

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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Edition 11.43	Paul Parent Garden Club News	October 27, 2011
	<p><b>Featured Quote:</b></p> <p>"Bittersweet October. The mellow, messy, leaf-kicking, perfect pause between the opposing miseries of summer and winter." ~ <b>Carol Bishop Hipps</b></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <h2>All Seasons Horticultural Spray Oil</h2> <p>All Seasons Horticultural Spray Oil is a superior type paraffinic oil that may be used as a growing season spray, dormant spray (no leaves) or delayed dormant (green tip) spray to control overwintering eggs of red spiders, scale insects, aphids, bud moths, leaf roller, red bug, codling moth, blister mites, galls, whitefly, mealy bugs and other insects.</p> <p>Highly recommended for use on fruit trees, shade trees, shrubs, ornamentals, roses and vegetables. Safe and pleasant to use.</p> <p>For more information see the <a href="#">Bonide website</a>.</p> <p>We had an error on last week's spotlight link - sorry! Here's the correct link to the <a href="#">Shake-Away@ website</a>.</p>	<p><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><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>Regular Phone Hours:</b> Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p><b>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</b></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>[Send &gt;&gt;]</p>
	<h2>Special Offer for Paul Parent Newsletter Readers:</h2> <p>Get up to \$5.00 back when you purchase Wet &amp; Forget.</p> <p>Just print out the <a href="#">PDF (click here)</a>, fill it out and mail it in!</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>In the past, I have told you about the Giant Fritillaria called the 'Crown Imperials,' and they are wonderful and magnificent to look at--but today let talk about the miniatures because they are perfect for naturalizing. These spring flowering bulbs grow naturally all over Europe as a wildflower. They begin to flower when the guinea hens return to wet pastures and open fields, to start the mating process and lay their eggs in the springtime. The closed flower buds are the size</p>	<p><b>Where can I find Paul on</b></p>

and shape of the guinea hen's eggs, hence the name "guinea hen's flowers."

The guinea hen's flowers are the most popular and most well-known spring flowering bulb all over Europe. In America, their popularity is growing quickly and once gardeners see them in a friend's garden they must have them in their garden too. If you can find the right spot in your garden and the plant is happy it will quickly and easily naturalize itself, spreading beautiful flowers all over your garden for many years to come.

They love a shady spot in the garden, and a moist soil that is rich in organic matter and well-drained. When you plant Fritillaria in your garden, be sure to add a bit of compost, peat moss, or animal manure to condition the soil properly--do it right, and it will pay off in the long run. If your soil is sandy, conditioning the soil is a must. If your soil has clay in it, and stays wet during the winter and early spring, plant something else because the bulbs will rot in the wet soils.

When the flowers open they resemble small lanterns or inverted cups. In parts of Europe they are also called frog-cups or Lazarus bells, but to make it easy, call them Fritillaria hybrids. The foliage looks a bit like the foliage of tulips but smaller in size and a nice deep green color. Depending on the variety you select these hybrids will grow from 8 to 18 inches tall and the flowers will stay in bloom for many weeks, March to May.

I also want to tell you that the variety name (meleagris) means "a spotted coat of feathers " like that of the guinea hen. Many of the flowers have very unusual markings that resemble a checker board--no other flower family looks like this. The flower colors range from white, through purple, green, red, yellow, violet, mahogany, and many bi-colors.

Plant the bulbs as soon as you receive them, as they will dry out if kept in storage for a long time. Always dig your hole three times as deep as the bulb is tall, so the bulb has twice as much soil on top of it to grow in. Example: if your bulb is 2 inches tall, dig your hole 6 inches deep so twice as much soil covers the bulb. I suggest that you use Seaweed Kelp Meal as a fertilizer when planting to help the roots develop more quickly. When the flowers fade in late May, feed them again with Seaweed Kelp Meal to help the bulbs divide underground and make more flowers for you next year.

Stay away from bone meal as it will encourage rodents to dig them up. They will not eat the bulb but they will dig them up because of the smell of the bone meal. Plant your guinea hen flower bulbs in groups of 5 or more per hole, spacing them 3 to 4 inches apart between bulbs for the best show of color when spring arrives.

The Fritillarias will make noticeable seed pods, green and filled with seed. Do not cut the seed pods from the plant; allow them to ripen, and once the pods turn brown, they will crack open and drop the seed around the existing plant. In 2 to 3 years these seeds will have grown into bulbs and your clump will become larger, producing more flowers for you. These wonderful bulbs will do very well in perennial gardens, rock gardens, in shrub beds in-between shrubs and also under small trees like dogwoods and flowering crabs. If you have a garden on a sloping hillside, plant them near the top and watch them spread down the hill in the years to come.

