

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.30	Paul Parent Garden Club News	July 28, 2011
	<p align="center">Featured Quote:</p> <p>"How cunningly nature hides every wrinkle of her inconceivable antiquity under roses and violets and morning dew!" ~<i>Ralph Waldo Emerson</i></p> <p align="center"><input type="text"/></p>	<p align="center">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p>Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p>
<p align="center">Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew by Bonide</p> <p>□ Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew® contains Spinosad (spin-OH-sid), a product first isolated from a naturally occurring soil dwelling bacterium that was collected on a Caribbean island from an abandoned rum distillery.</p> <p>Deadbug Brew® kills bagworms, borers, beetles, caterpillars, codling moth, gypsy moth, loopers, leaf miners, spider mites, tent caterpillars, thrips and more! Use on fruits, vegetables, berries, citrus, grapes, nuts and ornamentals.</p> <p>For information on where to buy, see the Bonide Lawn & Garden website.</p> <p align="center"><input type="text"/></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 align="right">[Send >>]</p>
<p>Two weeks ago while working with fellow gardeners on the <i>Private Gardens of the Kennebunks</i> garden tour, I was intrigued by a special garden that featured edible flowers as its theme. This garden was unusual because it was only planted this spring--rare to see on a garden tour. The garden of Kathy and Dr. Mike Landrum was so unique it got me thinking about this type of gardening and after talking to both of them I had to tell you about edible flower gardening. Growing edible flowers is very specialized, so before you go into your garden and pick flowers for your salad tonight please read this story, because some flowers could make you very sick, or worse.</p> <p>Kathy always gardened, but before she started her edible garden she took courses to become a master gardener to learn the basics and more about gardening. Mike, her husband, grew up with parents who were missionaries traveling the world and always worked in the vegetable garden at a young age so both had experience in the garden--but now was the real test.</p> <p>Most of you have eaten flowers from your garden or from the supermarket almost every week and you don't realize it. Broccoli, cauliflower, and artichokes are flowers, did you know that? If you like Chinese food and have eaten hot and sour soup, dried daylily petals are a key ingredient. If you like chamomile tea, it's made from the flowers of the plant, and when I looked at the herbal tea that I drink now and then, I found that it includes rose petals, mint, chamomile, hibiscus and many other flowers found in our gardens. The flowers of these plants have more flavors than other parts of the plant and sometimes other parts of the plants will make you sick--only the flowers are edible.</p> <p>If you want to grow an edible flower garden, here are a few things to think about before planting and harvesting your first flowers. Location and the soil are very important because of possible contamination from the environment in your yard. If your garden is to be near the house and your home is an older home, was it ever painted with a lead based paint? Is the garden to be near your driveway where oil from asphalt is possible problem, near the outdoor oil fill for your home, near a tool shed where you store power equipment that requires gasoline or where garden chemicals are stored? If you're planting near a wooden fence, think about lead paint and preservatives used to keep the wood from rotting. If you're growing flowers to cut or enjoy in your garden, it's not a problem--but if you're going to be eating them, it could be a problem.</p> <p>Think of an edible flower garden the same way you would care for a vegetable garden. If you're going to harvest flowers from your perennial flower garden, be sure you do not pick from plants that you planted the same year. Most perennial flowers have been forced to grow faster than normal, with all types of fertilizers and treated with insecticides and fungicides to keep them clean</p>		<p 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 align="center">Where can I find Paul on</p>

of insects and disease problems. These products will break down with the help of Mother Nature in the coming year and the flowers will be safe to eat the following year. Unless you purchase them from an organic farm or you started them yourself from seed, wait a year to harvest the flowers.

Certain flowers growing wild in your lawn, like dandelions and red clover, are wonderful as long as you did not treat your soil with a weed killer, insecticide, or fungicide. Your lilacs and some types of roses make wonderful dishes for the dinner table but again did you use insecticides, fungicides or weed killer near the plant? Many insecticides used on plants today are "systemic," meaning they are absorbed into the plant or root system to control problems. This is wonderful technology because it will cut down on the amount of insecticides used in the environment due to frequent rain during the year, but systemic products do not wash off plants with rain--and they stay in the plant for a long time.

