

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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Edition 10.32	Paul Parent Garden Club News	August 12, 2010
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Featured Quote:</b> "In joy or sadness, flowers are our constant friends." ~Kazuko Okakura</p> <div data-bbox="225 685 1062 972" style="text-align: center;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scotts® Turf Builder® With SummerGuard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeds and strengthens against heat and drought.</li><li>• Kills and protects against bugs.</li><li>• WaterSmart® Improves lawn's ability to absorb water and nutrients.</li></ul> <p>Controls chinch bugs, sod webworms (lawn moth), fleas, ticks (including ticks that may transmit Lyme Disease), and other lawn pests.</p> <p>Apply to a dry lawn, then water-in thoroughly to activate the product.</p> <div data-bbox="536 1458 754 1491" style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Listener and reader Amy Petersen sent an email regarding last week's article about butterfly weed, a relative of milkweed. She said:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Just finished reading this week's newsletter and what you said about the butterfly weed being in the same family as the milkweed. I was wondering if anyone has ever related to you that during World War II, we little kids in rural area one-room schools (mine was in Minnesota) were given US Government gunny sacks and asked to fill them up with all the milkweed pods we could find. Our soldiers needed them, we were told, and we all wanted to do our part for our soldiers. I had no problem filling my sack as our farm had a big man-made ditch running through the land and there always were plenty of milkweeds growing there. Just thought you might like a little trivia."</p> <p>Some fascinating trivia, indeed. Thank you! A bit of research on the internet gives a bit more. About 29 states east of the Rockies along with parts of Canada were involved. Amy was part of an effort that collected an estimated 11 millions pounds of milkweed fluff during the war. It was used as a substitute for the fluff from the kapok tree, which was used in life jackets and flight suits. The kapok tree is native to Indonesia, and our supplies of kapok had been cut off by the Japanese (who were occupying Indonesia). Like the kapok fibers, the milkweed fibers are both waterproof and bouyant.</p> <p>Milkweed was used in pioneer days to stuff quilts, and the Native Americans used it to insulate mocassins. It is still used, with goose down, in some pillows and comforters. Seems to me that our "common" milkweed has been, and is, an uncommonly useful plant, to more than just the Monarch butterflies.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gifts for the Gardener</b></p> <p><a href="#">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <p><b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="#">Click to contact us.</a></p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p><b>Fax:</b> (207) 985-6972</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p><b>Phone Hours:</b> Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</b></p> <p><a href="#">Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Customized Gardening Tour of Ireland</b></p> <p>Join us for a journey to the beautiful gardens of the Emerald Isle.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here for more information.</a></p> <div data-bbox="1134 1901 1342 2069" style="text-align: center;"><p><b>Have a Look Around Our Website:</b></p></div>



The other day I was visiting friends, and as we walked their property I found wild inkberry growing along the side of the road and near the water edge near the lake. I was so used to seeing this plant as a cultivated evergreen plant sold in nurseries that I had forgotten that the inkberry was a native plant that will grow from Nova Scotia to Florida.

The inkberry plant is a member of the holly family and hardy to 20-30 degrees below zero. It will grow most anywhere in your yard or garden, even in the shade. As a wild plant it will grow in an unruly mound shape and spreads with suckering branches in all directions. The birds do help to spread this plant around the area, as they love the seed-filled berries that the inkberry makes during the summer.

The foliage is deep green and shiny, but during the winter it will pick up a bit of bronzy color with the cold weather. The leaves are 1 to 3 inches long and 1/2 to 3/4 inch wide--oval with a rounded tip. When the new growth matures in late spring, the small white flowers develop at the base of the new leaves. When the bees do their job, small green fruit will form, and by the late summer, the fruit will change color to shiny black. The fruit is about 1/8 inch in diameter. When it's ripe the birds, and many four legged animals, will feed on them almost like they will on wild blueberries.

Inkberries will grow in most soils--wet or dry--and acidity is never a problem, as the plants adapt to most soils quickly. The inkberry will grow in areas with full sunshine or on wooded lots with moderate shade. Whether you have a sheltered location or one wide open to the wind and weather, the inkberry will thrive for you with little to no care once established. Insect and disease problems are rare on the inkberry plant. Even with cold weather and lots of wind, foliage damage is very rare. Truly, a plant made for your home or a camp by the lake.

