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Edition 10.39	Paul Parent Garden Club News	September 30, 2010
 <p style="text-align: center;">Featured Quote: "A flower is an educated weed." ~ Luther Burbank</p> <div style="text-align: center;"><p style="text-align: center;">Wet & Forget</p><p style="text-align: center;">□</p><p>For over 30 years, people all over the world with some of the biggest cleaning jobs (and the smallest) have been using Wet & Forget. It has been used on big jobs like the building exteriors at Sea World in Florida and small ones like restoring a historic bungalow.</p><p>Wet & Forget removes moss, mold, mildew and algae stains gently over time from roofs, concrete, brick, siding, tennis courts, awnings, boat sails and wood decks without scrubbing or pressure washing. For your toughest outdoor cleaning jobs, apply some Wet & Forget...then forget it.</p><p>Wet & Forget is the only product you'll need to solve all your outdoor moss, mold, mildew and algae issues. Not only is it non-caustic and non-acidic, it's also safe for all outdoor surfaces.</p><p>Wet & Forget is easy to use. Simply apply with a garden sprayer, then sit back and let Mother Nature do the rest. Wet & Forget starts to work gently over time. Results can be seen within days for those less contaminated areas and over several months for more distressed areas. Naturally.</p><div style="text-align: center;"></div><p>This week I want you to call your local nursery/garden center and ask them to order for you a fall flowering crocus called Colchicum. Some stores will have them, and you will be in luck because this crocus not only flowers in the fall but it is a "giant" bulb with giant flowers. The bulb will be as large as a tennis ball with a point on top.</p><p>When I was in college, I asked one of my teachers why we need to know the Latin names of plants. My teacher told me because most plants have different names in different countries and many nicknames, but the Latin name was the same no matter where you lived. Here is the perfect example and you will love this, so use this name on your garden friends. Colchicum's nickname in Europe is "naked-lady," because it makes its foliage in the springtime, so when in bloom no foliage is present around the flowers--hence the nickname.</p><p>This fall-flowering crocus comes up in May with a cluster of leaves that resemble those of a hyacinth plant. The foliage grows six to eight inches tall and two inches wide in a clump eight to ten inches across. The foliage of the plant is deep green and shiny, and it will last for a month or more in the garden before turning yellow to brown and then fall apart. Most of us have forgotten what we planted so we wait for color and nothing forms from the clump but foliage.</p><p>In the fall they flower, beginning to push their way out of the ground two or three at a time. The flowers grow 4 to 6 inches tall and resemble a crocus but much bigger. The flower is goblet-shaped and made up of six flower petals, truly striking to see coming up in your garden with no foliage. As the flowers start to fade, the color changes from lilac-pink or rosy-purple to pale lavender. The flower slowly falls over on the ground and another bloom develops to replace it in the clump. In time, it is possible to have as many as 30 or more flowers on the ground and straight up in the clump--almost like a bouquet resting on the ground of your garden.</p></div>	<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>	

Plant the bulbs in a well-drained soil in a sunny location out of the wind. I like planting them near a large shrub or statuary, so I do not accidentally dig them up or cut into them when planting something else in the area. Dig a large hole, 6 inches deep, and condition the soil with compost or animal manure before planting.

If your soil is sandy, be sure to put in a pinch of Soil Moist water retention granules to help keep the plant well watered. The bulb should have four inches of soil covering it, and the bulb should be watered well after planting. Once the roots form, the flowers will develop in a couple of weeks. I also add a couple inches of bark mulch over the bulb for extra winter protection.

If you like different flowers try this with your Colchicum bulbs this fall: place the bulb point up in a shallow dish like a Jell-O or pudding dish and add one inch of water to the dish. Keep the water in the dish at all times. In just two weeks, the bulb will begin to send a flower out of the top of the bulb and it will bloom in the dish for two to three weeks. When the flowers stop, plant the bulb in the garden and the roots will form in the ground quickly. Next spring foliage will form and next fall the flowers will "magically" come out of the ground.

