



FEATURED QUOTE :

"In order to live off a garden, you practically have to live in it."
~**Frank McKinney Hubbard**



Soil Moist Granules

Soil Moist has been developed to reduce the amount of water needed to maintain vigorous plants and other green goods. When mixed in the soil, the crystals will soften and swell as water is added and absorbed. When the potting system dries, the polymer will release its water to the plant. Soil Moist acts as a water reservoir--even during periods of drought the stored water is released to the plant. The expansion and retraction of the polymer during the watering cycle helps soil aeration, which is important to all plants.

Note: Soil Moist must be incorporated into the soil at the root level of the plant/green good. Do not top dress or place on the surface. Should be kept out of drains.

- stores over 200 times its weight in tap water
- releases a steady supply of water as your plants need it
- non-toxic, safe and economical to use
- reduces plant watering by 50%**
- reduces transplant shock
- lasts several seasons**

**Results may vary depending on soil conditions such as salt, pH, microorganisms, and on UV light.

This Sunday is Mother's Day. If you're looking for a nice hanging basket of flowers for your mother, I'll be listing a few of the best plants for you to consider. Hanging baskets are divided in two groups: sun- or shade-loving plants; both will need special care to keep them flowering. Follow these easy steps and your plant will keep flowering all summer long.

The first is watering, as the plant is grown in a container and relies on you for its needs. Hanging baskets dry out faster than plants in the ground, so they must be checked daily. Just lift up on the pot and feel the weight of the pot; if it is heavy most likely it has enough water in the pot. You can also poke your finger into the soil a couple

of knuckles deep and feel for moisture. Sun-loving plants will need more water than shade-loving plants--and the larger the pot is, the easier it is to keep it moist during the season. If you're a busy gardener, then I recommend that you add Soil Moist Granules to the container. All you have to do is take a pencil, poke 3 or 4 holes into the soil to the bottom of the pot and add a half a pinch of Soil Moist (no more) into the holes and fill with soil. These granules will swell to the size of your thumb and act as a sponge holding extra water for the thirsty plant. This will cut your watering by 25% and help to keep your plants alive on those hot and sunny days.

Next is fertilizer; where you purchase the plant will determine how often you will need to feed it. What I want you to do is lift the foliage and look for small pellets on the surface of the soil, these pellets are timed released fertilizer often used by greenhouses to give the plant a constant feed every time the plant is watered. Besides watering, feeding your plant regularly is second in importance to keep your hanging baskets healthy and flowering. If your potted plant has pellets on the top of the soil your plant should be all set for the next 60 days, then you will need to reapply the fertilizer pellets that will feed the plant until the fall or use a liquid fertilizer every two weeks. I recommend that when you purchase the plant purchase a container of Dynamite fertilizer pellets and add it to the hanging basket when you get home (if there are no pellets there already) and use this unique product in your window boxes, containers and the garden, as it will feed your plants for 9 months and you can forget about those every other week feedings--saving you much time for other gardening chores.

Cleaning of the plant is also important; if you can remove all faded flowers or seed pods that form on the plant you will keep the plant flowering all summer long. Your goal is to prevent the plant from making seeds. By removing the faded flowers you will do this and the plant will keep making more flower buds and flowers. Also remove any yellow or dead leaves on the plant to prevent possible disease problems. While you clean the plant also check for possible insect or disease problems and if you see anything suspicious, call the greenhouse where you purchased the plant for help. Don't ever feel that your question is a dumb question as it could save a plant in trouble if you act early before a problem gets out of control.

Here are some of the top selling plants to consider when you look for the perfect plant for a **sunny** location:

Ivy Geraniums

The number one selling hanging basket and easiest plant to grow for either a first timer or experienced gardener. Ivy geraniums come in all colors like white, pink, lavender, and red. The foliage is a blue-green color and shiny. The flowers grow in a cluster and usually cover most of the plant. Disease and insect problems are few and this plant is forgiving if you get busy and forget about it for a day or two. It also requires less water than other hanging baskets. Just keep the dead flowers off and the plant will keep flowering right up into the fall season. When the weather get cold, bring it into your home and hang it in front of a sunny window for several weeks of flowers.