You can prune the plant to control the height or let it grow wild, as most plants will mature to 6 to 8 feet tall and just as wide. Most mature plants will have many suckering plants growing around the base of the plant that you can dig up in the spring and transplant during April.

Your local nursery will have several varieties of the plant available to add to your landscape, such as the Ilex Glabra 'Compacta,' which has to be pruned every spring early to control the height of the plant. It is a nice plant for a natural garden look but it does drop the inner foliage and loses its density as it matures. For a more formal-looking plant, use the 'Nigra' variety, as it holds its foliage better and tends to be thicker growing. Because it holds the lower leaves and is darker in color, it will look better as a foundation plant.

My favorite variety of inkberry for hedges or for the formal garden look is the 'Shamrock' variety, as it has very dark green foliage and the foliage is more dense than the other varieties and will grow 4 to 5 feet tall and wide.

Plant inkberry at any time of the year and use organic matter like compost and animal manure to help get the plants off to a good start the first year. Water two times a week for the first year and plants will thrive with a spring feeding of Holly-tone or Acid Adoring fertilizer each spring. This is a great plant to use for erosion control on sloping land. Plant in groups or in a mass for a soft evergreen look with a rich fall color.

Do not forget the small shiny black berries on the plant that will last from August to spring if the animals do not find them. If you're feeding the birds, this plant--the inkberry--will give them evergreen foliage to shield them against the winter weather when the plants mature, along with the berries the birds will eat.



When Spanish, Italian and English explorers left their countries looking for the New World, they hoped to find new lands filled with animals, fish and plants that would help to feed and better their fellow countrymen. When they reached North America, they found a plant that was beautiful and stood out among all the plants that they found.

This plant, the sunflower, was named for its beautiful flowers that resembled the sun, had flowers that always faced south towards the sun and stood so tall over other flowers that it could be located in the distant sky like the sun. Old world gardeners, dazzled by the sunflowers beauty and size, searched and traded for the seed with other gardeners from around the world for the bragging rights to the tallest and largest flower in the gardens of the world.

Even if you are not a gardener, you know of the sunflower and so do most kindergarten children. The sunflower is that huge, gold outer-pedaled flower with the yellow or brown center that in time will contain large seeds to feed the birds. The flower head is a circle of petal-like florets that surround the dense center in the shape of a plate. The plate is covered with tiny flowers that when pollinated will fall, revealing rows of seed arranged in a circular fashion. The plant grows so fast we can measure it almost daily and watch it grow larger every day--in just a few weeks it will grow taller than we are, almost like the tale of Jack and the Beanstalk.

The sunflower is grown mostly for the oil rich seed found in the center of the large flower and not for the birds, even though most of us think of it as a source of food for our winter feeder. Actually, the sunflower is grown for the oil in the seed for cooking, bread making and baked goods, eaten as a raw or toasted seed and lastly as a source for food for our birds. The oils in the seed make it possible for our birds to survive a long, cold and wet winter season. The main use of the sunflower is for its seeds, that are pressed for the oil they contain for cooking, use in margarine and to help

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lower cholesterol in our diet.

Plant sunflowers in a full sun garden that has a better than average soil that is well drained. The better you prepare the soil, the larger the plants and flower will be. If your growing season is short, you can begin the plants inside the house in 4-inch pots for a head start on the season but start no sooner than 3 weeks before planting. If you start too early, the pot that you use to start them in could almost stunt them, as they grow so quickly that they will get root bound.

I always prefer that you plant seeds directly in the garden, as they do grow quickly. Condition the soil with animal manure and compost before planting, and add additional soil conditioners once the plants have grown to 12 inches tall for the extra boost.

Today sunflowers come in many heights, from 18 inches to 10 feet tall. Sunflowers come in various colors such as yellow, orange, red and bi-colors. You can also choose varieties that make a single flower, or the new branching varieties that will make multiple stems with multiple flowers that are great for cutting. If you are growing the sunflowers for the birds, look for the black oil types, as the seed is richer with oil than the traditional striped seed type. You can also save some of the seeds from your bag of bird food and plant them in your garden.

Several years ago I planted a section of my garden with a mixture of sunflower seeds and it turned out beautiful with multiple colors and heights. I purchased 6 different types of sunflower seeds that would grow 4 to 8 feet tall and mixed them together before planting in the garden. I also fertilized every week with Miracle-Gro and the results were stunning.