Fertilize in the spring and again in the fall with Bulb-Tone fertilizer and watch the flower numbers grow. The Colchicum is very hardy bulb and will thrive in the garden from northern New England to Georgia, even where temperatures get down to -40 degrees. If you do not disturb the bulb, it will last for many years and grow larger each year.

This bulb was originally found in Turkey growing on mountainsides so it is very strong and makes a great plant for wildflower gardens, rock gardens, naturalizing or just a unusual flower for your garden that flowers in September and October. By the way, this flower is not actually in the crocus family--it is just called a fall crocus because it looks like one; actually it is closely related to the lily family. This bulb is worth the search to find and you will love it as I do mine. Enjoy!



Gardening Tips for October

It is time to put on your favorite gardening blue jeans, work shirt and head back out to the garden after the long hot summer. Fall gardening is more relaxing than springtime in your garden, because you are not in a rush to get everything done for a deadline. After all, if the work is not all done you can do it in the spring of next year, so let us get going.

Grab your wheelbarrow and fill it with pruners, loppers, a shovel, a rake, a cup of coffee, your portable radio and then you're ready to clean the garden and put it to bed for the season. Fall is the best time to start a compost pile because of all the garden waste you acquired during the growing season. All the fertilizer and animal manure you applied to the garden this year has made wonderful plant material to be composted. Apply to the garden in the spring as rich compost to help those new plants grow better. It is now time for fall garden cleaning and winter preparation.

Start in the perennial garden, cut back most all of your perennial flowers to the ground and rake the garden clean. Cleaning the garden now removes any diseased foliage that will contain spores to cause disease problem again next spring or foliage damaged by insects, as it may also contain insect eggs for next year. This cleaning helps to eliminate potential problems for next year before they get a chance to start. Your garden will be clean so you can get started sooner.

When cleaning, if you come across any weeds that have many seeds on them toss them out with the trash, do not put them in the compost pile. A good example is crabgrass, as each plant can contain up to 500 seeds that most compost piles do not kill and those seeds will germinate in your garden next year in the new compost you made. This sorting of plants will help you weed less next spring and summer.

As soon as the annual flowers die back, remove them also and clean the garden of all plant material. This is a great time to add compost, animal manure, limestone, and garden gypsum. If you live near the seashore, collect fresh seaweed and blend it into the soil to help condition the soil for next year. If you have the time, edge the flowerbed now and it will be one less job to do next spring.

□ Plant some early spring-flowering bulbs when the flowerbeds are cleaned in the fall, as these will help to motivate you to get back in the garden next year when those spring flowers arrive. Always plant flower bulbs in groups, so you can plant your annuals on time in the spring by planting around them. Never plant bulbs in rows or the wind will knock them over like dominoes and it will be difficult to plant around them.

If you have blue hydrangeas or a rose garden in your yard, remove all the faded flowers from the plant to prevent heavy wet snow from collecting on them and breaking branches. Clean around the plant all faded foliage and tie up branches to resemble a "Hershey's Kiss."

When the ground freezes, build a mound 12 inches high and 12 inches wide around the base of the plant with soil or bark mulch, as this will help protect the plant during the winter cold. Pine needles, straw or salt marsh hay can also be used for winter protection of the plant, but you must wait until the ground freezes or mice will build a home in this soft material and eat the bark from the stems of the plant, killing it. If you live north and west of Cape Cod use Wilt -Pruf or Wilt Stop on the branches to prevent winter wind damage. Always remember: "NEVER" prune these plants in the

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fall, only in the spring as the new growth begins.

Label all non-hardy bulbs now, before the frost arrives, with a string tag that will identify them for later. You want plant name, color and height that the plant grew to, so you can store them with identification on them for next year. Always use a permanent marker or pencil but never ink--it will fade. I always store such bulbs as dahlias, begonias, cannas, callas and caladium in banana boxes from the produce department at the local supermarket. Ask them to save them for you, as they are thick and strong.

