

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.46	Paul Parent Garden Club News	November 17, 2011
 <p data-bbox="667 499 869 526">Featured Quote:</p> <p data-bbox="488 533 1050 584">"No two gardens are the same. No two days are the same in one garden." Hugh Johnson</p> <p data-bbox="213 797 895 826">Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever.</p> <p data-bbox="213 833 986 927">All wreaths will be 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="213 954 630 978">Click here for more information and pictures!</p> <p data-bbox="539 1131 735 1169">Wilt-Pruf®</p> <p data-bbox="204 1211 1062 1321">Excessive moisture loss in plants causes stress, shock, wilting and plant failure. It strikes when the plant roots are disturbed during transplanting, or during periods of drought. It also occurs in winter when drying winds and frozen ground deprive plants of their natural moisture intake.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1348 1070 1458">Wilt-Pruf® acts as a protective coating, holding in moisture on plant foliage and stems, substantially reducing water loss during periods of plant stress. Wilt-Pruf spray dries to form a clear, colorless, flexible, gloss film without interfering with plant growth or materially affecting respiration, osmosis, or photosynthesis.</p> <ul data-bbox="236 1491 903 1834" style="list-style-type: none">• Protects against cold drying winds of winter and hot drying winds of summer.• Protects plants when roots are frozen in the winter, depriving them of their normal moisture intake, as well as during periods of drought.• Protects tender transplants while their root systems are developing. Tubers and bulbs do better in storage when first sprayed or dipped with Wilt-Pruf.• Protects and extends the life of Christmas trees and wreaths by reducing moisture loss which results in needle drop and browning. <p data-bbox="204 1861 1007 1917">Wilt-Pruf is a natural product derived from the resin of the pine tree. Wilt-Pruf is organic, biodegradable, non-hazardous, and is non-toxic to eyes and skin.</p> <p data-bbox="204 1944 1062 2141">Broadleaf evergreens have a natural ability to survive when normal water intake through the root system is curtailed, such as in the winter when the ground is frozen, or during drought. But if the plants have been recently transplanted, they may not have enough moisture built up in their foliage to survive long periods without absorbing water. Wilt-Pruf gives them added protection to see them through - as well as protecting established plants against long or severe periods of water stress. Unsightly wind barriers may also be eliminated by protecting these plants with Wilt-</p>	<p data-bbox="1123 495 1342 517">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1078 539 1366 618">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1123 725 1337 750">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1078 777 1262 826">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 851 1382 952">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 976 1219 1025">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1050 1310 1151">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1176 1305 1249">Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1357 1374 1435">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1462 1382 1563">(Note: this will not subscribe them to the newsletter, nor retain their email - it will just send them a copy from you.)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1590 1206 1615">Your e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1630 1161 1657">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1668 1206 1693">Your name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1709 1161 1736">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1747 1206 1771">Their e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1787 1161 1814">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1825 1206 1850">Their name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1865 1161 1892">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1177 1917 1286 1944">[Send >>]</p> <p data-bbox="1107 2112 1358 2136">Where can I find Paul on</p>	

Pruf instead.

[Please see the Wilt-Pruf website for more details and instructions for use.](#)



When most of us think of the palm, we think tropical, like the climate in southern Florida. Warm temperatures, high humidity, and hot weather, even jungle-like, but this does not describe the growing conditions of the ponytail palm. The ponytail palm originated in the desert of southern Mexico, not the tropics. It prefers dry air and low humidity--making it the perfect plant for the home that is heated with forced hot air heat, very unusual for a plant, unless you like cactus.

The ponytail palm is truly a unique looking plant, and very eye-catching. The base of the plant does look like the foot of an elephant, a thick woody rough skin-like growth that produces a bottle shaped tall growing stem that is topped with grassy like foliage. In the desert the base of the plant and the stem are filled with water like a reservoir for the plant. The leaves are narrow, growing 1/2 to 1 inch wide and up to 36 inches long. They all grow from the top of the stem in a cluster and resemble a ponytail. The leaves are medium-green and have a nice sheen to them; to me they look a lot like the dracaena spike we all put in our planters for the summer time.

Another unique thing about this plant is that it is in nature a "semi-succulent" type plant because of the large foot and unique stem that holds water like all succulents do. In the wild the plant will flower and produce seeds, but seldom when used as a house plant unless you have a greenhouse to grow it in.

Growing the ponytail palm is very easy. With a little bit of care this plant will last for 25 years or more in your home. The plant does grow slowly; it will take up to 10 years to grow 4 feet tall. You will need to transplant the plant every 2 years into a container--2 inches larger each time. After 10 years the pot will be larger, heavier, and more difficult to move around the house, so find a place to leave it as the plant gets larger or place the pot on a saucer with wheels attached to it.

