

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.36	Paul Parent Garden Club News	September 8, 2011
	<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>	<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;"><input type="text"/></p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Scotts® Turf Builder® WinterGuard® Fall Lawn Fertilizer</h2> <p>Benefits: Builds stronger, deeper roots for winter. See a thicker, greener lawn next spring. Safe to walk on lawn immediately after application. Safe to use on any grass type.</p> <p>How to Use Apply to a wet or dry lawn on a calm day. No need to water in, however, during dry periods, watering will hasten greening.</p> <p>When to Apply Any time in the fall. Fall is the best time to feed.</p> <p>How often to apply For your best lawn, feed once in early Fall and 6-8 weeks later in late fall.</p> <p>To learn more, visit Scott's.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></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>Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p>Most of us have seen sumac growing wild on the side of the road as a large weed. It's either 'Smooth' sumac or 'Staghorn' sumac, and just another plant that just seems to grow almost anywhere. In the fall of the year the Smooth sumac will definitely catch your eye because of the magnificent fall color of the foliage, bright red and very vibrant. The Stag horn sumac is very similar but shades of gold will blend in with the red foliage and the stems are hairy, not smooth.</p> <p>In 2007 a new hybrid sumac was developed called 'Tiger Eye' that won instant recognition by winning a Gold Medal Plant Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Because sumac is a native plant in the Northeast, it did not get much press here, and most nurseries did not carry the plant. I was in Chicago a month ago and saw this plant in many gardens and all I could say is, "why isn't this plant in New England yet?" It is, but you don't know about it yet, so let me tell you about this exciting plant I found in Chicago.</p> <p>The plant was introduced by Bailey's Nursery, the same nursery that developed the 'Endless Summer' blue hydrangea and many other hydrangea hybrids. Let me tell you about this plant, because the first thing you will notice is that the new foliage is chartreuse green, WOW. As it matures, it will change to bright golden yellow--but that is just the leaflet.</p> <p>The leaf of the sumac is made up of a central stem with 10 to 30 leaflets on this sturdy stem. Each leaflet is 2 to 6 inches long and about one inch wide. The 'Tiger Eye' leaflet is unique because of its exotic looking cut-leaf form with many notches in it, similar to the Japanese maple leaf. Also, each leaf will grow 18 to 24 inches long from a strong upright growing stem. The stem that holds the leaflets is rosy-pink to purple-pink, creating wonderful contrasting colors. The stem that holds the leaflets will grow horizontal but a bit upright and the leaflets gently weep downwards, giving the plant a wonderful Oriental look.</p> <p>These colors stay beautiful on the plant right up until the fall season but when the cold weather</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 style="text-align: center;">[Send >>]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on</p>

arrives the foliage will begin to change to shades of yellow, orange and deep scarlet on every leaflet and leaf stem of the plant. The main stems are strong and covered with a fine fuzzy hair, giving them extra character. The plant does grow upright but the foliage will give the plant a more rounded appearance.

On the top of the plant, a flower cluster will form during the late summer in the shape of a spike that will grow 4 to 8 inches tall and is yellowish-green. In the fall this flower will change to a hairy, dark red fruit cluster that is still spike shaped. This is truly a plant that changes color every season.

'Tiger Eye' sumac will grow 6 feet tall and just as wide with many side branches that will develop on the plant. Unlike the common wild sumac, it is not aggressive and will not become invasive in your garden. The plant will spread with suckering branches that develop from the base of the plant that are easily controlled with pruners. The plant will stay compact without much pruning by you.

The 'Tiger Eye' is a slow-growing plant and should make 12 inches of new growth every year, unlike the 'Smooth' or 'Staghorn' types that can grow 3 to 5 feet every year. The plant is winter hardy to minus 20 degrees, making it a Zone 4 to 5 plant. I would suggest that you do cover the soil with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch or compost to insulate the soil around the plant if your garden is in a windy area or snow cover is limited. Plants do not like stone mulches or gravel. The roots are strong and wide-spreading so it may be difficult to grow flowers under them when they mature in 3 to 5 years.