Store the bulbs in your basement on the floor where they will not freeze--never in an unheated garage or tool shed or they will freeze and die. I always shake a bit of rose and flower garden dust on them to help keep possible insect or disease off them during the winter and cover the boxes with a couple sheets of newspaper, never plastic, to keep moisture in the bulbs. Glads can be stored in a old pair of nylons in the legs and hung from the rafters in the basement; also use garden dust on these to prevent possible insect damage.

You may want to wash birdbaths or fountains and put them away for the winter, as they will fill with water, freeze and break. Clay or ceramic planters should also be cleaned of dead plants at this time and moved inside for winter protection. Soil does not have to be removed from containers as this soil can be used again next spring if conditioned with compost or animal manure.

I always bring in garden statuary, garden signs, and patio decorations to keep them safe from ice and snow. If you are not going to use your sprinkler or garden hose, it is time to drain them of water, coil them up and tie them together so if you want to wash the car during the winter, the hose will not be frozen and filled with ice.

When the vegetable garden is cleaned this fall, it is a great idea to plant winter rye in it. Winter rye will grow until the ground freezes and again during the early spring when the frost comes out of the ground. The roots can grow one mile long on each plant during this time and when the garden is tilled in the spring, these roots become a great source of organic matter. Growing this winter grass is like growing your own peat moss to help condition the soil in your garden. In April, cut the grass down first and then till the grass and roots into the soil. Winter rye seed is available at your local garden center or nursery; five pounds will cover about 200 to 300 square feet of garden.

□ If you are going to decorate your house with pumpkins this fall, be sure to rub a bit of Vicks on them to keep the chipmunks and squirrels from eating them. Indian corn is loved by blue jays and they will clean the colorful kernels of corn of the cob quickly if you do not spray them with shellac or hair spray to help make the kernels stick together.

If you're decorating with bales of hay, be sure not to use it as a mulch on your gardens as hay is native grasses and weeds cut from the farmers field--and those weed seeds will quickly cover your garden. Use old hay to prevent erosion on slopes, or spread it where nothing has ever grown before and watch the weeds fill in those impossible areas. If you are decorating with bittersweet, be sure to toss the decoration in the trash when finished or the seeds will germinate where you dispose of them and become a major weed problem for you. When you decorate with corn stalks, save them and cut them up to use to protect your roses in the shape of a teepee around the plants or chop them smaller and toss them into the compost pile.

Fall is a great gardening season, so take advantage of the cool temperatures and clean your gardens, fertilize the lawn to help make it strong for the arrival of winter, put the patio furniture away and start the snow blower-- you may need it sooner than you think. Be prepared this year.

One last thing...rake a big pile of leaves for the kids to play in just like your dad did for you. This year jump in it with the kids or by yourself, look at the sky and smell the fragrance of fall and your dad will be right there with you in the pile of leaves again. Enjoy!



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

Tour includes the Cliffs of Moher, Connemara National Park, Brigit's Garden, Muckross Gardens, Bantry House & Gardens, Kilravock 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:

The botanical family Solanaceae contains some very toxic plants, including nightshade, datura and mandrake. It also contains the potato, one of the world's most important food plants. Can you name another one (or two) well-known food plants in this family?

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:

Our apologies - last week, we accidentally repeated the previous week's question. Since the answer was also there, we have no winner for last week. Sorry!

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:

Spicy Sweet Potatoes



- 3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive or canola oil
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Step by Step:

- In a large resealable plastic bag, toss sweet potatoes and oil.
- Add remaining ingredients; toss to coat.
- Transfer to a greased 11" x 7" x 2" baking dish.
- Bake, uncovered, at 400 degrees F for 40-45 minutes or until potatoes are tender, stirring every 15 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

Nutritional Analysis: One serving (3/4 cup) equals 149 calories, 4 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 164 mg sodium, 28 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 2 g protein. Diabetic Exchanges: 1-1/2 starch, 1/2 fat.



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