Try growing a sunflower garden or plant random giant sunflowers in the flower or vegetable garden and watch them grow. If you have young children or grandchildren, have them each plant their own cluster of 3 or 4 tall-growing plants in the garden and create a contest for the tallest plant and largest flower head. When I was growing up, my dad did this--and we ended up with plants over 15 feet tall in the garden! Enjoy.



If you have a flower garden that is sunny, hot, and dry, with well drained soil, do I have a perennial flower to add to your garden--and it is in bloom right now. This perennial, called Russian sage, is one that once you see it, you will not forget it--and you must get one for your garden. The foliage is gray-green, fuzzy, with woody stems, almost like a small shrub.

In the spring, the foliage develops on these woody stems that grow like a clump of arching branches--going in all directions. The new growth is gray-white, attractive and eye-catching. When the foliage finishes filling the plant, the flowers begin to form in late May and continue to grow and flower well into the fall.

The flower stems will grow two to three feet tall; these stems are covered with hundreds of small 1/2-inch tubular flowers that open up like a lipstick, and the tip opens to resembles two lips. The flowers are lavender-blue and the plant has so many flowers on the stems that it almost looks like a blue cloud in your garden. Most plants will bloom for 3 months or more.

Most people who see this plant are surprised in the spring as it is like other perennials that die back to the ground almost. Do not cut back the plant in the fall like other perennials; in the spring wait until the new growth begins to develop, as some new growth will develop on branches above the ground as well as from the base of the plant. Once the growth starts then you can cut back the dead branches made last year.

The plant will grow three to five feet tall and spread two to four feet wide during the summer. Plants do not need staking, as a plant that grows wild looking is better looking. Russian sage is hardy to -10 to -20 degrees, but keep the plants out of windy exposed areas if you live in a cold wintery climate. They will do best against a building or fence to break the winter winds but will tolerate the cold.

Select a location in full sun, as this plant will flower more if planted in bright and hot sunny location. In a garden against a brightly painted house, against a fence or planted in a rock garden that warms up early and stays hot all season long--that is what they love. The second thing they must have is a soil that is well- drained and never has standing water--like a raised flowerbed or on the side of a sloping hillside.

If you have a clay soil this plant is not for you! When you plant, be sure to add compost to the soil to help hold moisture so the roots can develop easily but once the plant is established its on its own. Water weekly and feed often with liquid fertilizer like Miracle-Gro the first year to help establish the roots. Once established, feed in the spring with Plant-Tone and a couple times during the summer with a mycorrhizae based fertilizer to help form a larger plant and more flowers.

I like to use Russian sage plants in perennial borders as a background plant, in a cut flower bed (and it does make a great cut flower), or in mass-planting shrub beds with evergreen plants as a background. Plants do very well and look fantastic in areas with large stones sticking out of the ground. Plant in a row up against a tall evergreen hedge and the blue flowers will jump out at you. Ask for 'Blue Mist' or 'Blue Spire' varieties for your garden at your local garden center or nursery.

Mulch plants with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch when planting to help hold the heat in the ground longer, start to warm up the ground sooner in the spring and protect the roots during the winter. Enjoy!



It is August, and the gardens are still full of beautiful flowers---so let us keep it that way. One of the most important things to do is to keep removing the faded flowers from our plants. This is called "deadheading." It prevents the plants from making seeds in the faded flowers and puts the energy back into the plant, making it stronger and able to grow larger.

Many of our summer flowering annuals and perennials have a goal to make seed to reproduce new plants for next year. If you remove the faded flowers, the plant cannot do this and it will make new flowers on the plant and continue to try to make these seeds. So cut the flowers the plant makes and bring them indoors for a vase full of fresh cut flowers.

Plants that are not used for cut flowers must have faded flowers removed with pruners right down to the foliage. Doing this will also help make the foliage look better. More green and less yellow foliage will remain on the plant. For better perennial plants, keep fertilizing them into September--even if the plant has stopped flowering--and continue to check plants for insect and disease problems.

In the rose garden, continue to treat for fungus problems until mid-September, as the humidity is most responsible for this problem. As air dries out, disease will be less of a problem for roses. August is the last month I want you to fertilize your rose plants!As the days cool off and the length of the day shortens, you want your plants to begin to prepare for the seasonal changes.

