to 3 weeks, and avoid heavy foot traffic as it establishes. During hot dry seasons, a gentle misting will be your gift to your moss.

It may take a couple of seasons for a moss lawn to completely establish, or for your favorite boulders in your rock garden to be carpeted in green moss, but won't it have been well worth it?

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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 (usually) the best time of day to water your garden?

This Week's Prize:

Liquid Plant THRIVE

Soil Conditioner & Mycorrhizal Root Stimulator--perfect for seedlings and growing plants of all types.

The hottest gardening product for 2012! From existing plants to seedlings--THRIVE helps plants get off on the right "root." The beginning is often the most important part of your plants' lives. Maintaining soil quality for them to grow is imperative. Liquid Plant THRIVE contains a concentrated dose of the microbes already found in nature that will ensure a strong root system, require less watering and help you do your part for the environment.

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

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Last Week's Question:

Which of these IS a plant?

- A. Algae
- B. Moss
- C. Mushroom
- D. Seaweed
- E. None of the above

Last Week's Winner:

Tony Marino

Last Week's Answer:

B. Moss is in the Kingdom Plantae. (Mushrooms are in the Kingdom Fungi and seaweed and other algae are in the Kingdom Protista.)

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:

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- 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:

Caribbean Sweet Potato Salad



What You'll Need:

- 1 large russet potato, peeled and quartered
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and quartered
- 1 cup corn
- 1 teaspoon prepared Dijon-style mustard
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cucumber, halved lengthwise and chopped
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup finely chopped peanuts

Step by Step:

- Place the russet potato pieces into a large saucepan, and cover with salted water. Bring to a boil, turn the heat down, and simmer for 10 minutes.
- Add the sweet potato, and cook about 15 minutes more. Remove a piece of each potato, and cut it in half to see if it is cooked enough.
- Once the potatoes are tender, add corn kernels; cook another 30 seconds. Drain through a colander.
- Fill the saucepan with cold water, and drop vegetables into water. Cool for 5 minutes, and drain.
- In a large bowl, whisk together mustard, lime juice, cilantro, and garlic. Slowly whisk in oil. Mix in salt and black pepper.
- Cut cooled potatoes into 1 inch cubes, and add to dressing along with cucumber and red onion. Toss well.
- Serve at room temperature or chilled.
- Toss the peanuts in just before serving.

Yield: 5 servings



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