New Guinea Impatiens

These are becoming more and more popular because of the unique foliage and flowers. The foliage is usually multicolored, with shades of green and yellow or green and white banding stripes, also solid green leaves that are shiny and clean. The flowers are much larger than the common impatiens and flower color selection is also large, you can even find even two-toned blossoms. The unique foliage and flower color combination gives this plant much character. They will flower all year, right up to frost and are insect and disease free. The only thing to remember is these plants must be watered every day especially if they get sun all day long; use Soil Moist as described earlier to help with watering.

Petunias/ supertunias

New hybrids that are self-cascading and self-cleaning plants. Great clean looking foliage and a large flower color palate to choose from--white to red and everything in-between, also many bicolor flower combinations. Easy to care for plant that loves the sun and flowers nonstop all season long.

Million Bells

A fairly new plant from the Proven Winner line of plants that has a flower like a miniature petunia in shape. The color selection is endless and there are many new and unique colors to choose from including yellow, burnt orange and many bi-color. Plants are insect and disease resistant and, if well fertilized, will bloom all season long. When plants get to be overgrown and look tired, just cut the plant in half, fertilize and they will bounce back like crazy to their original look in just a couple of weeks.

Thunbergia/Black Eye Susan Vine

A wonderful vining plant with yellow or orange flowers with a black center. They love the sun and will flower all summer long, also will flower indoors for you during the fall season when the weather gets cold. Your Mom will love the unique colors for this hanging basket plant and it's easy to care for plant especially if the weather gets real hot and humid, needs less water than most plants also.

Scaevola Blue

A wonderful blue flowering plant that will tolerate a windy location. Plants flower all summer long and love the hot sun but require less water than most hanging baskets. Flower looks like a fan in shape with deep blue petals with yellow edge; they also come in white. I love this plant and it's also great in window boxes.

Proven Winner Plant Assortment

I was at a wonderful greenhouse in Falmouth, Maine called Skillins Greenhouse, and they put together several of the new hybrid plants in the same hanging basket for great flower combinations, great color assortment and unique foliage. If you're looking for something unique and different this should be your choice for a sunny

location. Easy to care for and just watch mom's eyes light up when she sees this gift.

Top-selling plants for the **shade**.

Fuchsia

Great flowers with unusual shapes and wonderful color combinations. You will love the red and white or red and purple or even pink and white flowers on these plants—and there are many other combinations to choose from. Great deep green foliage color, that is clean looking and free of insect and disease problems. Hummingbirds and butterflies love the flowers, and the flowers are long lasting. When the flower falls from the plant, it will leave a seed pod. Pinch pods off to keep the plant flowering, and if it becomes too long cut back the plant and watch how fast it fills in again and flowers like crazy.

Non Stop Begonias

Wonderful hybrid begonias for baskets, with bright colors that flower (like the name) non-stop all summer long. Strong stems hold the large 2 to 3 inch flower and the foliage is shiny and clean looking. They will tolerate half a day of sun also and if you want color in a shady area this is your plant. Great for containers or window boxes in the shade and the plants are disease and insect free, a good choice for a new or experience gardener.

Angle Wing Begonias

Wonderful foliage that resembles an angel's wings--deep green in color and some spotted varieties --with no disease or insect problems. Flowers dangle from the branches that arch over the edge of the pots and are red or orange in color. I have had this plant in the past and brought it into the house for the winter and it flowered past Christmas in a sunny window.

Impatiens

A great plant for the shade with many colors to choose from--and it will flower all summer long. This plant is easy to care for on a porch or in front of the house on a bracket. If the plant becomes overgrown just cut the plant in half, fertilize, and in just a week or two it is back to its normal shape and full of flowers again. Easy to care for, but keep the water off the foliage when watering.

Have a wonderful Mother's Day, and remember Mom loves flowers all around her; enjoy!