Some flowers can be eaten raw for salads or as a garnish, some flowers must be cooked first before eating and some flowers you grow in the garden, only certain parts can be eaten. Know what you're eating before you mix it with your garden salad. Sometimes the name of the flower is misleading--like buttercups--they must taste like butter, right? NO, they are **poisonous**.

NEVER eat flowers you purchase from a florist or your favorite vegetable stand on the side of the road, especially on a "wedding cake," as today flowers come from all over the world where they are grown for their beauty, not for consumption. The flower of the common potato is poisonous but the potato is safe to eat; the stem of the rhubarb is safe to eat but the leaves are poisonous, so know what you're eating.

Some of our most common landscape plants are poisonous if eaten so enjoy them for their foliage and flowers but use your head and don't eat them. Azaleas, rhododendrons, mountain laurel, boxwood, morning glories, sweet peas, jonquils, hyacinth, and even common houseplants like English ivy and schefflera are poisonous if eaten. You probably have more poisonous products under your kitchen sink where you do all your cooking, than you have in your yard, though, so do not panic.

The reason I "scared the hell out of you" is to make you aware of possible problems, so don't just go out and pick flowers at random in your garden or in the wild. All I want you to do is know what you're eating and that you grow your flowers the same way you raise your vegetables. Go to the book store or on the internet and purchase a book or two about edible flower gardening and do your research before planning this wonderful specialty garden. Think what you use to make them grow: fertilizers, insecticide, fungicides and weed control products just like you do in the vegetable garden.

Fresh flowers for eating are wonderful but some are better dried before eating. Other things you will need to know about edible flowers: how to grow them, how to harvest and preserve them. You should know when is the best time of the day to harvest them from the garden what parts of the flower will taste best and at what stage of bloom will they taste best. Also are certain varieties better than others, can you freeze them, and how long will they keep fresh or preserved? This is a wonderful new gardening area for you to learn about and when your friends and family eat their first garden salad filled with flowers all the work will be worth the effort. If Frank and Jim Perdue can feed all of their chickens fresh marigold petals, you can grow edible flowers too!

Here are my favorite edible flower books for you to consider that have a lot of information and ideas. Taylor's *50 Best Herbs and Edible Flowers*, Cathy Wilkinson Barash's *Edible Flowers, Deserts and Drinks*, and the queen of edible gardening is Rosalind Creasy, with 3 wonderful books: *Edible Landscape*, *Edible Flowers*, and *Edible Herbs*.

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It's a wonderful day to be in the garden until you notice some missing foliage on your tomato plants! On closer inspection you notice that the beautiful foliage has been removed from the upper part of your plant--and it was there last night. All that remain are the stems of the tomato leaves attached to the stems of the plant; some flowers are still there...and then it happens. You see that some of the tomatoes have been partially eaten. You're now upset and you begin the search for this CREATURE that had the nerve to eat your plant. You notice square shaped droppings on the foliage and on the ground and you smile because he must be nearby and you want him DEAD.

You look on top of the leaves and he is not there, he is not on the stems but you now begin to look under the leaves and you find him. WOW you say to yourself because he is the biggest caterpillar you ever saw--and he will get even bigger, up to four inches long and one inch in diameter, like a hot dog feeding on your tomato plant. You look at him closely and he is the same color green as your tomato plant foliage; no wonder you did not see him sooner! His head is bent over and he is busy eating and not scared of you. He has white and black lines on his body like medals he earned for each leaf he ate on your plant and on the end of his body a deep RED horn that waves back and forth warning you not to bother him while he is eating.

This creature is a giant eating machine that will eat up to 2 to 3 times his body weight in foliage every day, and he gets bigger every day so he eats more every day that he is in your garden. He is the largest caterpillar in North America; he has come to your garden--and he is **hungry!** Don't run back to the house to hide the kids and pets; it's time for action, and now is the time to act.