If you continue to feed roses, the plants will continue to make new growth that will be succulent. When the cold weather arrives, the plant will not be ready for the cold and plant will have die-back on tender branches. When you stop feeding in August, the plant begins to produce growth that is woodier and better able to tolerate the cold weather of winter, so you will have less dieback. Japanese Beetles are almost done feeding, but the traditional insects like aphids will continue to live on the new flower buds and new growth. Keep them in check and spray as needed with Bayer or Bonide Rose and Flower products.

At the end of the month, you can divide the German bearded irises, daylilies and hostas growing in your garden. This is a great time to swap these plants that others have noticed growing in your garden for some plants that they have, and that you would like to plant in your garden. And your local garden center should have new varieties of iris for sale as a bare-root plant for a lot less money in early September.

Also, remove all the faded flower stems from hosta and day lilies to keep plants looking good and clean. Cut back Oriental and Asiatic lilies to remove the seed pods and fertilize now to help the bulbs divide and make additional flower stems for next year.

At the end of the month, you should dig up plants that you want to bring into the house for the winter. Such plants as geraniums, begonias and foliage plants that you used in the garden, such as wandering jew, ferns, vinca vines, etc. as an accent plant in containers or in the garden. This will give them time to acclimate to the change while the weather is still nice.

Any tropical plant that you brought out for the summer should be brought back into the house by September. The transition is easier for the plant while the windows are still open in the house, the heat is still off and before the storm windows go on.

Check plants well for insects and spray plants with All Season Oil before bringing them into the house, and fertilize with Osmocote fertilizer pellets. One last thing--begin to label tender bulb or tuber plants like dahlias, begonias, and caladium with height and color so you will know what they are when the frost knocks them down for the season and you can store them for next year. Enjoy!



**This Week's Question:**

What is the only bird that can fly backwards?

**This Week's Prize:**

Espoma Organic Potting Mix



- Contains Myco-tone® mycorrhizae
- For all indoor and outdoor containers.
- In 4, 8, 16 qt., 1 and 2 cu. ft. bags.

[Click Here to Answer](#)

**Last Week's Question:**

What color is the bougainvillea flower? (Yes, this question is a bit tricky.)

**Last Week's Prize:**

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

**Last Week's Winner:**

Pattie Prescott

**Last Week's Answer:**

White. (What we think of as bougainvillea flowers are actually colorful bracts, which are specialized leaves.)

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:

### Luscious Grilled Chicken



Summer is perfect for grilling! This quick marinade makes flavorful, juicy chicken ready for the grill in less than 30 minutes. Serve with homemade potato salad and grilled vegetables for a great summertime dinner in less than an hour.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 1/3 tablespoon sweet paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 tablespoon crushed coriander seed
- 1 3/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper *or* 1/3 teaspoon crushed black peppercorns
- 3 teaspoons liquid smoke
- 1/3 cup olive or peanut oil
- 6 chicken breast pieces with ribs
- 1 zipper-style plastic bag, one-gallon sized

#### Step by Step:

- Open one gallon size zipper style plastic bag.
- Add spices: onion, garlic and chili powders, paprika, ground cumin, crushed coriander seed, black pepper (or crushed black peppercorns) and salt; mix together in plastic bag until well combined.
- Add 3 teaspoons liquid smoke to spice mixture and drizzle with olive or peanut oil.
- Knead mixture through plastic until thoroughly mixed, about 2 minutes.
- Remove chicken from refrigerator and rinse under cold water, patting dry with paper towels. If chicken breasts are large, cut in half with chef's knife or butcher knife so that pieces are uniform.
- Place chicken into zipper style plastic bag. Seal zippered bag and thoroughly toss chicken in marinade until it covers all pieces.
- Push air out of the bag and seal, placing into a bowl in the refrigerator (in case bag leaks) and allowing to rest for 15-20 minutes.
  
- Clean rack and turn grill to high, closing cover until grill is hot.
- Prepare clean grill rack by oiling lightly or by removing rack with potholders, moving away from fire and spraying with nonstick spray.
- Remove chicken from bag and place onto grill breast side down, allowing chicken to sear on both sides over high heat, about 4 minutes per side.
- Turn off one burner and transfer seared chicken to this side of grill, cooking over indirect heat and turning often, about 18-20 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 165 F.

Yield: 6 servings.

*Recipe courtesy of "Cooking for Pleasure" by Jeanine Harsen.*



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