

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 1, 2011 3:20 PM
To: rickmorin@earthlink.net
Subject: Paul Parent Garden Club News - December 1, 2011

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Edition 11.48	Paul Parent Garden Club News	December 1, 2011
 <p data-bbox="571 495 823 521">FEATURED QUOTE:</p> <p data-bbox="347 533 1034 577">"A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself." ~May Sarton</p> <div data-bbox="528 629 751 663" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 140px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="217 707 895 734">Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever.</p> <p data-bbox="217 741 986 835">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="217 864 628 887">Click here for more information and pictures!</p> <div data-bbox="504 972 775 1005" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 170px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="217 1050 1062 1122">It is the time to visit your local nursery to select your fresh-cut Christmas tree. Most of us take the Christmas tree for granted each year, buying it and decorating it without much thought. This year I want you to know the story of the Christmas tree; it will change how you see your tree.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1140 1043 1261">This is a once-upon-a-time story. It starts far away in the mountains of Germany, where the tradition of bringing an evergreen tree into house for Christmas began. The evergreen tree was brought into the house to ensure health and happiness through the season and the spring greening of Mother Earth. As people emigrated to other parts of the world they took the tradition with them and the popularity grew.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1279 1043 1429">In America the tree grew from a table tree to a full-size floor-to-ceiling tree. As its popularity increased each year, problems rose due to unrestricted cutting of the tree in the forested areas. Conservationists warned then-President Theodore Roosevelt that if he did not act fast, the nation's forests would be depleted in just a few years. By 1900, roughly half of our timber had been cut--not, of course, all for Christmas trees. The topsoil was washing away and many birds were approaching extinction.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1447 1062 1644">Fearing that our great forests would be destroyed, the President banned the Christmas tree from his home and urged everyone to do the same. Unfortunately for the President, his two children did not listen to their father and smuggled a tree into the closet of their room. As punishment for their deeds, the children were sent to the office of the National Forest and Parks Service to hear the explanation of the problem. To the President's surprise they came back with a plan that would help thin the forest selectively and save the tradition of Christmas trees. New conservation practices helped to relieve the strain of the tree shortages, and the forests were saved from unnecessary destruction.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1662 1062 1760">Some years later, his cousin President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a farm in Hyde Park N.Y., and in an effort to encourage soil conservation he experimented with growing Christmas trees commercially. He chose land that was too stony to farm, too steep to plow or otherwise unsuitable for cultivation crops. The project was a success and he encouraged others to do the same.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1778 1062 1928">The Christmas tree farmer became a American hero. Tree farming helped relieve the pressure on our forest, preventing erosion of our soils, helped prevent the extinction of some wildlife and created thousands of new jobs on land unsuitable for farming. The Christmas tree of today is possible because of two children, Archie and Quentin Roosevelt, who wanted something badly enough to work for it and their father, who helped make it possible. So you see, there is more to our president than the teddy bear and the Rough Riders.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1946 1062 2067">By the way, the state of Maine was the home of the Christmas tree for America. The first Christmas trees sold in Boston came from Maine--and many still do. Maine had the best growing conditions, soil and climate for the balsam fir tree. Then and today the balsam fir is the number one selling Christmas tree in America from Maine to Florida and west to California. The tree has everything we want for the house--fragrance, color, hardiness, shape and affordability.</p> <p data-bbox="217 2085 424 2107">Click to print this article.</p>		<p data-bbox="1126 495 1342 517">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1078 544 1366 616">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</p> <p data-bbox="1126 730 1334 752">Contact Information:</p> <p data-bbox="1078 779 1262 824">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 853 1382 952">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 981 1222 1025">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1055 1310 1153">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1182 1302 1249">Regular Phone Hours: Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p data-bbox="1094 1361 1374 1435">Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1462 1382 1561">(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 1592 1206 1615">Your e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1637 1158 1659">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1671 1206 1693">Your name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1715 1158 1738">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1749 1206 1771">Their e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1794 1158 1816">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1827 1206 1850">Their name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1872 1158 1895">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1174 1917 1286 1939">[Send >>]</p> <p data-bbox="1110 2119 1358 2141">Where can I find Paul on</p>

When I was younger, and it came time to select the perfect Christmas tree, we had one choice--the Balsam fir. Although this is still the number one tree sold in New England, today the selection is very different and our choices more numerous. Let me tell you about these trees and then you can select wisely.

The Balsam Fir

Needles lie flat on each side of the branch and the branch is thickly covered with needles. The needle is dark green on top and pale green on the bottom. Needles are an inch long and, when crushed, are VERY fragrant. Your entire home will smell like the great outdoors. Branches are stiff but will bend with the weight of lights and ornaments. Ornaments are easily displayed, as the branches spread out and open up the tree to show inside to the trunk. Balsam fir has long lasting color, fragrance and freshness.

Frasier Fir

A new hybrid of the Balsam fir. Needles are flat and surround the branch, not just on the sides. Top of the needles is very dark green, while the underside is silver. Needles are an inch long and have some fragrance to them. The tree is much fuller than the traditional Balsam fir. The branches are stiff but will bend some with the weight of the lights and ornaments. When it is heavily sheared, ornaments lie on the side of the branches as the tree does not open up as much. Fraser fir has the best color of all trees with the dark green top and silver underside. Fragrance good in the room it's in.

