

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 10.52	Paul Parent Garden Club News	December 30, 2010
 <p data-bbox="582 495 831 521">Featured Quotation:</p> <p data-bbox="352 533 1038 580">"A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other." ~ Author Unknown</p> <p data-bbox="438 701 847 741">Jiffy Mini Greenhouse</p> <p data-bbox="204 781 820 909">The professional way to start seeds and cuttings. Just add your favorite seeds or cuttings. The clear dome maintains humidity and warmth during the germination period.</p> <p data-bbox="204 938 847 999">You can get several different sizes and types, depending on what you need.</p> <p data-bbox="212 1028 839 1055">Click here for more about about Jiffy seed starting products.</p> <p data-bbox="212 1209 879 1234">Join Paul Parent for a garden tour of the Emerald Isle! Only 8 seats remain!</p> <p data-bbox="212 1249 1054 1346">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.</p> <p data-bbox="212 1361 400 1386">Click here for details.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1487 328 1512">Aloe Vera</p> <p data-bbox="212 1769 1070 1895">Growing up in Maine, I got my inspiration for gardening from my mother, as she took the time to teach me how plants grew, and I spent many hours in the family garden with her and my dad. Houseplants were not very popular back in those days (1950's) but my mother did have two house plants that I can remember: an African violet and a scraggly looking aloe plant that never seemed to get any larger, as it was used so much on cuts and burns on us five kids.</p> <p data-bbox="212 1910 1066 1984">My dad always bought her a new plant for Mother's day to help get us through the sunburn time of the summer. This helped the big mother aloe plant recover from being cut back all winter and spring long. My mother was a nurse and knew the qualities of this plant, especially with five kids.</p> <p data-bbox="212 2000 1066 2148">Let me tell you about this wonderful plant and how to care for it in your home so you too can have something to help your family with cuts and burns. Aloe is a slow-growing plant indoors during the winter, but if you can leave it outside during the summer it will quickly fill your container before fall arrives. The aloe is a succulent plant, a plant that loves the sun. Many people think it is in the cactus family, because it is treated much like you would a cactus. It is tough and will grow almost anywhere as long as it gets half a day of sunlight. Give it sun all day and it will thrive even though</p>		<p data-bbox="1126 495 1347 517">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1086 539 1374 613">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1129 725 1342 750">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1086 779 1270 826">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1086 853 1369 949">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1086 976 1230 1023">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1050 1321 1146">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1173 1385 1247">Phone Hours: Monday-Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1110 1357 1362 1406">Where can I find Paul on Sunday mornings?</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1431 1366 1480">Click here to find Paul Parent Garden Club™ radio stations.</p> <p data-bbox="1106 1592 1362 1639">A Customized Gardening Tour of Ireland</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1666 1342 1740">Join us for a journey to the beautiful gardens of the Emerald Isle.</p> <p data-bbox="1086 1767 1382 1792">Click here for more information.</p> <p data-bbox="1129 1901 1342 1951">Have a Look Around Our Website:</p> <p data-bbox="1129 1966 1342 2092">Home About Paul Paul's Recipes Newsletter Archives</p>

you forget to care for it.

The plant is messy looking to most because it will make many small plants in the pot it is growing in. You will easily notice the original plant in the container and during the summertime, with lots of sunshine and warm weather, it will quickly make many new plants around its main stem. The mother plant can have long dagger-like foliage up to 12 inches long growing on a single stem while the new plants seem to develop in clumps around her with much shorter foliage.

Spring or fall is the best time to divide the plant and put all of those new plants in their own containers. By spring the small plants will have matured--and some may even begin to make new plants around them. When you transplant the new baby plants, use a good quality potting soil like Espoma's new planting soil or MiracleGro planting mix to help the plants get established quickly in the new container. I always add a bit of Osmocote pellet fertilizer after potting so the plant will be fed properly for the next 90 to 120 days.