This Mother's Day, if you're looking for the perfect shrub for Mom--and want a plant that will bloom for several weeks, has wonderful fragrant flowers, and comes in many different colors think about lilacs. The only thing you will need to know to get started is that all lilacs need a sunny location to grow in, as flowers are few in a shady garden. Lilacs have been around for hundreds of years and it is estimated that there are over 2000 varieties, with more new varieties coming out each year. The most popular is the common lilac with lavender or white flowers and its trademark deliciously fragrant flowers. The sweet perfume of the flowers it produces will fill your yard with fragrance, and the long flowering stems can be cut from the plant and brought into the home so you can enjoy the fragrance there.

Lilacs love a well-drained soil that is rich and fertile. If your soil has clay in it, be sure to mix in lots of organic matter like compost, animal manure, or garden coir fibers before planting. Avoid areas where soils are wet during the winter or spring or the roots of the plant will easily rot and die. So when you purchase Mom a lilac, be sure to also purchase soil conditioners at the same time, so the plant gets off to a good start. If your soil is on the sandy side, also use soil conditioners to improve the quality of the soil and add a couple tablespoons of Soil Moist Granules to help hold water around the plant when the heat of summer arrives. The best lilac plant that has the most flowers is a plant that is watered during the summer months when it is hot and dry. Lilacs will flower best when they receive one inch of water per week during July and August.

Once your plant is set into the ground, be sure to make a large planting bed around the plant to make it easy for you to mow the grass around the plant without damaging the lilac plant. Cover the planting bed with 2 to 3 inches of compost, bark mulch or decorative bark to control weeds, and help retain moisture around the plant. Lilacs will not bloom if they are over-fertilized! I will say it again: they will not bloom if they are over-fertilized. Feed your lilacs in the spring when they are in bloom or as they finish flowering--but no more. Use an organic fertilizer like Plant-Tone from Espoma or Dr. Earth Shrub and Tree plant food with Pro-Biotic every spring to keep your plants productive. If the planting bed has a mulch covering, punch a hole in the ground through the mulch with a crowbar about a foot deep and add half a hand full of fertilizer per hole, near the drip line of the plant.

Also very important is to add limestone, wood ash, or lime substitute products like Magic-Cal or Turf-Turbo every spring as Lilacs LOVE a sweet soil. If you notice that there is moss growing in the lawn where you planted the lilac, your soil is acid and the plant will need lime to make flowers buds on the plant. If your yard has pine trees, oaks, and maples in it, soil sweeteners should be added every spring to keep them near neutral and prevent acid soil from developing around the plant. I would like to see you add 2 to 3 handfuls of these products per 3 feet of height or spread of the plant; you can never add too much and hurt the plant. Add these soil sweeteners in the early spring so the rain can wash them into the soil to the root zone of the plant and keep it sweet.

Water weekly for the first season to encourage root development--and be sure to keep the water off the foliage or you will encourage powdery mildew disease to develop on the leaves. Powdery mildew will turn the foliage white and the infected

foliage will turn yellow and fall from the plant in the late summer, decreasing the number of flower buds on the plant for next year. If we have a hot and humid summer and you notice powdery mildew forming on the foliage, spray the plant with a copper or sulfur fungicide. If the plant does develop a leaf fungus be sure to clean around the plant in the fall to remove the infected foliage so it will not become a problem the following spring. Powdery mildew will not kill the plant but it does make it look unsightly if the disease is not treated, so spray the plant when needed.

Pruning of lilacs should be done in the spring as soon as the plant finishes flowering. If you wait until the summer you will remove all the new buds for next year. Lilacs bloom on old growth that was made the past year, so prune early. When your lilacs come into bloom this spring look at the flowers and if you think they are getting smaller in size it's time to prune the plant. When you prune the plant remove any dead growth; you can also remove the oldest canes right down to the ground to encourage new growth to form from the ground. Remove all the small suckers that form at the base of the plant but keep 6 to 10 of the strongest growing shoots. Cut back tall canes to about 5 feet tall to encourage side shoots to develop on the canes and flower buds to form.