Always plant 'Tiger Eye' sumac in a garden soil that is well drained, rich, and never has standing water on it during the winter months. The better you condition the soil with compost, animal manure, peat moss and a bit of Soil Moist granules, the better the foliage will color up for you. In dry soil the coloration of the foliage will not be as bright as in a well prepared soil. Sandy soil will require more water if the summer gets hot and dry--and mulches do help, also. If you have to select a plant that will tolerate a dry sunny location in your yard, this is the plant to choose.

A sunny garden is best location for this plant but it will tolerate a bit of late day shade. The plant will also do better out of the wind, because the foliage is so large it could be damaged. Plant the 'Tiger Eye' sumac in the front of a dark background to make the plant stand out even more in your garden. Evergreen plants like hemlock, spruce, and pine will have wonderful foliage contrast to reflect the bright shades of yellow, orange, and red foliage of the sumac during the year.

Fertilize with Plant Tone or Dr. Earth shrub and tree fertilizer with Pro Biotic spring and fall. Lime is not necessary as the plant will do very well in acid soils. This type of sumac is not poisonous to your touch and, believe me, all your neighbors and gardening friends will want to touch this plant. Be sure to plant the 'Tiger Eye' sumac in front of your house for all to see, because it will draw much interest to your yard and garden. People will stop to ask you about this plant if they see it, because it is that unique.

Plant as a focal point plant in your garden, or in groups in front of dark leaf shrubs or trees. It will look great near the house as a foundation plant but not near windows; also near a water feature or fish pond. Place this plant where you will enjoy it when you're out in the garden like your deck, patio or near a swimming pool. You can also plant several of them in a row to create a wonderful privacy hedge. If you allow them to make suckers at the base of the plant, it will thicken the hedge, or you can remove the suckers and train the plant to become a single-stem tree-like plant. You can also plant 'Tiger Eye' sumacs in large containers like whiskey barrels and place them on your driveway or on your deck.

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This past weekend I started to clean up my perennial flower beds and begun to remove the faded foliage and cut back the plants that looked real tired in the garden. Fall cleaning time has now arrived so when you have a few minutes, begin to clean up your gardens too. As I removed the yellow and brown foliage from the faded plants I noticed that one of my favorite early blooming perennials the lungwort was still looking great. Then I remembered that this perennial will stay looking great right up until Thanksgiving and beyond most years.

The lungworts are wonderful perennials and they begin to flower in early April, as one of the earliest flowers to emerge after a long winter. Some years there are more flowers in the garden than foliage on the plant. The flowers come out at the same time as the new growth, but they quickly open on top of the clump of foliage. The foliage is slow to spread out, and as it does begin to expand in the garden new buds continue to develop on the foliage that forms. Lungwort will spread out 18 to 24 inches wide in just a couple years from new potted plants, and then they just sit there--never crowding out other plants in your garden. I have 3 plants in the garden and I have never had to divide them in the past 12 years. The plant usually grow 10 to 15 inches tall, depending on the variety you select.

The flowers of the lungwort are small delicate clusters of bell shaped blooms, about 1 inch long; as they open up, the flower is held horizontally over the plant for all to enjoy. The flower buds are oval in shape and usually purple to blue in color giving the flower extra contrast when they open. The flowers come in shades of lavender, violet-blue, white, red and my favorite pink. I just love the blue flower buds and pink flowers on the plant early in the season. The flowers will last for 3 to 4 weeks when they open but because they open over several weeks the plant is in color from April to June.

There are many varieties of lungwort but I want you to select the varieties that have spotted

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foliage, not the solid green leaf types. The foliage develops as a mound and spreads as the foliage develops on the plant. The foliage is oval almost like an elongated heart with a distinct point on its tip. The foliage is medium to dark green and splashed with irregular shaped spots that are white to silver depending on the variety you select. Some of the newer hybrids have just as much spotting as they do green foliage on the plant.

Large leaves are produced at the base of the plant, 2 to 3 inches long and 1 to 1/2 inches wide. Smaller leaves that are half the size will form on the stems that hold the flower up on top of the plant. Because the plant flowers so quickly in the spring, much of the foliage is still not fully developed when it's in bloom. Most of the foliage does not reach its full size until the flowers have faded and the air temperatures warm up in late May. Once they are formed they become very strong and will tolerate the cold weather in the fall, lasting well into November most years.

