

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 10.47	Paul Parent Garden Club News	November 24, 2010
 <p data-bbox="587 495 847 521">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p data-bbox="368 533 906 580">"Gardening is a way of showing that you believe in tomorrow." ~ Old saying</p> <div data-bbox="533 685 756 719" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 140px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="213 763 1050 860">Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever. All wreaths are made in Maine to your order, to insure freshness. Wreaths are double-faced with fresh picked balsam fir, and are not machine-made.</p> <p data-bbox="488 880 802 907" style="text-align: center;">Click here to order online.</p> <div data-bbox="555 1003 735 1037" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 113px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="563 1072 722 1111" style="text-align: center;">Vacation</p> <p data-bbox="204 1151 882 1182">Plants Survive For Two Weeks With No Watering!</p> <p data-bbox="204 1216 647 1243">Keep Plants Happy When You Are Away.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1270 1062 1440">Going on vacation? Give your plants a Vacation too! Vacation is a new all-natural, anti-drought plant treatment perfectly suited to take care of your plants while you are away. Simply mix a small amount of Vacation with water and pour onto your plants. Your plants will remain in a state of hibernation for up to two weeks or until normal watering cycles continue. Vacation is an effective tool to protect against drought and plant transplant shock. Safe and non-toxic for people and pets.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1464 699 1491">How do I apply Vacation to Christmas Trees?</p> <p data-bbox="204 1496 858 1552">Vacation will eliminate the need for watering fresh-cut Christmas trees for the brief holiday season or up to three weeks.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1576 879 1688">Add the entire bottle of Vacation to one-gallon of water. Mix thoroughly. Pour entire solution into the reservoir inside the Christmas tree stand. The tree will suck in the solution through the fresh-cut base.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1713 871 1825">The tree should keep its needles and green color for up to three weeks. Tree must be fresh cut or have its end sawed off before putting it in the stand. It is assumed that the tree will be discarded after holiday use.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1850 608 1877">How do I apply Vacation to Poinsettias?</p> <p data-bbox="204 1881 874 1937">Mix two capfuls of Vacation to a cup of water (3-oz per gallon). Apply the solution as a watering to entire pot until soil is saturated.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1962 707 1989">Is the Vacation plant treatment solution safe?</p> <p data-bbox="204 1993 1078 2074">Yes. Vacation is safe, biodegradable and contains no polymers or other toxic chemicals. Vacation is classified as GRAS (Generally Regarded As Safe) and is safe for pets, children and you. Always read instructions carefully before applying Vacation.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1129 495 1345 521">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1090 544 1374 622">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1134 730 1342 757">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1090 779 1270 835">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1090 857 1369 958">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1090 981 1230 1037">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1090 1059 1321 1160">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1090 1182 1382 1261">Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1114 1361 1361 1417">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p data-bbox="1090 1440 1366 1496">Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p data-bbox="1114 1597 1361 1653">A Customized Gardening Tour of Ireland</p> <p data-bbox="1090 1675 1342 1753">Join us for a journey to the beautiful gardens of the Emerald Isle.</p> <p data-bbox="1090 1776 1382 1803">Click here for more information.</p> <p data-bbox="1134 1906 1342 1962">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <div data-bbox="1129 1966 1345 2101" style="text-align: center;"><p>Home</p><p>About Paul</p><p>Paul's Recipes</p><p>Newsletter Archives</p></div>	

The Living Gift of Poinsettias



Poinsettias are a wonderful worldwide holiday tradition. In fact, next to a Christmas tree, nothing else says Christmas quite like poinsettias. Displayed alone or in groups, they can add a festive splash of color to every décor. From a centerpiece on a holiday table to a miniature plant decorating the corner of an office desk, to a colorful hanging basket that can brighten any room, the poinsettia is the perfect holiday gift.

So how did poinsettias become so popular at Christmas--and where do they come from? According to Mexican legend, a poor Mexican girl named Pepita who could not afford a gift to offer to Christ on Christmas Eve picked some weeds from the side of a road. The child was told that even a humble gift, if given in love, would be acceptable in God's eyes. When she brought the weeds into the church and laid them at the feet of the Christ child, they bloomed into red flowers with beautiful leaves, and the congregation felt they had witnessed a Christmas miracle.