When you transplant, use a potting soil that is well drained, like a cactus soil mix. What I would do is purchase a good potting soil and mix this soil with 50% sand for the extra drainage; think desert soil, not tropical forest. Plants respond best when transplanted in the early spring to summer, avoid the fall and winter.

Choose a location in your home with a lot of direct sunshine near a window. The plant will tolerate less sunshine during the winter months but likes direct sun the rest of the year. This is a great plant for a bright room that gets real hot all year long; most plants will not tolerate these conditions. This is a wonderful plant to grow if your home is heated with forced hot air heat. It will also grow great in a room with a wood or coal burning stove with no moisture in the air and high heat temperatures. The average temperature should be 65 to 75 degrees but it will tolerate 50 degrees during the winter months.

The plants need to be fertilized from March to September with a good house plant food like Miracle-Gro or Ferti-lome Blooming and Rooting plant food. Fertilize every month except during the fall and winter season, as they go partially dormant then.

Watering is simple for this plant: keep the soil moist from early spring to late fall; never let the pot sit in a tray of water, and if you move the plant outside during the summer time, do not place it in a saucer; you want to be sure rain water can drain easily from the container. During the fall and winter months, water when the soil feels dry 2 inches deep into the pot. usually once a month will be enough.

As the plant matures, it will lose the older leaves, and the remaining leaves will lose their color and turn brown. They will pull off very easily--this is natural. As this is happening, the plant is getting taller and new growth is also developing on the top of the plant to keep the unique "ponytail" look to it.

During the winter, wash the foliage with a damp cloth to remove the dust that will build up on the foliage; this will keep the plant actively growing. When you dust the coffee table wash the plant and check the soil to see if the plant needs to be watered.

If you care for this plant properly, it will reward you with new shoots that will develop at the base of the plant. Each new shoot will begin as a small growth, marble sized, with a bit of foliage; it should be left on the plant until it reaches the size of a golf ball before you transplant it to its own pot--or just leave it there and it will give your plant additional character.

This plant, the ponytail palm, also makes a great plant to grow in a shallow container to create a bonsai-looking plant. You can purchase plants in a 6 inch pot and re-pot them in a shallow bonsai type container. The plant is also available in larger sizes and the plant can be a single plant in the pot or planted as a group to give you even more character.

It's real easy to grow and it will make a wonderful gift plant for the first time or seasoned gardener. Overwatering is the biggest problem with this plant as it has few insect problems. If brown tips develop on the foliage, cut the brown off with sharp scissors and feel the soil; it usually means too much water. My experience is: if you're not sure if it needs water, wait a few extra days and then test the soil again. Think moist, never wet. Think again to yourself: "this is a desert plant, not tropical, even though it is called a palm."

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The weather has been mild for most of us but let's use these remaining nice days to our advantage and close up the garden for the year. The weather has a way of changing without much of a notice so let's get it done and move our gardening skills indoors now.

In the vegetable garden let's pick all the roots crops, such as carrots, beets, turnip, and rutabagas. Remove all the foliage but do not cut into the flesh of the vegetable. I usually cut the foliage to one inch of the top and toss the greens into the composter. Store these vegetable in your garage or cold basement in a box of sandbox sand. All I do is cover the bottom of the box with a thin layer of washed sand and then place the root crop in the box and cover with the rest of the sand. This keeps the air off them so they do not dry up while in storage. Sandbox sand can be purchased in 50 pound bags at your local garden center and it keeps the vegetables much cleaner than using peat moss. When you're done eating the vegetables, use the sand on the snow and ice on your walkways as needed.

If you have not pulled your onions, shallots, sweet potatoes, or regular white potatoes, now is the time to do so. Shake off any soil, wash them with the garden hose, and let them air dry. Remove any dried foliage and place them in your garage or cold basement in open baskets or mesh bags to create good air circulation while in storage. . Check often for possible rotten vegetables and dispose of them as needed. (One rotten potato can and will destroy all your work.) When everything is removed, rake the garden clean of debris and spread limestone over the garden to keep the soil from getting too acid.

All your winter squash can also be kept in the same storage conditions in baskets and dry. Butternut, acorn, buttercup, Hubbard and more will keep well most of the winter. Many places are having specials on winter squash right now so take advantage of the price and stock up while it is available.

Brussels sprouts can stay outdoors in the garden until you are ready to eat them; along with kale. Many years I have picked both of them right up until Christmas; several years I had to dig them out of the snow and they tasted real good.