My Mother always used a coffee can filled with soapy water to kill them after she picked them off the plant with her garden gloves on. She made MAD faces and she talked to these creatures as

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she found them on the plant and then dumped them into their soapy water grave and laughed as they sank to the bottom of the container. Tomato horn worms don't swim very well, "HA HAHA!" I don't use a can of soapy water when I find them on my plants. I just drop them to the ground and tell them the end is near as I raise my leg off the ground and quickly drive the heel of my shoe on top of them driving them into their grave, "HA HAHA!"

These creatures came from a giant moth, called the "hawk moth," and it's also known as the "hummingbird moth." The eggs were laid under the leaf so you cannot find them and they hatch just a few at a time so if you think you found them all, you're mistaken; more will come to feed on your tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and potatoes. The eggs hatch in 4 to 5 days and when the hornworm emerges from the egg, it will feed for up to 4 weeks on plants in your garden before it falls to the ground and pupates until next year. The pupa spends the winter in your garden soil and emerges in the spring to mate and start the cycle all over again.

Now do you control them in your garden? The best way is to roto-till your garden every fall to destroy them in the soil, with results of up to 90% kill. Now there is a better way to do the job and that is with a small wasp called *Cotesia congregatus*. This wasp will lay eggs in the back of the tomato hornworm and as they develop they will feed on the inside of the hornworm until they are ready to pupate. The cocoons will appear on the back of the tomato hornworm; they resemble white puffed wheat. As the wasps emerge from the cocoons, they will kill the hornworm and fly to others in your garden, killing them by parasitizing them. These wasps also feed on cabbage loppers and other garden caterpillars. If you see a hornworm with this puffed wheat-like growth on his back, move him to a plant where he will not be hurt as each infected hornworm can contain 15 to 25 wasps that will help keep your garden free of this creature.

Other than the wasps, the best, most effective and natural method to KILL these tomato hornworms is a new bacterium called Spinosad found in the Caribbean a few years ago. Just spray on your garden and all the caterpillars will die in just a few hours. Spinosad is safe for beneficial insects, birds, pets, and the environment as it kills only caterpillar-type insects. You can eat vegetables the same day you spray as long as you rinse the vegetables well before eating. Spinosad is also sold under the name Captain Jack made from Bonide Lawn and Garden. The old product we did use was Sevin Garden Dust or Spray, but it is very toxic to beneficial insects like bees and should never now be used in the garden. Sevin is old school pesticide and harmful to the pollinators in our garden, so stay away from this product.

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The tomato plant is the number one vegetable grown in the home garden and there is nothing more frustrating than watching your tomatoes develop and then find that the bottom of that tomato is all black and rotten. It usually happens to the first tomato to ripen in your garden and that is the one tomato we really wanted to pick and eat...just devastating. What's worst, we never saw this rot until the tomato began to ripen, because it develops on the bottom of the tomato and the top and sides look perfect.

Blossom-end rot is a plant disorder, not a fungus problem treatable with a fungicide. The rot develops at the base of the flower where it was attached to the young tomato. In its early stage it is unnoticeable unless you look real close to the tomato for a soft depression or soft water-soaked spot. It can happen at any time during the growth of the tomato, but in most cases it begins to develop quickly when the tomato is one-third to one-half full matured. The spot will enlarge quickly as the fruit matures and it will usually cover as much as one-third to half of the bottom of the tomato. This spot will eventually dry up creating a leathery looking, black flattened bottom on the tomato.

The good news is that this plant disorder will not spread from plant to plant, nor from tomato to tomato on the same plant. The environment is the cause of the problem and this is easily corrected. The first problem causing blossom-end rot is moisture to the plant, and that is why it is most frequently found on container grown tomatoes, it is caused by uneven watering practices in your garden. When your tomatoes are growing fast, especially in the spring and you forget to water or in the case of the containers, they are too small for the plant, the roots will dry up and the plant will go into a stress condition. Tomatoes need one inch of water EVERY week to prevent this from happening. During hot weather, water your container grown tomatoes every morning!!!

