

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.42	Paul Parent Garden Club News	October 20, 2011
	<p style="text-align: center;">Featured Quote:</p> <p>"Despite the gardener's best intentions, Nature will improvise." ~Michael P. Garafalo</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Shake-Away®</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">Stop deer, rabbits, cats and other animals from destroying your plants, shrubs, and garden.</p> <p>Shake-Away® 100% organic animal repellent products safely and effectively repel animals like deer, rabbits, cats and more from damaging your plants, shrubs, and garden. Shake-Away®'s patented formula uses predator scent, in the form of non-toxic urine granules, to create the illusion that predator animals are present. When an animal detects the scent of its predator, its natural survival instinct compels it to leave and avoid that area.</p> <p>For more information, see the Shake-Away® website.</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>Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p>
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<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>The weather is changing fast now and it's time to move your gardening skills indoors for the next few months. Whether you're new to gardening indoors or an experienced gardener, let's talk a bit about an easy-to-grow foliage plant that will grow just about anywhere in your home. Are you looking for a plant that will tolerate occasional neglect, no direct sunlight, low humidity in the air due to your heating system, and will grow well, even in the corner of the room? If you are, then I want you to consider the Split-leaf Philodendron, because this was the plant that started the idea of keeping plants indoors year-round.</p> <p>The Latin name of this plant is <i>Monstera deliciosa</i> and it means a strong, large-growing plant that is pleasing to look at. In the wild, it will produce clusters of white berries with tropical fruit flavor. In Mexico, where it is native, it is referred to as the Mexican bread fruit or fruit salad plant--I bet you did not know that about this plant as it seldom makes fruit in our homes.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Where can I find Paul on</p>

If you have this plant in your home now, look at it closely and you will notice something unusual about it. All the leaves are in the shape of a heart but no two leaves look the same! Some of the leaves are solid, some have oval elongated holes in them, and some even have splits on one or both sides of the leaf. The slits that give the plant much of its character occur when there is the most amount of humidity in the air of your home. So foliage that forms during the summer months when the windows are open and the humidity level is high will have more slits and oval holes in them. When the heat is on in your home during the winter months, the air is dry and the foliage that forms will have little splitting to them, unless you mist the plant frequently, so expect normal foliage during the winter months.

The split-leaf philodendron is really a vine that will climb 50 feet or more in a warm climate outside but in your home it will grow 1 to 2 feet a year while attached to a piece of bark or sturdy stake. When you purchase a plant be sure that there are several plants in the container to help give the plant some body and help it to look full and thick.

Split-leaf philodendron will grow best in a rich soil that has 50% compost and is well drained. Plants should be repotted every other year in a container that is 2 inches larger and has room to hold a sturdy wood stake to support the plant as it grows larger. Many garden centers sell a wood slab that has bark on the front of it, to make it more decorative looking in your home. If your philodendron plant is happy growing in your home, aerial roots will form on the plant, as thick as a pencil and these roots will give your plant additional character.

If some of these aerial roots reach the container, push them into the soil and they will help move moisture and food to the upper part of the plant faster. Aerial roots that develop high on the plant can be removed or tied to the stake that holds the plant up in the container. In nature these aerial roots would attach themselves to the tree they are climbing on for support.

Your plants will grow best in a room with moderate to bright light, but no direct sun on the plant. It will also do well but not thrive in a low light room as long as the walls of the room are painted a light color and reflect the light well. You can put the plant outside for the summer months to help create more splitting on the foliage as long as it is in a shady location. Put outside in May when the threat of frost is over and bring back indoors in mid to late September.

Plants will do best in a room with temperatures 65 degrees or warmer. They will tolerate temperatures as low as in the 50's but will not tolerate a drafty area with doors that open and close often during the winter months, chilling the plant. Water moderately during the growing season but allow the plant to dry on the surface 3 inches before watering again. Water less often during the winter months and always poke your finger into the soil 2 to 3 knuckles deep and feel the soil for moisture before watering again.

Yellowing of the lower foliage is a sign of overwatering. Keep the soil moist but never let the plant sit in a saucer of water; drainage is very important. Mist the plant when possible to help increase the humidity around the plant and increase the splits on the new foliage.

Fertilize the plant every other week during the spring to fall season to encourage new growth and once a month from the October to May. Use a fertilizer like Miracle-Gro or Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer or--if you forget to feed your house plants, as many of us do--use Osmocote time release pellet fertilizer spring and fall, and every time you water the plant it will get fed.