Let's not wait any longer--winterize your roses now. First, if you have potted rose bushes, potted tree roses, or miniature potted roses they must spend the winter in an unheated building like your garage or tool shed, NOT your house or basement. Roses must go dormant for the winter and rest. If you keep them alive they will grow themselves to death. Like you and me, they need downtime and winter is their time to rest. Once all the foliage has come off or turned brown, water the planter well and move it indoors. Do not feed them, do not prune them; just let them rest in the cold building until mid-March. When the weather changes, move the container outside, water well, and wait until April first before pruning the plant and feeding it to begin a new season in your garden.

Roses planted in your garden need extra protection for the long winter if you live in a cold climate like New England. Right now build a mound of soil, compost or bark mulch on top and around your plant 12 to 18 inches tall and just as wide. This will help protect the delicate graft on the plant. I also recommend that you spray the branches or canes of the rose bush with an anti-desiccant like Wilt-Stop or Wilt-Pruf to prevent the winter winds from drying out the delicate canes. Do not prune your rose bushes during the fall ever; wait until April to prune them and at that time start your monthly application of rose fertilizer. If you have climbing roses, make sure to tie them up to the structure they are climbing on so the branches are not damaged with the winter wind and snow. In April, spread the mound of protection material around the plant to help keep the roots cool during the heat of summer.

Hydrangeas should be cleaned of all dead flowers on the plant to prevent heavy snow or ice damage. Those large dried flowers will catch the heavy wet snow or ice and the weight will bend, possibly breaking the branch. Just remove the dead flowers; do not cut back the branches until spring. Your summer flowering blue hydrangeas are the least hardy, and if you live north or west of Boston, in northern New York State or in western Pennsylvania, they should be protected much the same way as the roses are. Follow the same steps with the mound of mulch and a spraying of an anti-desiccant to help protect the delicate flower buds on the plant for next year.

Newly planted trees over 6 feet tall should be staked to the ground to prevent the wind from moving the plant around during the winter months. If the tree moves around during the winter, the root ball in the ground will also move and the small newly developing roots will snap off, preventing the plant from establishing itself. If you have a flowering or fruit tree, it should also be wrapped with tree wrap to prevent the bark from cracking or splitting with the fluctuating temperatures.

If these trees are planted near open fields or near a wooded area, there is the possibility of rodents damaging the plant by eating the bark the first couple of years, until the bark toughens up. Please take the time to build a ring around the trunk of the tree with hardware cloth wire from the ground to the first branch. Make the wire collar so it has a 1 inch space from the trunk of the tree to the wire. If you don't, mice, moles, and rabbits will feed on this tasty bark when the snow gets deep; if they eat the bark off the plant, the tree will die.

If you have new arborvitae, look at them closely and see that they are multi-stem plants; ice and heavy wet snow will split them, breaking them apart. Just take a piece of rope, like clothesline rope, and tie a piece at the base of the plant and wrap the branches together like a cork screw around the plant. Go 3/4 of the way up the plant to prevent damage and leave it on the plant from November to April. This will need to be done for the first 2 to 3 years until the plant has begun to mature and the branches harden.

If you have a new or established birch clump it might be a good idea to tie them together to prevent them from falling over with heavy wet snow. Tie one tree with the rope and wrap the rope around the others--like the arborvitae--in a corkscrew pattern. T,here is strength in numbers, so tie

all the individual trunks together. Birches have weak stems and easily bend under heavy snow never to return to the same position in your yard.

Any newly-planted broadleaf evergreen like azalea, rhododendron, boxwood, holly or mountain laurel should be sprayed with an anti-desiccant like Wilt-Pruf or Wilt-Stop NOW and AGAIN in early February to keep them from drying out in a windy location. To me it's worth spending a dollar per plant to prevent damage on a plant worth \$25.00 or more, now, isn't it?

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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

What flower was used in a nursery rhyme about the Bubonic Plague?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

This Week's Prize:

Wilt-Pruf®...The Safe Way To Reduce Moisture Loss When Plants Are Under Water Stress due to:

- winter kill
- windburn
- drought
- transplant shock



[Click here for more information about Wilt-Pruf.](#)

Last Week's Question

Which of the following fruits comes from a plant that is not actually a tree? Apple, pear, banana, cherry, peach.

Last Week's Winner:

Robert Luckraft

Last Week's Answer:

Banana. (Actually an herb plant, not a tree.)

Last Week's Prize:

Wilt-Pruf®

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:

Autumn Maple Sugar Cookies



- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon maple extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger (optional)

Step by Step:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- In a large bowl, cream sugars and butter together.
- Add egg and vanilla and maple extracts and mix well.
- Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and spices. Gradually add to butter and sugar mixture.
- Drop into small balls onto a nonstick cookie sheet. Decorate with sanding sugar or festive sprinkles.
- Bake for 10-14 minutes.

Yield: 3 dozen cookies



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