Here are some great varieties to look for at your local garden center or on the internet.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Checkerboard': with wonderful soft purple and white squares on the flowers. They grow 8 to 10 inches tall with flowers 1 to 2 inches tall and wide. This is the number one seller.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Alba': a wonderful white version on the checkerboard also growing 8 inches tall. The flowers have no markings and they look wonderful planted in a clump of just white or mixed with the checkerboard variety for great color contrast.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Artemis': Purple and green markings on the flower make it look almost grayish, and it almost glows. Taller growing 12 to 18 inches flower stems.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Aphrodite': This bulb will make larger white flowers that will grow 8 to 16 inches tall. Look for the unusual green markings inside and outside on the flower.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Jupiter': This bulb has the largest flowers. The checkerboard markings are deep red and white and the plants grow 8 to 1'0 inches tall, Very eye-catching.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Mars': wonderful large dark purple flowers that are solid with no markings and grow 8 to 14 inches tall.

Fritillaria Meleagris 'Pink Eveline': A new hybrid with light pink flowers that will change color to white and grayish pink. They have wonderful checkerboard markings on the outside of the flower and grow 18 to 24 inches tall.

Fritillaria michailovskyi: A newly discovered variety found in Turkey in 1983. It will grow 8 inches tall with flowers that are very attractive and unique. The flowers are solid red-purple with a yellow lower edge and a yellow inside as well. The flower looks like a lily-of-the-valley bloom.

Fritillaria persica: a large flower variety from Turkey that can grow up to 5 feet tall! The flower is spike-like in appearance, almost resembling a Delphinium with bell-like flowers that are dark purple, almost black, hanging bells. This flowering bulb is very different looking from the other varieties of Fritillaria and it makes a great cut flower also.

Try this family of bulbs this fall for unique flowers next spring. Tulips and daffodils are nice but *your* garden will be the one your gardening friends will be talking about. Enjoy!

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It's that time of the year again...when we must encourage our holiday plant to begin making flower buds and flowers. If you have a Christmas cactus or poinsettia that you kept over from last year and want it to bloom for you again this year, now is the time to help motivate it to flower. It's easy and you can do it if you follow these steps to the letter. Begin by saying to yourself, "I can do this, it's not that hard!"

Let's start with the Christmas cactus, because you will need to provide this plant with several things to make it flower. I have found that this plant will flower easier if you keep it outside during the summer months, if possible. It should stay outside until the temperatures begin to dip down to around 40-50 degrees at night. When you bring the cactus plant inside in the fall, place it in a room that will stay as cool as possible--below 65 degrees.

I like a window that gets plenty of light but does not get mid-day sun, because that will warm up the plant well above 65 degrees. Use your east, west or--better still--your north facing windows that receive no direct sunlight but good light all day and the room will stay cooler. Temperature is one of the determining factors that will encourage flower bud production. If you have a room that is not used often, turn off the heat (if possible) to keep the room at 50 to 65 degrees. At this temperature range, the plant will make MORE flower buds. Keep the plant in that room until the flower buds begin to show color and then you can move it to the room where you will enjoy it.

Now just as important, if not more, is controlling the length of the day light. Christmas cactus is called a "Short Day Plant" in the greenhouse trade, because it will need to have short days of daylight to make the flower buds on the plant. When the sun goes down your plant cannot have any additional light of any type--even the lights in your home--or it will not flower well or at all. So the perfect place to keep this plant is in that unused room in your home where you do not turn on the light when it gets dark out.

When you combine short days and cool temperatures your Christmas cactus plant will have hormone changes and the plant will stop growing foliage and switch to flower bud production. If you keep the Christmas cactus plant in your living room and you watch the television set until the 11:00 PM news is over, you have created an artificial environment. The lights that are on in the room have increased the length of the day and your plant will not flower. That is why your plant needs to be in a room with no light after sunset each day--but once the flower buds have formed on the plant, light is no longer a factor, just cool temperature.

If you can keep the plant cool, it will also bloom longer for you. Keep it near a window and the cold that comes through the window will help cool down the plant better than if it were on a table in the middle of the room. During the winter months water the plant sparingly; the soil should be lightly moist at all times. Fertilize monthly with Miracle Gro or Blooming and Rooting fertilizer.

Christmas cactuses will drop their flower buds if they are exposed to stresses like hot rooms, overwatering, moving the plant around the house several times during the flowering cycle and not being fertilized. Also--when the plant finishes flowering, feed it, and move it back into the cooler room with short days and it will flower again for you in about 6 to 8 weeks--a real bonus for you. Just repeat what you did during November for a second set of flower buds to form on the plant. Again I want you to say "I can do this, it's not that hard." Enjoy!

Now, here is how to make your poinsettia bloom that you kept alive since last Christmas. Like the Christmas cactus, I like to keep it outside during the summer and bring it indoors when the temperatures drop to 40 to 50 degrees at night around late September to early October. Hopefully you repotted the plant into a large pot during the summer to help the plant grow better and increase the size of the plant. If you did not re-pot the plant than you can do it next year, no problem, but do **not** do it now!