The foliage is beautiful, deep green in color and glossy. Use a damp cloth and wash the leaves several times a year to keep them shiny, especially if you have forced hot air heat. The dust in your home will make the foliage lose its shine just like your coffee table does. Once cleaned, you can also spray the leaves with a leaf shine for additional gloss and make them stand out even more. Clean leaves help all house plants grow better, especially during the winter months when available light is less, due to the weather and shorter days.

If your plant becomes too tall, cut the stem just below a leaf that has an aerial root and pot up the cutting in a container of fresh soil. Make sure the aerial root is in the soil; if several of these roots can reach the soil, push them in also for faster development. Keep moist and in the shade until the plant becomes established.

The split-leaf philodendron will make a wonderful floor plant for any room in your home without much care or effort from you. Insect and disease problems are few with this plant but--like most plants--it is possible, so when you water or fertilize the plant look it over and check the plant for possible problems.

If you're looking for a good gift plant for a new home owner or first time gardener, this is the one plant to consider. This plant is in the same family as the heart-leaf philodendron used in small containers, dish gardens or hanging baskets for your home except that it grows much larger. As the name states: *Monstera deliciosa*. Enjoy.

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I am sure when you read the title of this story you said to yourself, "Paul, flowering onions, are you kidding me?" No, I'm not kidding you, because when you read this I am hoping that you will plant some of the many varieties available at your local garden centers and bulb catalogs on the Internet. There are over 700 varieties available for you to choose from, but most retailers will carry only a handful, because gardeners are just getting to know about this wonderful family of spring and summer flowering bulbs. I will tell you that once you see them in flower in the garden you will be hooked.

I'm sure that many of you have seen and even planted the most popular flowering onion in the

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garden world and never knew it was a flowering onion. The one I am referring to is called *Allium giganteum*. Now think about the flower that will grow on a thick stem about the diameter of your index finger. The stem will grow 3 to 5 feet tall and will hold a round dense ball-shaped cluster flower that will open up to 8 inches in diameter. The flower cluster is made up of countless small purple star-shaped flowers. If you ever saw a chives flower, yes the herb that you cook with, it looks just like it--but much, much bigger. By the way, chives are in the Onion family, just in case you did not know.

A few of the flowering onions, like garlic, chives, leeks, and shallots, are used in your kitchen but today I want you to know about the ornamental types. Let start with where would you plant these flowering onions. Some varieties will look great when planted in groups in-between shrubs, under flowering trees like dogwoods and flowering cherries to help naturalize these planting areas. Others will look great in perennial gardens, some of the smaller growing varieties will give your rock gardens unique texture and dimension.

Some will look wonderful when planted in ground cover beds, such as English ivy, pachysandra, and even ground cover junipers to help give these garden s color, flowers, and a little height that is unexpected from these common ground covers. Now the main reason I like to plant in-between other plants is because most of the flowering onions have terrible foliage and most of the foliage dies before the flowers come into bloom--but some have great foliage also.

Not all the flowers are shaped round, some are disk-shaped, rounded umbel, oval or spherical flower clusters at the top of the stem. The tall-growing varieties make wonderful cut flowers and they will last for two weeks or more in your favorite vase. If you can change the water in the vase every few days the flower will last longer and you will not have an onion smell from the flowers.

Plant allium bulbs in the fall, at the same time as you would plant tulips and daffodils. The allium family loves a well-drained soil and it will do better if the soil is not too rich, so no need to add soil conditioners like compost or animal manure to the soil before planting unless the soil is of poor quality. The onion family does not like fresh animal manure AT ALL. Use Seaweed Kelp Meal as a fertilizer to encourage good root development and not attract rodents to your planting bed. Plant your bulbs at a depth that is equal to the height of the bulb, so a 2-inch bulb will need 2 inches of soil on top of it and a 4-inch bulb will need 4 inches of soil on top of it. Water bulbs weekly until Thanksgiving to encourage a good root system and then all you have to do is wait for spring to arrive for the wonderful flowers to emerge from the garden.

Here are some great varieties to look for this fall at your local Garden Center:

Allium atropurpureum

1.5 to 2.5 feet tall, dark, wine-red star shaped flowers that start as a tight round flower and as it ages the individual flowers grow on long stem making the flower resemble a big spider with long legs.

Allium christophii

I think it is the most exquisite ornamental onion for the garden. The flowers are large spherical clusters up to 8 inches in diameter and some of the flower cluster can have up to 100 star shaped violet flowers with a metallic sheen. It looks like fireworks and grows 2 feet tall, great cut flower or let it dry in the garden and use in a dried flower arrangement.