Poinsettias are native to the tropical forest at moderate elevations along the Pacific coast of Mexico and some parts of Guatemala. They are named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States Ambassador to Mexico, who introduced the plant in the U.S. In 1825. The poinsettia was a gift to President John Quincy Adams for the White House from the Mexican government.

Poinsettias have come a long way from their humble beginnings. For years only variations of red flowers were propagated and grown. But now there are hundreds of color varieties available ranging from traditional shades of red, pink and white to burgundy, peach, striped, flecked and hand-dyed varieties.

Poinsettias are easy-going, and with proper care can last long past the holiday season. Just remember this plant is tropical and does not like the cold. Make sure it is wrapped when you leave the garden center. This will prevent chilling of the foliage. If it is cold, preheat the car before placing the plant in it. Do not stop on the way home to run additional errands and leave in the car unheated, or in a day or two most of the leaves will drop from the plant because they were chilled. If the plant pot is covered in foil, make sure it does not fill with water or the roots will rot--be careful. It's a wonderful plant for the holidays and makes a great Christmas present.



Cyclamen

Nothing is more beautiful in the garden than a large display of cyclamen. They are among the best fall-blooming plants. You can use them in pots on tables, by the front door, or planted in a nice shady spot outdoors before the frost arrives. They are great for atriums.

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The flowers resemble a butterfly fluttering above the plant. The foliage is in the shape of a heart and they grow in a mound over the pot. There are miniatures varieties for small spots and the common larger plants for the table or garden. The foliage color can be green to silver and every combination in-between. The flower color ranges from white to pink, red, lavender and some multi-colored. Some varieties can also have frilly flowers or smooth edges. Hint: a great gift plant for someone with a cool home during the winter.

A few notes on growing cyclamen:

General:

- Try to keep water away from the crown area (they can get crown rot).
- Do not bury them too deep; keep the top of the tuber just slightly above the soil line.
- Keep your plants well fed; feed every couple of weeks while they are in full leaf.
- Pull out the stems that have gone by. Hint! Bend the stem down towards the foliage and quickly pull the stem out. It will snap free from the plant. Never leave old flower stems on the plant as they will rot and kill some of the leaves next to them.
- Pick a few flowers to go into a bud vase. They are lovely and last quite well.
- As the flowers begin to fade, gradually allow the plant to dry out for 2-3 months; do not feed during this time.
- Resume feeding when new growth appears. Repot at this time in a container 2 inches larger.



Outdoors:

- Cyclamen like cool weather (that's why they make great winter-bloomers). That means outdoors in a shady to semi-shady spot. If you have a spot that is full shade in summer and gets more light in cooler weather, that is ideal.
- Make sure they are planted in a well-draining area.
- They like cool weather—but not severe cold. Some are hardier than others are, but all need some protection against cold. These plants are bulb-like and will not survive outdoors during the winter. They must be brought indoors for the winter and they will bloom most of the winter for you. Great in mixed containers for the front step also. Try planting with flowering kale and cabbage.



Indoors:

- Pick a cool spot. Make sure they have good air circulation, but keep out of cold drafts. Also heating vents where hot and dry air can dry plants quickly. Hot forced air will force the plant to send all flower buds into bloom all at once. Cool temperatures spread out the flowering time over many week indoors.
- High humidity, especially during winter, is very important. Try putting the cyclamen on a tray of water with a layer of pebbles to form a shelf for pot to sit on. Don't put the cyclamen itself in the water. You want humidity around the plant, not soggy soil.
- Let the cyclamen have plenty of light in winter; sunburn is rarely a problem. In summer keep it in indirect light.
- Repot when the tuber fills the existing pot; it's best to repot it while it's dormant. Use a pot just a little larger than the old pot.

Indoor Bulb Gardening



Forcing bulbs to bloom inside the house is a wonderful, easy way to get through the cold gray days of winter while adding fragrance and color to your life indoors. If you plan ahead, you can have red tulips for Christmas Day, pink and white hyacinths on Valentine's Day, and the fragrance of springtime in your home all winter long.