Another thing I like to do during June is to cut the plant back by 1/3 to control the height of the plant and stimulate the plant to make new branches to become bushier. This pruning will also help create a stronger crotch where it branches out, preventing breakage of branches later. Again, if you did not prune the plant back, do it next year.

The Poinsettia is also a "short day plant" that will not flower when the days are long. If you want to help make this plant flower for Christmas, start right now by giving the plant short days. As with the Christmas cactus, use the spare unoccupied room but this time keep it warm like the rest of the house. Temperatures of 60 to 70 are best when the plant is preparing to "flower."

The poinsettia loves sunlight, so a south window exposure will be better for the plant. If there is a street light in front of your house, or the room is where you leave the porch light on at night for guests that may come, be sure to close the shades at supper time to block out the light--yes, this little bit of light will prevent flowering.

To make flowers on your plant, you must have 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness. If you walk into the room and turn on the overhead lights you just spoiled all your work and it will not flower. This is what I do to make my poinsettia flower and I don't have to worry about lights in the room. Take an index card or piece of paper and write on it "poinsettia." Now tape it on your refrigerator door near the handle.

At supper time, when you open the refrigerator door to make supper, it will remind you to give the plant darkness. Place the plant in a closet or just cover the plant with a BLACK trash bag or large box to block out the light. When you get the cream out for your coffee in the morning, the note will remind you to take the plant out of darkness and place it near a window for the rest of the day. The plant needs sunlight to grow and it must be near a bright window from breakfast to supper. The better the sunlight during the day the more color the plant will have later!

Now keep the soil moist--but not wet--at all times, or the plant will lose its lower leaves. Always use warm water when you water the plant, never cold. The plant should NEVER sit in a saucer of water or the roots will rot and the plant will die. Fertilize your poinsettia monthly all year for the best foliage color and larger flowers. Use Miracle- Gro or Blooming and Rooting fertilizer. Keep plants away from drafty windows and doors, especially doors that open and close often.

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The flowers on the poinsettia are small button-like growths on the tip of the branches that will eventually turn yellow around Christmas. What we all enjoy about the plant is called a flower "BRACT," which is a leaf that is able to turn color. This will take about 4 weeks of the short day process before your plant begins to show color on the "leaf stems" near the top of the plant. This is a sign that your work is paying off; when you begin to see a bit of color on the leaves near the top, you can stop the short day process. Now keep the plant in a south facing window all day and as warm as possible 65 to 75 degrees to speed up the coloration of the plant.

As with the Christmas Cactus, say to yourself, "I can do this", it will be fun, it will be a challenge." And just think about the "bragging rights" you will have to tell all your gardening friends and family! Enjoy.

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If you are looking for the easiest hanging plant to place near or in front of your window at your home or even at the office, look no further than the Swedish ivy. This hanging plant is the most popular of all the hanging indoor foliage plants sold today, and it's the easiest to grow, no matter where you live or what your experience level is with growing plants. The plant is perfect for the beginner, for your first apartment, for the dorm room in college or even for a teacher in a cool classroom--if neglect is likely, this is your plant. Think "foolproof" and it will grow better with little attention; even thrive in your window if you leave it alone except for a bit of fertilizer now and then and water when it needs it.

I have no idea how this plant got its name, since it is not in the Ivy family and is unable to climb an upright vertical surface as all ivies do--and it's not even from Sweden, it's a native plant to Australia and the Pacific Islands. It is a member of the Mint family but the Swedish ivy is able to cascade as much as 3 feet over the side of a hanging basket, and if it likes where it is growing, it will reward you with flowers in the late spring that will last to mid-summer.

Let me tell you about this plant. It will start as a bushy growing plant, upright at first, and as the strong thick stems begin to grow longer, they will fall over the sides of the pot. The plant does grow best in a hanging basket so you can better see the wonderful foliage from all sides. The foliage is rounded, the edges are scalloped and the edges have indentations on them. The foliage is also glossy, medium to deep green in color and has 1 to 2 inch long stems holding the leaf from the stem. You will also enjoy the deep veins running through the leaf giving it additional character.

In the spring, flowers will develop all over the plant at the base of the leaf and quickly poke their way thru the foliage often covering the plant. These flowers develop in the shape of a spike opening from the bottom of the spike first and slowly moving to the tip of the spike. These flowers will range from white to pale lavender and are often spotted with lavender dots. The flower spikes are short--2 to 4 inches tall--and attractive but not as showy as the foliage.