Allium fistulosum

Looks like a coarse chive plant but it blooms with flowers that are yellow-white. It will grow 2 to 2.5 feet tall blooms during May- June and the flowers and foliage are edible. This variety has great foliage also.

Allium 'Globemaster'

A new Hybrid with flower clusters up to 10 inches in diameter. The stalks will grow up to 3 feet tall and has violet flowers. The foliage is beautiful, and has large shiny deep green leaves like straps or your belt that holds your pants up. The bulb is bit pricey but worth the money for this bulb

Allium 'Molly'

Just beautiful small flowers those are yellow and easy to grow. The flower stems will grows 10 inch tall with 2-inch flowers and the foliage that is gray- green in color. Great bulb to naturalize in a sunny or light shade area, rock gardens and under small flowering trees.

Allium 'Mairei'

reat grass-like foliage with 8-inch tall flowers. Blooming in the late summer, the flowers are loose and wide open. The flowers are pink and look more like small bells. Great for naturalizing in rock gardens and can be used as wild flowers.

Allium meapolitanum

A wonderful bulb for planting as wild flowers and grows 8 to 16 inches tall. The flower cluster is made up to 30 or more star-shaped white flowers. It is offer used in Bridal bequest and it flowers in May- June.

Allium sphaerocephalon

Often called the "drumstick" allium; the flower bud is very dense and thick. The flower stalks will grow 2 feet tall; they are great for cutting during June –July. Red to purple flowers form a green bud and you will often see the red develop on top of the flower bud and work its way down the green sides of the flower, very unusual to have bi-colored flowers on a plant.

Allium tuberosum

Flower stems grow to 2 feet tall and develop at the end of the summer. The flowers and the buds are edible, scented and white in color. These bulbs will thrive in a rich, damp soil in a sunny spot.

Try some of these bulbs this fall and you will be in for a real treat next spring or summer. Nice plants if you are looking for unusual flowers for your garden. Enjoy!!!



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The ancient Greeks and early Europeans call the early pumpkin "pepon," which means large melon. They were not like the rounded orange pumpkin of today but more crooked-neck, odd shaped or more like winter squash in shape and not bright orange but a mixture of different colors. Today's pumpkin originated in America; it was hybridized by our farmers to what we have today as an orange, round-shaped vegetable.

The name pumpkin came from America. Christopher Columbus brought seeds from this funny looking vegetable that the Native Americans gave him back to Europe, where it was used to feed animals during the winter months but never eaten by people. Little did they know how nutritious this amazing vegetable would be in their diet when food got scarce. Pumpkins are not used as decoration in Europe like here in America; they are grown as a food crop for animals.

Many years ago while I was working at a nursery, a tour bus pulled into where I worked and tourists from Holland poured out of the bus with cameras to take pictures of the display we had made. They could not believe how many pumpkins we had and what people did with them. They thought pumpkins were for animals and loved the idea of using them for decoration around the house during the fall.

The first Native Americans used pumpkins as a food source and cooked them in numerous ways from roasted, baked, boiled, and even dried for flour. They ate the seeds and used the flowers in soups and stews but the real benefit of the pumpkin was its ability to be dry and stored for late use when food became scarce during the winter months. Some pumpkins shells could be dried and used as bowls or storage containers to hold grain, beans and seeds.

The Native American Indian introduced the pumpkin to the Pilgrims; it is documented that it was served at the second Thanksgiving Celebration. The pumpkins were an important food source because they stored well, which meant a nutritional food source during the winter months for them. It is also documented that without the pumpkin many of the Pilgrims would have died from starvation.

As time progressed and food became more plentiful, the Pilgrims also used the pumpkin to make pumpkin BEER by fermenting a combination of persimmons, hops, maple sugar and pumpkins to make the early colonial beer. Man does not only live on pumpkin pie, he needs something to help wash it down with while watching "Pilgrim Football."

Now let me tell you about the Jack-o'-lantern and Halloween. The early Jack-o'-lanterns were carved from large potatoes in Ireland and large turnips in Scotland for their Celtic celebrations. The British used large beets, and to illuminate them used a lump of coal lit on fire and placed inside the hollowed vegetable. When European settlers arrived in America, they found that the pumpkin was easier to carve and much better suited to being a Jack-o'-lantern. The Halloween celebration in America with Jack-o'-lanterns was first celebrated in the late 1800's as a means to celebrate the fall harvest, with community and neighborhood parties.