The term "forcing" refers to inducing a plant to produce its shoots, leaves or flowers ahead of its natural schedule and out of its natural environment. To force bulbs, you need to mimic and compress the process the plant would undergo outdoors naturally in the garden.

Small-sized bulbs, such as snowdrops, scilla, muscari, chionodoxa, and crocus can be forced just as easily as larger bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, and hyacinth. Early blooming varieties are better suited for forcing than others. It's also important to select varieties that don't grow too tall.

Narcissus (paper whites) hyacinths, amaryllis, and lily of the valley will grow indoors in water. You can use a bulb vase or a shallow dish filled with clean pebbles or marbles to stabilize the roots and to support the bulbs above the water. Just wedge the bulbs among the pebbles, close to each other but not touching, and cover the pebbles with water. Allow air space between the top of the water and the bottom of the bulb to prevent rot.

For other bulbs, half fill a shallow container with . Fill this layer, small end up, with as many bulbs as will fit in your pot without touching each other. Then add more soil between until they are completely covered. With hyacinths, amaryllis, and narcissus, allow the necks to protrude slightly.

After planting, place the pots in a cool, dark place, such as a cool cellar, garage, tool shed, the

bulkhead stairs leading down to the basement, a barn or unheated building or refrigerator to initiate root and shoot growth. If necessary, set boxes, pots or black garbage bags over your potted bulbs to keep them dark during the cooling period. Keep the soil moist through the rooting and cooling period. After five or six weeks, the roots and growth should emerge.

Then move the bulbs to a cool location indoors. The bulbs should be placed in indirect lighting and should not be allowed to dry out. Forcing will take about 12 weeks for the early blooming bulbs (snowdrop, crocus, and daffodil) and about 16 weeks for tulips. The potted bulbs should be placed in indirect light and should not be allowed to dry out.

Feed weekly with a half-strength solution of a good houseplant fertilizer. Turn the pots every couple of days to help the flower stems grow straight and strong. When the foliage and buds are well developed, move the pots to a bright, sunny window in the house. Once the flowers begin to open, take the plants out of direct sunlight to prolong the bloom. Keep potted bulbs as cool as possible and they will last longer. Then sit back and enjoy the early breath of spring indoors!

When flowers fade, cut the blooms only off the plant. Treat the plant as a potted houseplant for 6 weeks so the foliage can rebuild the energy it took the plant to make the flowers originally. Now place the pot of bulbs in the basement and stop watering so it will go dormant. Plant in your garden in the spring as you would new bulbs from the nursery. They will bloom the following spring at their normal flowering time.



CHOOSING AND DISPLAYING A FRESH CUT CHRISTMAS TREE

There is nothing that says Christmas quite like the fragrance of a fresh cut Christmas tree. Somehow, scented candles and air fresheners just do not have the same natural aroma. Selecting and bringing home a fresh cut tree is just a natural part of the holiday tradition. Fun for the whole family.

You can get the most out of your holiday tree by following a few simple guidelines.

When selecting your fresh cut tree, bend a few needles and smell for fragrance. The stronger the smell, the fresher it is. Branches should be flexible, not brittle. Branches should have some "PITCH" on them and it should be sticky. Pick up the tree a few inches and bounce the cut end on the ground. A few needles will fall if the tree is fresh. If many needles fall, choose another tree.

Make sure to get the right size tree so you do not have to do a lot of pruning. Measure the height of your ceilings and the width of the space you plan to display your tree in, before you go to the nursery. Remember that a tree does not need to be perfectly even if displayed in a corner. A good nursery will make a fresh cut on the base of the tree for you so you will not have to when you get home.

Once you bring the tree home, place the tree directly in the tree stand and add water so it can start drinking at once. The fresh cut will help the tree take up water more easily. Display your tree away from heat sources such as heater vents, fireplaces, stereos and television sets, which can promote premature drying. If you are NOT going to set up the tree when you get home, place the tree in a bucket of water to prevent the fresh cut from drying out and the sappy pitch from filling the water tubes in the tree. Your garage is a perfect place to store the tree.

