

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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To: rickmorin@earthlink.net
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Edition 10.36	Paul Parent Garden Club News	September 9, 2010
	<p style="text-align: center;">Featured Quote:</p> <p>"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders." ~ Henry David Thoreau</p> <div style="text-align: center;"><h2 style="margin: 0;">Espoma Bulb-tone®</h2></div> <p>For all Bulbs - Spring and Fall</p> <p>All Natural Plant Food with Bio-tone® Microbes</p> <p>Available in 4 and 20 lb. Bags; 1 pound equals approx. 3 cupfuls.</p> <p>Bulb-tone is a premium plant food formulated specifically for bulbs and tubers. It contains bone meal and other natural organics to meet the special nutritional needs of these plants. Bulb-tone's all natural formula now contains Bio-tone®, our proprietary blend of beneficial microbes. Bio-tone biologically enhances our natural plant food to ensure superior plant growth. Bulb-tone feeds slowly, safely, and will provide a long lasting food reservoir to ensure superior results.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>Topsfield Fair Cotton Day is October 3! Bring your plants for judging, ribbons and prizes.</p> <p>More information to come next week. For more information on cotton, go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cotton.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>When most of us think of maple trees, we think of big trees, big leaves, lots of shade and a cool place to sit under on a hot day. The one exception is the red-leaf Japanese maple, which stays under 25 feet tall and is grown for its size and foliage.</p> <p>Last year, I had several branches on my white pines break with the weight of the heavy snow, leaving me with a big hole on one side of these trees. These white pines were planted for screening and noise control from the road, but the hole opened up everything.</p> <p>I wanted to fill in the hole and plant something that could give me a bit of color at the same time. I like the Japanese red-leaf maple but, when planted in partial shade, the foliage would lose its red color and change to green. So, I began visiting several nurseries near me, and I found a 'Flamingo' box elder tree--what a find.</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 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>Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Customized Gardening Tour of Ireland</p> <p>Join us for a journey to the beautiful gardens of the Emerald Isle.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"><p>Have a Look Around Our Website:</p></div>

Let me tell you about this tree, because you might like one for your yard too. The 'Flamingo' box elder will grow in a rounded to broad-rounded shape, growing 25 feet tall and 20 feet wide, and will do very well in partial shade. You can prune in the spring to control the size if you wish to keep the tree smaller. If you notice branches growing much faster than others, prune them back a bit to help stimulate internal growth inside the tree to make it fuller growing and create a better shape.

The main reason I selected this tree was the foliage, which is pink, white and medium green in the spring to the fall. The new leaves develop a pink outer edge all around the leaf, about 1/2" wide, quickly followed with white colored foliage and then to a green center of the leaf. There is as much white as green on the leaf and each leaf looks different. The pink edge of the leaf will fade during the heat of summer to white, but the lack of pink on the leaf does not detract from the leaf. When the tree is planted in full sun all day the leaves will have a more colorful pink edge to them than when planted in partial shade like mine is.

The leaf does not look like the traditional maple leaf and is composed of 3 to 5 leaflets that grow 2 to 4 inches long--an oval shape coming to a point on the tip of the leaf. The 3 to 5 leaflets grow on a white stem, 6 to 8 inches long; when fall arrives, the entire stem will fall with the leaflets attached. The foliage gives the plant a feathery appearance and the color combination makes the plant stand out in your yard.

The green background of my pine trees behind it makes the tree even better looking and more striking. The box elder will adapt to wet or dry soil--even when you plant near large white pine trees. It is tough to grow plants near mature white pines because of the size of the root system of the pines.

My box elder has done fine because I dug a big hole 3 feet deep and just as wide. I added a lot of compost and good soil to the hole to help get it off to a good start. I also added Bio-Tone fertilizer with mycorrhizae to help develop roots quickly and Soil Moist to help hold water around the roots. I watered 2 times a week until the fall and now fertilize the tree spring and fall with Dr. Earth tree fertilizer. After the first year most plants should be well established in your garden but plants may need water if the weather gets hot, dry and little rainfall.

Insects and disease problems are minimal, and you can grow the 'Flamingo' box elder where winter temperatures drop down to minus 10 to 20 below. Plant it in a garden bed with 2 to 3 inches of mulch covering the ground. Plant some variegated perennials like hostas around the base of the plant for even more color. This is a real treat for your garden, no flowers but great foliage!



Many years ago, when I attended The Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts, I ran into a wonderful shrub that you should have in your shade garden. The plant is called the Oregon grape holly (Mahonia aquifolium) and yes, it has sharp thorny leaves, but that is only one reason of many that I will never forget the plant.

My plant identification teacher asked us to look over the campus to find a plant we had never seen before and bring back a leaf, flower, or berry so we could discuss the plants. Several of us decided to check out the Dean's house at the top of the hill high above everything on campus, the highest point on campus. The driveway was lined with very mature umbrella pines, very rare to see in New England and very Beautiful. The grounds were beautifully landscaped and very well kept. As I ran thru the umbrella pine branches, I quickly ran into the first of many unknown plants, which I later found to be Oregon grape holly.

Oregon grape holly is one of the more cold-hardy broadleaf evergreens for New England, tolerating temperatures minus 10 to 20 below. The leaf was different from any holly I had ever seen before because each leaf was made up of 5 to 9 leaflets and each leaflet was the size of a normal holly leaf. The leaflets were arranged like a feather, on this stem, with one on the tip of the stem and the others in pairs opposite each other's in rows down the leaf stem. This multi-leaflet leaf grew to 10 to 12 inches long and the individual leaflets were one inch wide and two to three inches long.