Give the plant a good watering to help firm the soil around the plant and help establish the new roots quickly. Once this is done all you have to do is water the plant every 2 to 3 weeks. I also fertilize the plant every month with Miracle Gro plant food year round.

There are very few insect or disease problems with this plant as long as you do not keep it wet. If you overwater during the winter the plant will develop black marks on the leaves and the plant will begin to rot, so keep the plant on the dry side during the winter, as it will grow very little due to the short days and weaker sunlight. This plant is very hardy and should last several years in your home.

The plant is easily recognized because it grows in a clump of gray-green dagger-shaped foliage, and you will notice small spots and short white lines all over the stems. The edge of these leaves will have small teeth, often pale pink in color. As the teeth mature they may begin to get a bit sharp but never dangerous. The leaves can grow 1 to 2 feet long when mature and 1 to 3 inches wide at the base of the leaf.

If you take good care of the plant, it will make a flower for you during the spring to summer time. The flower develops on a tall stalk up to 3 feet tall but usually under 18 inches tall. This stalk will contain many tubular flowers about 1 inch long and yellow in color. The tubular flowers will dangle from the main stem and crack open, revealing a white center. With a bit of luck your flowers will make a pod that will be filled with seeds. Allow it to mature and begin to turn brown before harvesting.

Sprinkle the seeds on fresh potting soil and press into the soil with the palm of your hand. The germination of these seeds is quite good if you water regularly to keep the soil moist but never wet. Seeds will take 2 to 3 weeks to germinate. This will work best if you use a small container with a clear plastic top to help hold the moisture and heat around those seeds.

Your local garden center will have mini greenhouse available from Ferry Morse Seeds Co. or Jiffy Mix Co. These Mini Greenhouses are wonderful to start all your seedlings for the spring garden and also to root cuttings of your favorite houseplants. If you want to speed up the process, place this container on a heating pad set at the lowest setting and cover the heating pad with a hand towel to help spread out the heat more evenly and prevent hot spots.

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The Pineapple Plant

You can grow your own pineapple plant with your kids this week while they are on school vacation. All you will need is a 6 inch pot, some good potting soil and a fresh pineapple from the supermarket. With the holidays now, most supermarkets will have fresh pineapples available for you to do this. Try to select a pineapple with the best foliage on the top of the fruit and you're ready to go.

Lay the pineapple on its side on a cutting board. Use a large sharp knife or a knife with a serrated blade to cut into the pineapple. Just below the foliage of the pineapple, measure a good inch into the meat of the pineapple and cut the top of the pineapple.

Now with your hands pull off the meat away from the foliage, leaving you with a spiral whirl of foliage of leaves and the stump where the meat of the pineapple was attached. Slowly pull off some of the lower leaves from the whirl of foliage until you see small buds on the stump at the bottom of the whirl. When you have uncovered 8 to 10 of these bumps, your pineapple top is ready to plant.

These small bumps are dormant roots and when they are in contact with soil they will begin to grow and develop into a new plant. Put the remaining part of the pineapple aside to eat when the top is all planted.

Now fill your pot with potting soil to the top and firm the soil in place. You should have about 1/2 in

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of space between the soil and top of the pot to help hold water later. Push the pineapple top into the soil so all the dormant roots are covered with soil and so the foliage sits right on top of the soil. Now water well until all the soil is moist.

Place the pineapple plant in a warm room with good light in the morning or afternoon as it will not need a sunny window until the roots begin to develop and move into the soil. If you can keep the soil moist and the room warm, the roots should begin to move into the soil in about 2 to 3 weeks. A gentle tug on the plant will let you know if the roots have begun to form.

When the roots develop, move the plant to a sunny window. The more light it has, the faster it will develop. Once the roots form, add a tablespoon of Osmocote fertilizer to the pot to help strengthen the developing plant. I also begin monthly feedings at this time. Then, treat this plant like any other houseplant until spring arrives. When the threat of frost is over, move the plant outside in an area with full sun all day, like your deck or patio.