When the flowers fade, remove them, then cut back the plant to encourage new branches to develop on the plant. The pieces you remove from the plant can easily be rooted in a glass of water, or dip them in rooting powder and place several 3 to 4 inch long cuttings into a container filled with fresh potting soil. Roots will develop in just a couple of weeks in soil and a bit longer in water. When the roots grow to 3 inches long in water, pot them up in fresh potting soil and place 3 to 4 rooted cuttings in a 4 to 6 inch container. You can cut back the plant at any time of the year to control the size of the plant.

Keep the soil moist, but never wet, or the roots will rot in the wet soil. Water sparingly during the winter months. The plant can stay indoors all year long but it will do quite well outside from May to October if kept in a shady location or in morning sun only. You can also repot the plant at any time of the year; just use a potting soil that is rich in peat moss or compost. When you repot the Swedish ivy, cut the plant back by 1/3 to make the transplanting easier, especially if the branches are long. This will help encourage new growth from the base of the plant and help thicken plants that have all their growth over the edge of the container.

The Swedish ivy will grow best in moderate light all year long but tolerate direct sun during the winter months. Indoors, keep plants at a temperature from 60 to 75 degrees and avoid drafty areas where doors open and close often. Fertilize every 2 weeks from spring to fall and monthly during the winter months with Miracle-Gro or Blooming and Rooting fertilizer. If your foliage is pale green and has darker green veins that may even turn purple, it's a sign that the plant needs to be fed more often. If you usually forget to feed your houseplants, go to your local garden center, purchase Osmocote fertilizer pellets and feed the plants with them. These fertilizer pellets will slowly fertilize your houseplants for 90 days or longer with just one application and help keep the foliage nice and dark green.

If your plants begin to get dull looking, bleached out in color, and droopy, they may be getting too much sunlight. Move to a different window and fertilize them to help bring back the foliage color and help make the plant strong growing again. If your plant has never flowered or makes only a few blooms, change your fertilizer to one with less nitrogen in it. A fertilizer with more phosphorous in it has a higher middle number on the package--like Blooming and Rooting plant food does.

Swedish ivy has two insects that can bother it--but not very often. The first is mealy bug; this insect pest will make it look like the plant has small pieces of cotton at the base of the leaf or under the leaf. The second is red spider mite; this insect will produce a spider web-like material on the foliage and between the stems of the plant. If you see this, move the plant away from other plants and quarantine it at the first sign of a problem.

Spray the plant top to bottom and under all the leaves with a product called All Season Oil. This is a wonderful non-chemical product that will smother the adults and the eggs at the same time--killing them both. Repeat with a second application in 7 to 10 days. During the winter months, these insects are more of a problem. The oil spray is not toxic to you when you breathe it or even touch the plant.

If you like unusual foliage colors, this family of plants has many new hybrids. Look for the green leaf type that has a lovely bright white edge along the margin of the leaf - called "Variegata."

Also available are varieties with as much white as green on the leaf and other variegations. There is a wonderful green and pale yellow variegated leaf type and both of these varieties will occasionally have new leaves on the plant that develop with all white or all yellow.

Your local garden center may also grow the green leaf type with purple veins on them and some also have a purple underside and so are the stems called "Purple Majesty." I also love the new silver-gray leaf variety that seems to be covered with fine hair like African violets have.

Also, if you're looking for something different for your outside planters, use Swedish ivy in them instead of vinca vines next year. That will look wonderful, especially when you use the variegated varieties in them.

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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
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- 6 three year journal pages
- Insect & diseases page - 3 project pages
- 3 annual checklist pages
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- 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:**

The dahlia is popular worldwide for late summer and autumn color. Where is the dahlia from?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

#### **This Week's Prize:**

### Bug Beater® Stink Bug Trap by Bonide Lawn and Garden

Protects homes and gardens from the "population explosion" of stink bugs around the country.

- Use indoors or out
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#### Last Week's Question

Which part of the cinnamon plant is the spice made from?

#### Last Week's Winner:

Steve Folding

**Correction: Week before last, the winner was actually Pat Lavallee - sorry, we accidentally put the previous winner (Patricia Mederios) in. Sorry, Patricia!**

#### Last Week's Answer:

The bark.

#### 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!



## Featured Recipe: Pumpkin Muffins

#### What you need:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1-1/4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 cup fat-free buttermilk
- 1/2 cup egg substitute
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup applesauce
- Cooking spray

#### Step by Step:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Combine flours, granulated sugar, brown sugar, pumpkin-pie spice, baking soda, baking powder and salt in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk.

Combine pumpkin, buttermilk, egg substitute, canola oil and applesauce in a medium bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add pumpkin mixture to flour mixture, stirring just until moist. Spoon batter into 16 muffin cups coated with cooking spray.

Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes or until muffins spring back when touched in center.

Cool muffins for 5 minutes on a wire rack; remove muffins and cool completely on a wire rack.

Yield: 16 muffins



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