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Edition 12.47	Paul Parent Garden Club News	November 21, 2012
 <p style="text-align: center;">FEATURED QUOTE : "Gardening is a way of showing that you believe in tomorrow." ~ Old saying</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p>Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever. 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>Click here to see and order these wreaths.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p>The Dutch Flower Bulb Industry has developed many varieties of bulbs that you can purchase now and force into flower after the holidays. Let me tell you about them and how to care for those bulbs until you're ready to start growing them, as most of them can be stored until the holidays are over. These Dutch bulbs will also make wonderful Christmas presents for your favorite gardener. The most popular of these flowering bulbs is the amaryllis, and it takes no special talent to grow one in your home.</p> <p>Here are a few things you should know about selecting the best bulbs for forcing. The bigger the bulb is, the more flower stems it will make and the more flowers each stem will also produce. The larger the bulb is, the larger the flowers will also be on the plant, and the time they bloom is also increased. Your local garden center will sell these big jumbo bulbs for only a couple dollars more than the fancy pre-boxed bulbs.</p> <p>When you buy the pre-boxed bulbs you are paying for the box, a small pot, a small bag of peat moss, and a small bulb that will normally produce one to two stems with 2 to 3 flowers per stem. The large jumbo bulbs will produce 3 to 4 stems per bulb and each stem can and will produce 4 to 5 flowers per stem. These jumbo bulbs should be planted in an 8-inch pot--and use potting soil, not just peat moss, as a growing medium. You will need the larger size pot to produce a better quality plant. The more soil, the better the plant will grow. Jumbo bulbs have a better chance of re-blooming the following year for you also.</p> <p>If you like the convenience of a prepackaged bulb, do yourself a favor and open up the box and look at the bulb before you purchase it. What you may find is that the bulb inside the box has already started to grow in the box and the flower stem has made a flower inside the box also. This is caused by heat in the store where you purchase them, so open the box, and inspect it first before purchasing it. To prevent the bulbs from sprouting keep them in a cool place like your basement and don't plant them until you're ready to give them away or force them. Air circulation and temperature is the answer to keeping them from sprouting. If you purchase boxed bulbs take them out of the box until you're ready to give them away or plant.</p> <p>The Dutch have also made available a pre-cooled hyacinth bulb that you can grow in soil or in a nice hyacinth vase of water. The hyacinth vase filled with water is a wonderful to watch them grow, as you are able to watch the roots develop below the bulb and the foliage and flowers form on the top of the bulb at the same time. When you buy the hyacinth vase, buy several extra bulbs at the same time and keep them in the vegetable crisper so they will stay dormant and not dry up before you're ready to plant them. Once the bulb has finished flowering toss it on your compost pile as it will not re-flower the following year if planted in the garden, and then place another bulb in the vase for color all winter long. A small version of this vase is also available for forcing crocus bulbs into bloom using the same method.</p> <p>I know that most of you have planted paperwhite or paper-yellow bulbs in soil or stone bowls before--but if you want to have multiple plantings, you must purchase the bulbs now and store them in your vegetable crisper. The flower buds will dry up inside the bulb if not kept cool but</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> <p style="text-align: center;">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</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 Sunday mornings?</p> <p>Click here to find Paul Parent Garden</p>

the foliage will form with no flower buds and you will be very disappointed with the results. Once planted, keep the container of bulbs in a bright window on the east or west side of your house; south-facing windows get too warm and the foliage will grow very tall and fall over. Keep bulbs well watered at all times, and when they finish flowering toss out the bulbs as they will not re-flower.

Also available this year are the new pre-cooled tulip bulbs in a clear container like a round egg container that will hold the bulbs in place. Now you can watch them grow roots and foliage--and in time, the flowers will form on top of the foliage. All you have to do is add water, sit back, and watch the bulbs grow--a perfect gift for housebound gardeners during the winter. Just be sure to keep the bulbs dry and cool until you're ready to start the growing the bulbs. Some of these items are limited so start looking for them now and you will not be disappointed this winter.

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Many years ago, when I attended The Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts, I ran into a wonderful shrub that you should have in your shade garden. The plant is called the Oregon grape holly (Mahonia aquifolium) and yes, it has sharp thorny leaves, but that is only one reason of many that I will never forget the plant.