The foliage will begin to develop and will spread to 18 to 24 inches wide and also grow up to 15 to 18 inches tall. The only thing you will have to do is make sure that you add water in the middle of the whirl of foliage on top of the plant. This whirl of foliage will develop into the shape of a pitcher; keeping water in this pitcher is important as that is where the new pineapple will develop!

In the fall when you get ready to bring the plant back into the house for the winter, the fun will begin. Put the plant in a clear plastic bag, making sure there is plenty of room for the pot and the foliage to grow in. Now take a new apple and bang it on your counter top until the entire apple is bruised and dented--but don't break the skin, if possible. Put the apple in the clear bag with the pineapple plant and seal the top of the bag with a twist-tie.

You're going to leave the apple in the sealed bag for 2 to 3 weeks. As the apple breaks down it will produce ethylene gas that will fertilize the plant and induce fruit development. After you remove the plant from the bag place the plant in a sunny window, keep the pitcher filled with water and resume normal care for the plant.

A small pineapple will form in the pitcher in the next 3 to 4 months and slowly move out to form on a thick stem about 6 to 12 inches above the foliage. The pineapple will grow to 4 inches of meat and another 3 to 4 inches of foliage on top.

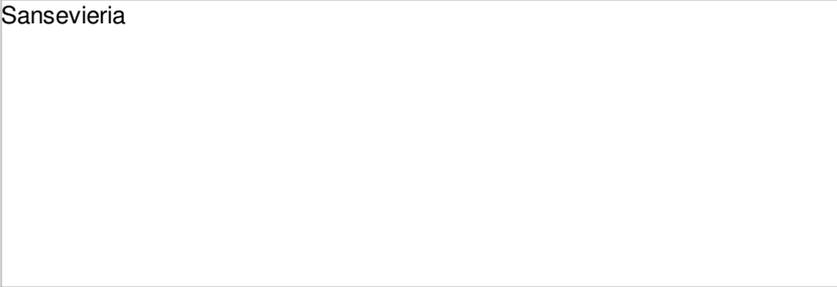
This miniature pineapple should last on the plant for 3 to 6 months and, like all pineapples, will turn yellow when it is ready to harvest. It will also have a nice smell to the fruit, just like the pineapple it originated from. When the pineapple fruit has ripened it will begin to fall over and it now time to discard the plant and start a new one from a fresh pineapple from the supermarket again.

I use a dry cleaning bag to force the pineapple into fruit development and to hold the plant and the gas that the apple will make. Keep the top of the bag always sealed to hold the gas in. Keep the bagged plant in a bright window but no direct sun during that 2 to 3 week period or it will get too hot in the bag.

When the pineapple begins to smell like it is ripe cut it up into pieces for the kids to eat, they will love it and so will you. Try it this winter and your children will have a lot of fun.

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Sansevieria



In 1960, as I walked to school, I saw a house plant in a trashcan on the side of the road. The plant was out of the pot and awaiting its fate with the trash man. I picked it up and put it in my backpack, so that I could repot it when I got home from school and give it another chance.

My mother told me it was a snake plant and said she thought it would survive the ordeal--and it did. There was no soil around the roots, so we took some soil from the garden and found a used pot and repotted the plant. My mother took out her favorite fertilizer, Hytrous, once the most popular fertilizer on the market (but like many good things it now is gone) and fed the plant. We placed it on the window sill in my room, where it grew for many years.

The snake plant is one of the most popular houseplants in America today because of its longevity and tolerance to neglect. The leaves are thick and fleshy, and grow in a rosette form from a thick root system. The leaves are sword-shaped, and sharply pointed; they are very stiff and, depending on the variety you choose, could grow from 6 inches to two feet tall.

The leaves are dark green with wavy gray-green horizontal bands of color throughout the leaves. This unusual pattern on the foliage gives the appearance of a snake skin--hence its name snake plant. Today, there are varieties with yellow leaf margins running up both sides of the leaf. Some will also have those wavy gray-green markings in the yellow margins while other have yellow running throughout the leaf.