Plant lungwort in partial to full shade but they will tolerate full sun in a cold climate like northern New England. The better you prepare the soil before planting, the better the plant will grow as this plant does respond to rich humus type soil. If your soil is average, be sure to mix in extra animal manure, compost, or peat moss before planting. If your soil is on the sandy side, add some Soil Moist granules, because this plant does much better if the soil stays evenly moist. If the summer gets hot and dry, water the garden and you will enjoy the foliage well into winter. If the garden dries out in the heat, the foliage will get spotty looking and fade early in the garden as it goes dormant for the year.

If your gardens get hot during the summer months, a thin layer of compost or bark mulch an inch or two deep will help keep the plants active and the foliage looking great during the heat. This is a great plant because it can be planted in the spring or fall season with great results. As long as you can, keep the soil moist until the plant is established--and fall plantings should be mulched to give the plant extra time to root in properly.

There are few problems with this plant but if your flower bed has a built-in sprinkler system that waters it regularly you will have problems with powdery mildew on the foliage. During a normal summer I may water the plant 2 or 3 times all summer long, so it is really trouble free and very low maintenance; just avoid frequent water on the foliage. In the spring, when it starts to leaf out, and I see flowers developing on the plant, I fertilize the plant with a slow-,release organic fertilizer like Flower-Tone or Dr. Earth flower food with Pro Biotic.

Also avoid heavy clay like soil where standing water may develop especially during the winter months, as ice buildup will kill the roots. A well-drained soil is best; if you live near a wooded area, just plant them under the trees and once they are established forget them. Lungwort makes a wonderful ground cover in a shady area, great for mass planting between and around hosta plants or in a woodland garden with native wild flowers. Use the plant in the front of your perennial garden, in a rock garden or under tall evergreens like rhododendrons or azaleas.

Lungwort will flower about the same time as bleeding hearts, lily of the valley, primrose, and many of your spring flowering bulbs like crocus, early tulips and hyacinths. I planted lungwort under some tall pines with Japanese painted ferns and blue forget-me-nots for great foliage contrast, and the pink and blue flowers bring that garden to life in the early spring.

Many nurseries and garden centers will have perennials on sale this month, so take advantage of the sale and try this plant and more while the price is right. After all, "Fall Is for Planting," the ground is warm and they will quickly get established before winter arrives. OOH, I said a bad word for us gardeners--"WINTER"--I'm sorry. So enjoy the fall and get back into the garden after this long hot summer and plant some flowers for next year's garden.

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Sweetfern is a native plant that grows from Nova Scotia to North Carolina, in the worst possible soil you can imagine. If you have a soil that is sandy, gravelly--even a soil with no fertility to it--this is your plant. If you cannot water the plants once they are established, if your soil is really acidic or you need a plant to grow on the side of the road and hold back a hillside--this is your plant. If the location is in full sun or even partial shade, if you have a cottage on a pond, a lake or near the ocean and nothing will grow because of the wind--this is your plant. It's the only woody shrub with this unique fern-like foliage that grows wild in openings around evergreen trees and forest areas with little to no top soil. It is also salt tolerant to road salt during the winter months.

Now, the first thing you need to know about this plant is that it is not actually a fern, but a small shrub. It will grow 2 to 3 feet high and spread 4 to 6 feet wide, and if it likes where it is growing, it will spread nonstop well over 8 feet in diameter. The root system of this plant has the ability to produce rhizomes that will actually spread indefinitely from the main plant. These suckers not only start new plants but are responsible for holding back the soil on steep inclines, preventing serious erosion problems where even most common weeds will not grow. It also will produce small seeds that explode from the pods in the late summer on the plant and start new plants in the spring when rainfall is more plentiful.

Sweetfern is a deciduous shrub with many stiff upright growing branches. The new growth will range from pale green to yellowish green in color; as the growth matures, it will turn to reddish brown. These stems will have small spots on them and, with age, become a bit hairy. In the fall of the year these stems will turn reddish purple to a copper color and have a bit of sheen on them. As the plant spreads across the soil it will have a very flat and even look to it. It does grow in a mound but always has a flat and even looking appearance to it. Even in the spring after a winter with a lot of snow on the plants, it does rebound and grow upright again.