If your lilac is old and has a bad shape to it, here is what I recommend that you do. Remove 1/3 of the oldest canes right to the ground this year. Next year remove half of the remaining canes right down to the ground and the rest of the older canes in the third year. New shoots will develop every year and you have now rejuvenated your plant. Many years ago I had a very large lilac plant and a heavy wet snow destroyed the plant. In the spring I cut the entire plant to 12 to 18 inches from the ground and it came back like crazy. In three years the plant was back up to 4 to 5 feet tall and flowered like it was a newly planted plant. Lilacs are very hardy and will grow in zone 3 (which is minus 30 to 40 degrees) to zone 7 (10 to 20 during the winter months). Lilacs do not do well in the South--sorry.

Here are some great varieties other than the common white or lavender lilac to look for:

'Donald Wyman'

6 to 10 feet tall, rosy purple, late bloomer.

'James MacFarlane'

6 to 10 feet tall, single pink, late bloomer.

'Charles Joly'

8 to 15 feet tall, double deep purple, early bloomer.

'President Grevy'

8 to 15 feet tall, double blue, early bloomer.

'Katherine Havemeyer'

8 to 15 feet tall, double lavender pink, early bloomer.

'Krasavitsa Moskvya'

8 to 10 feet tall, white with very pale lavender tint, early bloomer.

'Minuet'

6 to 8 feet tall, light pink, May-June bloomer.

'Miss Kim'

4 to 6 feet tall considered dwarf, purple-blue, early bloomer.

'Sensation'

6 to 10 feet tall, purple with a white-edged flower, early bloomer.

'Bloomerang'

purple and dark purple--up to 6 feet tall and just as wide. Very showy in the spring. Continues to flower off and on from midsummer to fall. New hybrid, and very fragrant

By mid-April we are all looking for some color--and there is no better a plant than the flowering quince shrub. It is hardy to minus 30 degrees, and even in Northern New England it will flower every year no matter what the winter was like. The plant is also great for cutting in the late winter and bringing those branches into your home for easy forcing into a colorful vase of flowers that last for weeks on the kitchen table. The cut branches in a vase of water will give your home a bit of oriental look due to the crazy shape of the branches and the look of the flowers.

The flowers that open on the plant will stay in color for 4 to 6 weeks in your garden, starting in mid-April and sometimes earlier. With today's new hybrids, you can even choose quince with white, pink, or scarlet flowers. These flowers are 1 to 1 1/2 inches across and resemble tiny flat petal roses that cover the plant, flowers have no scent to them.

The foliage is clean, deep green in color, grows 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long and is oval. The plant grows with many strong stems; it looks to be a tangled mass of stems but grows both upright and spreading at the same time. Your plant should be pruned every other year to control size and shape of the plant. This plant will grow in full sun to half day of shade--a real bonus for those of us with a partially shady garden. The plant also has thorns and makes a great hedge plant to keep out unwanted company--it is even deer resistant. The plant will grow to be 4 to 6 feet tall and spread just as wide. Plants will make 6 to 12

inches of new growth every year, so pruning is necessary if you want to control the size of the plant.

As a bonus the flowering quince will produce fruit, yellow to blush rose in color, 2 to 2 ½ inches across, and resembles small hard apples. The fruit is often picked in the fall and used to make jams and jelly. The fall foliage color is yellow but the plant is not that showy.

Besides using the plant as a border planting, it looks great all by its self, up against a white fence, in a mass planting--and you can even plant them under tall pines with later flowering rhododendrons and mountain laurels for early color. Just remember that the plant grows in all directions, so it will take some maintenance to control the shape and size of the plant. The best time to prune is just after it has finished flowering to encourage new growth and more flowers the next spring.

Plants will grow in most soils that are fertile and well drained, so be sure to add organic matter like peat moss, compost, animal manure, or coir fiber when planting. If your soil is on the sandy side, use Soil Moist Granules at the rate of 2 to 3 tablespoons per plant to keep moisture around the root zone for quick root development. Water the plant weekly from planting to autumn, at the rate of 3 to 5 gallons of water per plant. Once planted, cover around the plant with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch to help hold water around the plant during the hot and dry days of summer and to control weeds growing around the plant. Weeding around a thorny plant is a lot of work and can be painful--so mulch rather than weed

Fertilize in the spring when in bloom to help the plant produce more new growth when the flowering finishes--and to make more flower buds for next year on that new growth. The flowers buds are made on the plant during late summer to early fall; if you can fertilize a second time the bud count for flowers could almost double in number. Use Plant Tone from Espoma or Dr. Earth shrub and tree fertilizer with Pro-Biotic as both are organic and long lasting.