My plant identification teacher asked us to look over the campus to find a plant we had never seen before and bring back a leaf, flower, or berry, so we could discuss the plants. Several of us decided to check out the Dean's house at the top of the hill high above everything on campus, the highest point on campus. The driveway was lined with very mature umbrella pines, very rare to see in New England and very beautiful. The grounds were beautifully landscaped and very well kept. As I ran through the umbrella pine branches, I quickly ran into the first of many unknown plants, which I later found to be Oregon grape holly.

Oregon grape holly is one of the more cold-hardy broadleaf evergreens for New England, tolerating temperatures of 10 to 20 below. The leaf was different from any holly I had ever seen before, because each leaf was made up of 5 to 9 leaflets and each leaflet was the size of a normal holly leaf. The leaflets were arranged like a feather on the stem, with one on the tip of the stem and the others in pairs opposite each other in rows down the leaf stem. This multi-leaflet leaf grew to 10 to 12 inches long and the individual leaflets were one inch wide and two to three inches long.

The older leaves looked like the American holly--dull green with sharp thorns on the leaf edge. The new growth was bright apple green to bronzy copper and shiny. The plant grew upright, 3 to 4 feet tall, in a compact growing mound but not full and thick like other plants--more open and unruly. During the winter, the leaves had small purple blotches on the dull green leaves.

The plant also made fruit and, to my surprise, the berries were 1/2" long and purple-blue. The fruit or berries came in clusters of 25 or more and looked like small grapes with dusty blue powder on them. In the spring, usually March or April, the plant was covered with small spikes of bright yellow flowers 2 to 3 inches tall and fragrant. This is a wonderful plant, with holly foliage, spikes of yellow flowers in the spring and clusters of purple-blue fruit mid-summer through the winter.

Plant in a rich, moist soil that is well-drained, and be sure to add compost or animal manure to the soil before planting. Plants do best in a shady garden but will tolerate morning sunshine if they protected from the winter wind and afternoon sun.

Like other hollies, this plant does prefer a soil on the acid side, so keep limestone away from the plants and cover the soil with 2 to 3 inches of bark mulch to protect the roots year-round. Fertilize with Holly-Tone or Dr. Earth Acid Lovers Fertilizer in the spring--and water if the summer gets dry, or some of the fruit will fall from the plant.

Plant along a stone wall, as at the Dean's house at the University of Massachusetts, in groups with mountain laurel or rhododendrons, or as a specimen plant for the unique plant that it is. This is a great plant for gardeners who like something different in their gardens.

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I know that at this time of the year you're very busy preparing for the holidays and the last thing you need to do is plant bulbs in pots, BUT.... If you can take one hour of your day, and pot up spring flowering bulbs now, in 8 to 12 weeks (that's the middle of January to the middle of March), you will have pots of flowering spring bulbs on your kitchen table in bloom for pennies on the dollar when you compare the price from the local greenhouse or florist. Because of the season, all bulbs are on sale right now, so purchase bulbs for the garden and for potting and save money!

When you're out shopping look for bulb displays at the garden center and box stores, as they

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are in the Christmas sales season and bulbs are the last thing they want to think about right now. Think SALE! This is what you want to look for: daffodils, tulips that bloom in April (not May-flowering types because they will grow too tall when potted for forcing), hyacinths and all the dwarf or miniature minor bulbs. Look for crocus, grape hyacinths, scilla, chionodoxa, snow drops, snow flakes, leucojum, allium and dwarf daffodils, as these are the easiest to force into bloom for your home when the ground is covered with snow and you're craving flowers for the kitchen table.

Here is what I want you to do--check the bulbs to make sure they are firm; if you gently scratch into the bulb skin covering you will see white flesh, not brown or soft tissue. If the bulbs are dried out, leave them there and look somewhere else for good bulbs for forcing. Here is how many bulbs you will need for potting. For small bulbs, use 4-inch pots and plant 7 to 10 bulbs per pot. For more color use a 6-inch pot and plant 12 to 15 bulbs per pot. Bulbs will vary in size; when you place them in the pot you can determine how many will fit comfortably in the pot without jamming them together bulb to bulb, give them 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch between bulbs when potting.

For larger bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths use 6-inch pots and put 5 to 7 bulbs per pot, for 8-inch pots use 7 to 10 bulbs and if you want lots of color use 10 inch pots and use 10 to 15 bulbs per pot. Again the size of the bulb will vary and bulb count per pot will vary on size of the bulb.