Now let me tell you how to grow the "great American pumpkin" in your garden. Begin with a garden located in FULL sun all day long. Pumpkins are tender plants and will not tolerate a frost, so plant them when the season is ready and frost-free. The seeds will germinate better in warm soil, so don't rush to plant the seed until the ground has warmed up with the help of the spring sun. You can start seedlings indoors in pots 2 weeks earlier than outside to get a jump on the season. Just watch the weather when planting your seedlings grown indoors and moving them to the garden--and always be ready to cover them if frost is predicted. Don't rush the planting season, as Halloween is a long way off.

Your soil should be well drained and fertile with lots of organic matter like animal manure, compost or peat moss. The Pilgrims used seaweed and herring to help condition their soil before planting. If the soil is sandy, add Soil Moist Granules to help hold moisture in the soil. The best soil should have a pH of 6.0 to 7.0 and lime will be needed in most areas in the Northeast, but test your soil before planting. Try to stay away from areas where vine crops like cucumbers, melons and squash grew during the past 2 years.

Water is also very important when growing pumpkins. Your plants will require 2 to 4 inches of water per week, depending on your soil type. Soil Moist Granules are very helpful to help hold moisture in sandy soils along with a lot of organic matter. Always water in the morning and NEVER at night or your wet leaves will trap fungus spores, and diseases like powdery mildew will hurt your leaves, limiting the production of pumpkins.

How much space will you need to grow pumpkins in your garden? The average vine can grow 30 to 40 feet long, so if space is limited, plant seedlings or seeds on the side of the garden and let the vine run on your lawn. Spacing required is 50 to 100 sq. ft. per hill, so plant 5 seeds per hill of soil and thin to the 2 to 3 best when the plants begin to develop and become well established. Space hills 5 to 6 feet apart and 10 to 15 feet between rows of hills.

Weeding is a big factor when growing pumpkins and the garden should be weed-free at all times. When weeding, keep your garden weeder shallow in the soil as the roots of pumpkins stay close to the surface and deep weeding will hurt the roots. Landscape fabrics, plastic mulches or weed-free straw will save you a lot of time and help the roots develop without interference. Pumpkins love loose soil, so try to keep off the areas where they are growing to prevent soil compaction.

Insect problems can develop on the plant but they can be easily controlled with recommended insecticides when applied late in the day or early evening while the flowers are closed and the

bees are not present in the garden. Check with your local Garden Center for recommended product depending on your specific problem. Bees are very important for pumpkins, so be careful when applying insecticide to the garden. Stay away from SEVIN insecticide; it is the WORST product and very deadly to all types of bees.

Harvesting pumpkins is simple--when the pumpkin is hard and deep solid orange in color it's ready to pick! The vines are usually dying at this time but if the pumpkin has not changed color and the vine begins to die, pick them from the garden green and place them in a warm dry sheltered area until they color up. Always cut the pumpkins from the vine with pruners or a sharp knife. Pulling the stem from the vine will result in a broken stem, and pumpkins without stems do not keep well and will rot quickly. Always handle large pumpkins from underneath, never from the stem, to prevent breakage.

When you select a pumpkin always choose one without spots on it, soft areas, or cuts in the skin. The harder the skin the longer it will keep for you--and it must have a stem attached firmly to the top of the pumpkin. Thick walls keep better than thin lightweight pumpkins.

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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.

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- 6 three year journal pages
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- 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 part of the cinnamon plant is the spice made from?

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This Week's Prize:

Bug Beater® Stink Bug Trap by Bonide Lawn and Garden

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Last Week's Question

In the USA, it is estimated that this decorative plant covers a total of over 31 million acres--an area the size of New England. What do you think it is?

Last Week's Winner:

Patricia Mederios

Last Week's Answer:

Peas.

Last Week's Prize:

Bug Beater® Stink Bug Trap

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!

So, after you've carved your pumpkins and made your pumpkin dishes...what do you do with all the seeds? Here's the answer: they make a great snack!

What you need:

- 3 cups fresh pumpkin seeds
- 4 cups water
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika

Step by Step:

- Heat oven to 350 degrees F.
- Place pumpkin seeds, water, and 2 teaspoons of salt in a large saucepan and bring to a boil for 15 minutes.
- Drain seeds, blot dry and toss with olive oil, paprika and remaining teaspoon of salt.
- Spread the seeds in a single layer on a nonstick baking pan; roast until lightly golden and crisp -- about 30 minutes.

Yield: Approximately 3 cups



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