This is a good plant for a camp or cottage where wind is a problem with some plants. Cold wind will delay the flowering in most cases but the plant is tough and winter hardy. The quince is a good plant to use in place of azaleas where winters are cold and windy. With the three main colors and new hybrids available today I like them more than azaleas and they're less work and have fewer problems to deal with. If you have a problem with deer ,this plant is for you as it is not eaten because of: the thorns on the plant, no foliage during the winter and the taste of the plant.

Lime should be applied every couple years if your soil is very acid and you see mosses growing on the ground in the same area as you are planting the quince. The plant is low maintenance and has no major insect or disease problems to deal with. Plants are old fashioned and usually inexpensive to purchase. If you're looking for a natural looking plant with a mind of its own and an almost wild look to it this is your plant, this is not the type of plant that looks good when sheared hard every year to a specific shape like other plants.

These are the best hybrids:

Texas Scarlet

Has tomato-red flowers and is more spreading than upright. It will mature at about 3 to 4 feet; the flowers are profuse on the plant and long lasting --4 to 6 weeks. Plants grow 4 to 6 feet tall and wide.

Cameo

Has peachy pink flowers--often large, double, and fluffy. The flowers will cover the plant in profusion and it holds its foliage longer in the fall season. Plants grows 6 to 8 feet tall and wide.

Jet Trail

Pure white flowers that cover the plant. It is more upright growing than other varieties and the flowers are also smaller in size. Plants grows 4 to 6 feet tall and wide

Toyo-Nishiki

White, pink, red, and combination-colored flowers appear on the same branch or different branches. It is a strong upright grower, with flowers that are single petaled and look like a poppy. Plants grow 4 to 6 feet tall and wide.

New hybrids this spring called the "**Double Take**" series, with orange, pink, or scarlet flowers. These flowers are vibrant and doubled so they resemble camellias or large roses more than quince. Plus they are thornless! The flower can be 3 times larger than the traditional Quince, great for forcing and deer resistant. Look for Proven Winner plants at your favorite nursery for these three varieties of this series.



SOLD OUT! SEE YOU IN AUGUST! Paul Parent will be hosting a tour that includes:

Vancouver, BC

Butchart Gardens--55 acres of floral display!

Cruising the Inside Passage:

Ketchikan

Icy Strait Point

Juneau

Skagway

Hubbard Glacier Cruising

Seward

Scenic Drive to Anchorage

Denali National Park

Fairbanks City Tour, a tour of the Gold Dredge # 8 and a cruise down the Chena river on the Riverboat Discovery Sternwheeler.

This Week's Question

What is the official Mother's Day flower in the USA (chosen by Ann Jarvis, the founder of the holiday)?

- A. aster
- B. carnation
- C. lily
- D. orchid
- E. rose

**This Week's Prize:
Monterey Lawn and Garden
Agri-Fos Systemic Fungicide**

Agri-Fos is based on the potassium salts of Phosphorous Acid. It is very effective against Phytophthora (blights - including late blight on potatoes and tomatoes) and Pythium disease on agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plants. It also controls fire blight on apples, pears, and ornamentals and downy mildew on impatiens.

Can be used as both a preventative and curative spray.

Last Week's Question:

"Where flowers bloom, so does hope." Which First Lady said this?

- A. Eleanor Roosevelt

- B. Jacqueline Kennedy
- C. Lady Bird Johnson
- D. Nancy Reagan
- E. Rosalynn Carter

Last Week's Winner:

Sharon Lord

Last Week's Answer:

C. Lady Bird Johnson

Last Week's Prize:

Agri-Fos Systemic Fungicide

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

Happy Mother's Day!



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