The older leaves looked like the American holly--dull green with sharp thorns on the leaf edge. The new growth was bright apple green to bronzy copper and shiny. The plant grew upright, 3 to 4 feet tall, in a compact growing mound but not full and thick like other plants--more open and unruly. During the winter, the leaves had small purple blotches on the dull green leaves.

The plant also made fruit and, to my surprise, the berries were 1/2" long and purple-blue in color. The fruit or berries came in clusters of 25 or more and looked like small grapes with dusty blue powder on them. In the spring, usually March or April, the plant was covered with small spikes of bright yellow flowers 2 to 3 inches tall and fragrant. This is a wonderful plant, with holly foliage, spikes of yellow flowers in the spring and clusters of purple-blue fruit mid-summer through the winter.

Plant in a rich, moist soil that is well-drained and be sure to add compost or animal manure to the soil before planting. Plants do best in a shady garden but will tolerate morning sunshine if they protected from the winter wind and afternoon sun.

Like other hollies, this plant does prefer a soil on the acid side, so keep limestone away from the plants and cover the soil with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch to protect the roots year-round. Fertilize with Holly-Tone or Dr. Earth acid adorning fertilizer in the spring--and water if the summer gets dry, or some of the fruit will fall from the plant.

Plant along a stone wall like at the Dean's house at U Mass, in groups with mountain laurel or rhododendrons, or as a specimen plant for the unique plant that it is. This is a great plant for gardeners who like something different in their gardens.

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Have you ever wondered how some plants get their names? Let me tell you how the obedient plant got its. The flower stem is in the shape of a spike or spire like a snapdragon. The flowers are small, half to one inch, tubular in shape and grow on the four sides of the stem. The flower opens from the bottom of the spike first, and then moves up the spike in a corkscrew shape movement.

The flowers open directly above each other but in four rows up the stem. Each flower is "jointed" and you can move them to the right or left and they will stay in place. Once you move the individual flowers, they will obey you and stay in place--a very unusual trait in a flower. No other flower does this and florists love this flower because of what they can create in an arrangement using it.

Obedient plant is a perennial plant that flowers during late summer to mid-fall--it's in bloom right now. The flowers come in shades of white to pink in color. Each flower spike will bloom 4 to 6 weeks on the plant and last for 2 weeks or more in a flower arrangement. The plants grow 18 to 48 inches tall and spread 2 to 3 feet wide. The stems are square and strong, great as a cut flower.

Obedient plants grow best in full sun to partial shade and will grow in any soil, rich or poor, wet or dry. The better the soil, the taller they will grow and the more flowers the plant will make. Dry garden soil also limits the amount of flowers the plant will make. Fertilize in the spring only, because over-feeding will make flower the stems grow too tall, and they will fall over. Obedient plants will grow from Northern New England to Florida and have no major problems with insects and disease.

Plants are best when planted as seedlings rather than by seed as cultivars do not come true. Plant in the spring or fall, and those are also the best times to divide the clumps in your garden to share with friends and family. Nurseries will have plants available at this time of the year in bloom and they will have plenty of time to get established before winter arrives.

If you have a wet garden soil or a stream running on your property, the obedient plant will do quite well. This is a great plant if you want flowers to grow in a woodland garden, meadow or wild flower garden, or in a mass planting. Obedient plant does well in a perennial boarder, cut flower garden--or plant it on the side of the road as a wildflower where you do not mow the grass, for late summer color.

If you allow the flower stems to dry on the plant, the seed heads will look like a stem of wheat and make a great dry flower for arrangements. Or you can harvest them when the seed pods are still firm and closed, then cut them and hang stems upside down to dry in your garage or tool shed.

On the negative side the plant can and will spread beyond its boundaries if you do not remove new shoots that develop away from the main plant. Obedient plant is in the mint family. If you ever grew mint in your garden, you know what you are up against. On the positive side, hummingbirds, butterflies and beneficial insects love this plant. It is worth a bit of your time to remove suckers each spring to control the spreading of the plant, as the positives outnumber the negatives. Enjoy!



Join Paul Parent for a garden tour of the Emerald Isle!

Tour includes the Cliffs of Moher, Connemara National Park, Brigit's Garden, Muckcross Gardens, Bantry House & Gardens, Kilravok Garden, Garnish Island, Annes Grove Garden, Lakemount Gardens, Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre, Heywood Gardens, Powerscourt Gardens, Dublin Castle, Dillon Gardens and much more.

[Click here for details.](#)



This Week's Question:

Why don't botanists consider a strawberry to be a true berry?

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:

You've seen those fuzzy brown kiwi fruits - and may have even tried one. They are named after an animal - the kiwi. What is a kiwi and where is it from?

Last Week's Prize:

Daniel Zavisza

Last Week's Answer:

The kiwi is a flightless bird native to New Zealand.

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:

Aloha Quick Bread



- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup crushed pineapple

Step by Step:

- In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar.
- Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- Beat in banana, milk, orange peel and extracts.
- In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture just until moistened.
- Fold in the coconut, nuts and pineapple.
- Transfer to a greased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean.
- Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack

Yield: 12 servings



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