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The leaves are fern-like looking and grow 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 inches long and less than an inch wide. The leaf is a bit hairy, coarse, and thick, unlike most fern plants. The plant will grow very thick and full, often completely covering the ground with its foliage. The leaf is simple looking and alternates up the stem from the ground to the tip of the branches. When young they have sheen to them and are deep green in color but the best part is that they are fragrant when new and right up to the time they fall from the plant in the fall season. Just brush by the plant and smell the wonderful potpourri fragrance it produces, or, better still, crush a few leaves with your hands, then smell them--just magnificent.

In early May, it will make a flower that is not showy and often not seen on the plant. The seeds come from a seed pod that resembles a burr-like pod on the plant. In the late summer, the pods will dry up and the seeds will be thrown free to start new plants. The plant will make 4 seeds per pod or fruit.

The plant is very strong and seldom has problems with insects and disease. If the summer is very dry and hot, you will notice a bit of reddish spotting on the foliage but the plant will still look good. This is a perfect plant for recreational areas like cottages or camps where you want to spend time relaxing, not maintaining plants around your home.

What makes this plant so special in the wild is its ability to make its own nitrogen fertilizer. This plant can take the nitrogen gas from the air and use it to grow. The sweetfern plant can do this because of its ability to partner with a fungus in the soil that will make nodules on the roots of the plant. The plant will use the nitrogen and the fungus will benefit from the nutrients and water collected by the plant's roots. Because of this unique ability, the plant is able to grow in a dry infertile soil where almost any other plant dies.

The plant does not transplant very well, especially when it is covered with foliage in the spring to fall of the year. So mark small plants now with a brightly colored ribbon and dig them with a large root ball in the early spring, before the foliage develops. Make a nice hole and fill with soil that has been conditioned with compost, animal manure or good top soil when planting. I also recommend that you use Soil Moist Granules to help keep the newly transplanted seedling moist until it can get established. Water weekly until the foliage is fully developed on the plant and occasionally during the first summer. No fertilizer is needed, as it makes its own when it needs it.

When you plant sweetfern in these pockets of soil, space the plants 3 to 4 feet apart or closer if you want the plants to cover of the area faster. If you want the plants to thrive, use 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch, pine needles, wood chips or even spoiled hay or straw from your garden to encourage fast root development. This mulch will also help hold the soil in place for the first couple of years while the roots are getting established.

Plants can be purchased from your local nursery or from an organization that deals with soil erosion, soil conservation, or native plant specialty growers. Most nurseries do not stock this plant but they can get plants for you. Plants can be found growing where wild blueberries grow, on the edges of a wooded area, where trees have been harvested for lumber, and even on the sand dunes of Cape Cod. The more acid the soil is, the more you will find these plants growing in those areas. One last idea to look for the plants is where poison ivy is growing, as they love the same type of growing conditions.

Sweetfern stems are often used to make the very popular twig wreaths available at most garden centers. Smell the twigs, as they are also fragrant and will stay fragrant for several months inside your home. This is a wonderful plant for difficult growing areas--enjoy.

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Tour includes the Wisley Gardens, the Chelsea Flower Show, Tower of London, Roman Baths & Pump Room, Riverford Organic Farm, Garden House, Rosemoor Gardens, Lost Garden of Heligan, Village of Megavissey, Stonehenge, the Wilton House Garden Centre and more.

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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:

Which animal is responsible for the most human deaths around the world?

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This Week's Prize:

Stink Bug Trap by Bonide Lawn and Garden

Protects homes and gardens from the "population explosion" of stink bugs around the country. Their dual action pheromone lure in its controlled release dispenser lasts 4 weeks and attracts/traps both Brown Marmorated and Green Stink Bugs up to 50 feet away. All natural, non-toxic, odorless. May be used indoors!

Last Week's Question

The plant with the common name of "frangipani" is a tropical plant with lovely fragrant flowers, well-known in Hawaii. It is more commonly known by its botanical name in the mainland of the USA. What is that name?

Last Week's Winner:

Kristi Klein

Last Week's Answer:

Plumeria

Last Week's Prize:

Garden Journal

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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