The second problem is the lack of calcium in your soil. Calcium is needed to grow a mature fruit

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on the tomato plant. Acid soils are a common cause to this problem and adding limestone each fall to the garden will prevent this from happening. Jonathan Green Magic-Cal or wood ash will help fix the soil pH faster in the spring. A soil test should read 6.5 to 7.0 PH to prevent this problem. Also adding Garden Gypsum, like Soil Logic Liquid Gypsum/Thrive soil conditioner will help prevent calcium deficient soils.

The next problem is cultivating too close to the plant and hurting the root system, so it cannot move the amount of water needed up to the plant as it is growing. If weeds are a problem, use mulch or straw around the plant and keep the garden hoe away! Landscape fabric is wonderful also and that is what I use to control weeds and warm up the soil ahead of the season, giving my plants a jump on the season with a nice warm soil.

Also over-feeding the plant early during the season can cause this problem making the plant grow too quickly. If you grow your own plants, be sure to harden them off properly by bringing them out of a warm house to the cooler outside during the day and then back inside at night for several days to prepare the plant for the change of environment.

If you see infected fruit, remove it from the plant as soon as possible so the plant's energy is sent to good healthy fruit and not to damaged tomatoes. Organic Laboratories from Florida has developed a special fertilizer for tomatoes that will eliminate this problem in your garden and especially in container grown tomatoes, called "Tomato Maker." It is available at most good garden centers. If you have this problem on your plants now, be sure to apply this special product around your tomatoes and the problem will be solved.

Blossom end rot will also happen to all types of peppers, summer-type squash and eggplant. Peppers have black rotten holes on the side and at the bottom of the fruit. Squash and eggplant will begin to shrivel just below the flower and quickly resemble a chewed up cigar as they rot and fall over on the plants. Use the same method to control the problem. If you do not try to change these problems you could lose up to 50% of your vegetables on these plants this summer, so do not put it off any longer--especially with all this heat.

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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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This Week's Question:

In China, this fruit is a symbol of longevity (as is the tree that bears the fruit). What fruit is it?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

This Week's Prize:
Drammatic® Gardens Ready-to-Spray 4-4-1



- Enjoy the fresh flavor of fruits and vegetables without the hazards of dangerous pesticides or chemical fertilizers
- - Natural product that is people and pet friendly
 - Ready-to-Spray bottle, attach to a garden hose and spray
 - (NOP) compliant and OMRI listed

Last Week's Question

Honey bees are not native to the USA. Where did they come from?

Last Week's Winner:

Beverly Ann Mroz

Last Week's Answer:

Europe

Last Week's Prize:

Espoma Organic Seed Starter Mix

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

FEATURED RECIPE:**MIDWESTERN
POTATO SALAD****What You'll Need:**

- 2.5 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes (or other waxy, firm potato)
- 2.5 lbs. red potatoes
- 10 large eggs
- 1/2 cup chopped dill pickle
- 1 can pitted black olives, sliced
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- salt and pepper to taste
- sweet paprika to garnish

Step by Step:

- In a large pot, boil potatoes in salted water on med-high. Cook about 50 minutes, or until done. Drain.
- In a separate pot, boil eggs until hard-boiled, about 12 minutes; drain.
- While potatoes and eggs are cooling, chop dill pickles into 1/4" (thumbnail-sized) chunks; drain black olives and slice into chunks roughly the same as the pickles.
- Chop cooled potatoes into 1" chunks. Chop cooled and peeled eggs into 1/2" chunks.
- In a large bowl combine mayonnaise, mustard, and salt and pepper.
- Add pickles and olives and mix well.
- Add chopped potatoes and eggs; fold into dressing to coat potatoes evenly.
- Transfer to serving dish and sprinkle with sweet paprika.

Yield: 4 servings



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