In college, during a Foliage Plant Identifications course, I was introduced to a new dwarf variety

called the 'Bird's Nest' Sansevieria. My teacher told us that it was a "sport" that developed from the common green plant and that it naturally grew in the shape of the bird's nest, and only grew 4 to 6 inches tall. We were told that the plant came from South Africa and it could grow anywhere.

If you have been to a bar or dark restaurant lately, this plant was probably there--because it will tolerate low light and neglect. The plant will grow in most soils but if you want it to develop properly and even flower, use a good quality potting soil like the new Espoma Potting Soil or Jolly Gardener Potting Mix.

The flower is a spray of small creamy white flowers on a thick stem that develops from the center of the rosette of foliage. The plant does not flower often, but with good care it will occasionally provide you with a great treat. Fertilize the plant monthly with something like Miracle-Gro or Osmocote pellets twice a year.

The snake plant will grow best in a bright window and will quickly send out new runners through an underground rhizome. When happy, it is not uncommon to see the pot change shape because of the strong root system and all the new plants that will form. I like to use plastic pots because they will tolerate this while clay-type pots will break apart easily. When this begins to happen, divide the plant into clumps or separate the new plants and pot individually. You will need a good sharp knife to cut through the rhizome, or you can use hand pruners.

If you want to start new plants without dividing the main plant, all you have to do is cut one of the taller leaves from the main plant. Lay the leaf on a cutting board and cut it into pieces 3 to 5 inches long, making sure that you place the **bottom** of the cutting into the soil. If you reverse the cutting it will not root. Use a good potting soil that is well drained and a pot with drainage holes in the bottom to root the cuttings.

In just a few weeks new leaves will develop from the base of the cutting. If you are trying to make new plants from the yellow margin variety, you will have to divide the plant, because taking cuttings only makes solid green plants, no matter what type you started with. This is a great plant for both the beginner and the experienced gardener, so buy one today to add to your plant collection.

The week before graduation from college my roommate and I gave our college advisor, Doctor Goddard, a snake plant for his office because every plant he grew died from neglect! We put an 8-inch potted plant on his window sill with a clear half gallon bottle of water and wrote on the bottle, "This is water for your plant, please use it occasionally." We signed our names--Paul and Cal.

Five years later, I went back to The University of Massachusetts to see the campus and former teachers--and to my delight the plant was still ALIVE. Doctor Goddard's teachings are still being used by me today to help you with your houseplants and your garden.

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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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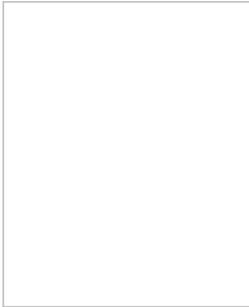


This Week's Question:

>In the traditional New Year's song, Auld Lang Syne, there is the following line: "And pou'd the gowans fine." "Pou'd" means pulled; Burns was talking about pulling flowers. We know gowans by another name--and many of us have picked them--what is that name?

[Click Here to Answer](#)

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.



Last Week's Question:

In the poem *A Visit From St. Nicholas* (more commonly known as "The Night Before Christmas"), the cheeks and nose of St. Nicholas were compared (respectively) to flowers and fruit. Can you name both the flowers and the fruit?

Last Week's Winner:

Donna Wheeler

Last Week's Answer:

"His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!"

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!



FEATURE RECIPE: AFTER CHRISTMAS TURKEY POT PIE

What You'll Need:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 4 cups chicken or turkey stock
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 cups shredded turkey
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1 prepared pie crust
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

Step by Step:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- Melt butter in saucepan and cook chopped onion until tender.
- Stir in celery and carrots and cook for 2 minutes.
- Stir in flour and cook for 2 minutes.
- Add chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Add potatoes and simmer until tender.
- Stir in turkey, parsley and peas.

- Pour mixture into casserole.
- Top with pie crust and brush with egg.
- Bake for 30 minutes until crust is golden.



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