If you think that waiting to select the tree later in the month is better than early in the month, you are wrong. Most Christmas trees are cut at the same time and the sooner you get the tree out of the SUN and WIND the better. Get it home out of the snow and your decorating will be much easier. Use a Christmas tree preservative like **Vacation** to keep the tree as fresh as it was before you brought it into the house

Above all else, make sure you only use Christmas lights with a UL seal of approval. LED lights produce little to no heat and this alone will extend the life of the tree. You will love LED lights, and the cost to use them is **much** cheaper. Inspect your lights each year for excessive wear such as frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking before putting them up. Never use candles near a tree. Remember to turn lights off before going to bed or when unattended.

Finally, make sure to use non-flammable decorations on your tree. Now sit back and enjoy the BIGGEST arrangement in water you will ever have in your house! Enjoy the fragrance.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas!



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.

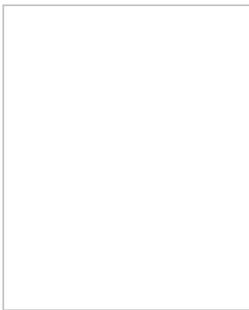
[Click here for details.](#)



This Week's Question:

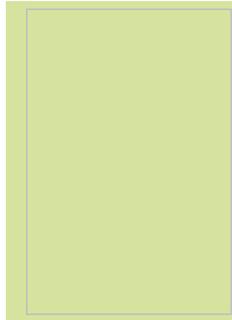
While we are on the subject of phobias--and just for fun--what is meleagrisphobia?

This Week's Prize: *Healthy Garden, Healthy You*, by Milo Shammass



Milo takes us through a storytelling journey of soil health, plant health, animal health and how they directly relate to human health.

BONUS: 100 easy-to-grow plants, their growing instructions, and their direct human health benefits and disease prevention properties.



[Click Here to Answer](#)

Last Week's Question:

Scoleciphobia is a fear of...? (Hint: it's not a good phobia for a gardener to have.)

Last Week's Winner:

Barbara Young

Last Week's Answer:

Scoleciphobia is a fear of worms.

Last Week's Prize:

Healthy Garden, Healthy You, by Milo Shammass

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:

Chocolate-Pumpkin Pie



What You'll Need:

Graham Cracker Crust:

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup butter, melted and cooled
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice (or cinnamon)
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp. sugar

Filling:

- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 15-oz. can pumpkin purée (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/3 tsp. ground cinnamon (or pumpkin pie spice)
- 1/2 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3 Tbsp. espresso powder
- 2/3 cup milk

Ganache:

- 1 pint (2 cups) heavy cream
- 12 ounces quality semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp sugar

Step by Step:

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- Stir all crust ingredients in a 9 or 10 inch pie plate; press wet crumbs uniformly against bottom and sides.
- Bake 12-15 minutes, until golden brown. Set aside.
- Turn up oven to 425°.
- Whisk eggs, pumpkin, brown sugar, cocoa, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, nutmeg and salt until lumps are completely gone.
- In a separate bowl, dissolve espresso powder in vanilla extract and milk. Combine with other wet ingredients, beating until silky smooth.
- Pour mixture into cooled pie crust, baking 15 minutes at 425°. Reduce oven to 350° and bake about 30 minutes more, or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean and the filling jiggles slightly.
- Cool completely on a wire rack.
- In a microwavable 2 qt. bowl heat cream at 50% power until bubbles form at sides.
- Remove and add chocolate all at once. With a *clean whisk*, begin gently stirring in center of bowl. As chocolate melts, continue gently and evenly stirring until all chocolate is incorporated and no lumps remain, 2-4 minutes.
- Fold in sugar; when incorporated, fold in butter until mixture is glossy. Allow ganache to rest loosely covered on counter until slightly thickened.
- Spoon ganache onto cooled, baked pie. Tap pan against counter to remove air bubbles so surface is glossy and smooth.
- Store in refrigerator, allowing to come to room temperature before serving. Refrigerate

leftovers promptly.

Yield: 8-10 servings



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