You can use your old pots from plants you purchased for the garden this spring, as long as you wash them before potting them up with the bulbs. Take a bucket, fill it halfway full with warm water and add half a cup of bleach to kill anything growing or living on the pot. All you need is a quick dip in the mixture, wash off any soil attached to the pot and rinse in clean water and you're ready to plant. Shallow pots are best; something in the 6 inch height range--it will take less room where you force them. Shallow pots are also called azalea pots or bulb pots and can also be purchased at your local garden center or feed and grain store if you need pots.

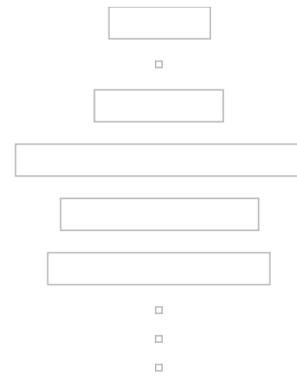
Next, fresh potting soil Like Black Gold, Fafard, or Espoma potting soil is best, NOT topsoil--potting soil! Now add 1 to 2 inches of potting soil to the pot and place the bulbs in the pot in so there is room between them and they are arranged to be evenly spaced. Most of the time the point faces up; if you're not sure, ask the sales person for help. Now cover the bulbs with soil and firm the soil around the bulbs to keep them from moving in the pot. Leave 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch of space in the pot so you can add water--don't fill to the rim of the pot with compacted soil, you need room for watering. Large bulbs like daffodils may stick out of the pot a little bit, so don't worry--they will be OK. Water well and let the excess water drain out the drainage holes and then water again to make sure that all the soil is wet and let drain. Use a plant label or mark on the side of the pot with a magic marker what you planted in the pot--it will come in handy later when you want to bring them inside for forcing. Also write the date you planted them, so you will know the growing time in the container.

Now move the pots to an unheated building like your garage, tool shed, on the stairs leading down to your basement (as long as the bulkhead does not face south), and you can also place them under a porch up against the side of the house. This will keep them cold and out of the winter weather but the pots have to be on the floor where it is cold, not on top of a bench. Next, cover the pots with a couple inches of straw for a bit of insulation and extra protection if the weather gets real cold while in storage. I cover the straw with a strip of burlap on top to hold it in place and keep the area clean. Check the bulbs every couple of weeks for water and keep the soil moist at all times. Roots will become visible in just 2 to 3 weeks growing out of the drainage holes.

Now, small and minor bulbs will be ready to bring inside the house in 6 to 8 weeks and the larger bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths will take 12 weeks to mature. Now you do not have to take them out all at the same time, just take a few pots out at a time so you can enjoy them longer. Move the pots to a nice sunny window to stimulate foliage growth; once you notice flower buds developing, move them to a cool spot in your home and away from hot sunny windows so the flowers will last longer.

When they finish flowering, remove the flowers but allow the foliage to continue growing for a month so the bulbs can rebuild their energy. Now put the pots of foliage in your basement until April and keep them moist. When the weather gets nice, plant them in your garden and next year they will bloom at their regular time. Plant as one unit in the garden and sink the root ball 2 inches deeper into the soil. Fertilize with Bulb Tone or compost and do not cut the foliage until it begins to turn yellow in early May. This is something you can do--and you will thank me later when the color arrives in your home. Give it a try this year and enjoy the winter full of potted bulbs. You can do this--yes you can!!

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Happy Thanksgiving!



Alaska trip

Paul Parent will be hosting a tour that includes:

- Vancouver, BC
- Butchart Gardens--55 acres of floral display!
- Cruising the Inside Passage:
- Ketchikan
- Icy Strait Point
- Juneau
- Skagway
- Hubbard Glacier Cruising
- Seward
- Scenic Drive to Anchorage
- Denali National Park
- Fairbanks City Tour, a tour of the Gold Dredge # 8 and a cruise down the Chena river on the Riverboat Discovery Sternwheeler.

[Click here for more information.](#)



This Week's Question

Which of the following do NOT have any species that pollinate flowers?

- A. Bats

- B. Beetles
- C. Birds
- D. Flies
- E. They all have species that pollinate flowers

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.](#)

[Click Here to Answer](#)

Last Week's Question:

Many of the "annuals" we grow in our gardens are actually perennials (in their native climate). Which of the following truly IS an annual?

- A. Black-eyed Susan
- B. Pansy
- C. Sweet Pea
- D. Transvaal Daisy
- E. Vinca

Last Week's Winner:

Linda Adams

Last Week's Answer:

C. Sweet Pea

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!

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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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

Note: You can also use a regular pie crust.

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
- 2 Tbsp. 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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