Douglas Fir

Flat needles on each side of the branch like the Balsam but longer--1.5 to 2 inches long. The branches are thick with needles; they are dark green on top and silver green on the underside. There is a little bit of fragrance but not like the Balsam fir. Branches are very flexible and decorate easily but heavy ornaments pull down branches easily. Tree has a weeping appearance, unusual and beautiful. Like all fir trees, it's long lasting, has good color and is fresh looking. Look for tags on the branches to see where it was grown. If grown on the West coast and you had temperatures 20 degrees or colder, do not buy it. West coast grown trees will shed needles when they hit the heat in your home.

Scotch Pine

Once very popular in the Midwest but due to insect problems and disease there are fewer and fewer trees grown each year. It grows very upright and the branches are stiff. Lights and ornaments lie on the side of the tree as branches bend very little. Needles are 2 inches long and blue green, with a silver underside. Not much of a fragrance but will last in the house longer than most trees.

White Pine

Very soft looking with pale green needles 3 to 4 inches long. Trees are sheared heavily and I think it is difficult to decorate, as branches are soft and ornaments fall off easily. Dries up faster than the fir family, as needles are thin and soft. It's beautiful to look at, but the tree will not last long in a warm room.

Noble Fir

From the West Coast, this is a tree that we should all try at one time. Stems are filled with one inch long needles that are rounded on the tip. Several layers of silver green needles on the branches, and they are just beautiful. Branches spaced about 6 inches apart, almost like layers on the tree, so ornaments can dangle on branches and display beautifully. No real fragrance but this tree will not shed needles--yes, it will not shed! When dry, maintains the color.

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Living Christmas Trees

Are you tired of purchasing a cut Christmas tree every year--just to throw it away after the holidays are over?

One of the most exciting parts of the holiday season is selecting the family Christmas tree. This year for a change, how about a selecting a Christmas tree that you can plant in your yard after the holidays? You can decorate it inside this year and outside in the yard next year.

Today a good cut tree will cost you \$30 to \$75 dollars and when the holiday is over, you have nothing left for your investment. You can purchase a living tree with a root ball for \$50 and up.

If the north wind is a problem, now is the time to start planting the first of that hedgerow of evergreens to break the wind. This is the fun way to get the job done. Each tree will have its own special memories of past holidays while performing an energy-saving task.

Sunday mornings?

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The proper care of a living tree is as follows:

- Choose a tree that you can handle since the dirt ball or pot will be heavy.
- Pick out the tree while the weather is good and the moving is easy.
- Your living tree can only stay in the house for 7 to 10 days. So, plan for the time that the tree will be in the house and out.
- Living trees must be kept away from fireplaces, wood stoves and heating ducts. The tree is now dormant and if you wake it up it will start to grow in the house. Then, once you take it back out, the cold weather could hurt the new bud.
- Keep the room cool and the root ball wet so the plant does not dry up.
- To prevent damage to floor or carpet, place the root ball in a tub. A child's flying saucer sled will work great.
- Try to bring the tree inside when the outside temperature is no colder than 25 degrees from inside.
- If you have a garage or barn keep the tree there until you are ready to bring it indoors. If not, keep it as close as possible to the door for easy access during periods of heavy snow.
- When you are ready to bring the tree indoors, place a scatter rug by the door and the container on it. The scatter rug will allow you to slide the tree along the floor without damage to the floor and it will save you extra lifting. Do not fill the container full of water--a quart at a time will do. To help keep the tree dormant, spray the foliage with Wilt Pruf or Wilt Stop. This will keep the moisture in the tree.
- Use the new LED lights on the tree, as they produce little to no heat and that helps keep the tree dormant.
- Mist the tree daily with water.
- After the holidays, if the weather is stormy or very cold, place the tree in the garage or barn. If not possible, up against the house or fence to keep it out of direct sun and the wind. Cover the root ball with bark mulch, straw or soil until spring.

You can plant the tree in the yard if the weather is good but you will have to dig the hole before the ground freezes and bring the soil into the garage so it does not freeze. You must also fill the hole with leaves in a trash bag just in case it snows or you will never find it (or worse, find it by falling in it). I wait until spring; it's easier!

The living tree is more work than the traditional cut tree but you will not be sorry when you see the results.

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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.

[Click here for details.](#)



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



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- 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

[Click here to order online.](#)



This Week's Question

Which was the last state of the union (at the time--new states since then have come in with the holiday already declared) to officially declare Christmas a holiday?

[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

If I have Poa pratensis growing in my yard, what am I growing?

Last Week's Winner:

Rick DeMaio

Last Week's Answer:

Kentucky Bluegrass

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:

Caribbean Christmas Ring



Try this delicious Bundt cake topped with an orange sugar glaze.

- 3 tablespoons vegetable shortening
- 2 1/2 cups finely chopped walnuts (split)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup softened butter
- 1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup sour cream or plain nonfat yogurt

- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 2 tablespoons orange liqueur (Cointreau, triple sec)

Orange Sugar Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 tablespoons orange juice

Step by Step:

- Thoroughly grease a 10 to 12-cup microwave-safe bundt pan with shortening; sprinkle with 1/2 cup of the chopped walnuts to coat evenly.
- Sift flours, baking powder and baking soda.
- Cream butter and sugar until fluffy; beat in eggs, one at a time.
- Stir sour cream or yogurt, banana and liqueur into egg mixture.
- Fold flour mixture into banana-egg batter; stir in remaining walnuts.
- Spoon into prepared pan and place on top of microwave-proof bowl in microwave, bringing cake up to center of oven.
- Cook on medium 10 minutes, then on high 5 to 7 minutes until cake tests done, turning twice. Let cake stand 15 minutes. Turn out onto serving plate.
- Let cool.
- Mix sifted powdered sugar and orange juice until smooth. Pour glaze evenly over cake and serve.

Yield: 20-24 servings



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