

**From:** Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>  
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Edition 11.49	Paul Parent Garden Club News	December 8, 2011
 <p><b>FEATURED QUOTE :</b></p> <p>"Youth is like spring, an over-praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits." ~ <b>Samuel Butler</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p><b>Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever. Fresh made this week!</b></p> <p>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><a href="#">Click here for more information and pictures!</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text"/></p> <p>When thinking of Christmas plants or cut greens, there is no better plant than holly. With its shiny green leaves and red berries, holly contains all the colors of the holiday. Because the holly bears fruit and stays green all year, it is considered a Christian symbol of immortality. One legend is that the holly hid Jesus from Herod's soldiers during the flight to Egypt and holly was thereafter blessed with green leaves all year.</p> <p>To insure good luck your holly had to be burned, not thrown away. Some legends held that the berries of the holly were once yellow and that the wounds of Christ on the cross stained them red. In early Yule celebrations, holly represented the male and ivy the female. Whichever type was brought into the house first was said to rule the house for that year.</p> <p>One Pennsylvania tradition from Scotch and Irish settlers held that if holly was brought into the house in fair weather, the wife would rule. If it was cut in stormy weather, the man would be the master of the house for the coming year. But, if holly was allowed to stay up until the New Year, bad luck would stay with the house.</p> <p>American holly was used as a holiday plant from early days in our country. George Washington, in fact, decorated the white house in Philadelphia with this native plant. He loved this plant so much he planted many holly types at his home at Mount Vernon. You can still see them today.</p> <p>Because the holly plant is so beautiful and hardy in many areas, it became popular all over the country. This year let's decorate our homes with natural plants and enjoy the tradition, for they are part of our history</p> <p>If you purchase holly plants this year from the nursery, keep them outside or on a cold porch. The holly is dormant and if you bring it inside it will wake up within the warm house and start to grow. Then, you put it outside for the winter after the holidays or it will die. Keep potted plants on the shady side of the house outside during the winter or in the garage or tool shed.</p> <p>The best holly for most all of New England is a new hybrid called "Blue" holly. These plants are a cross of the wild American holly that lives everywhere south of Boston and the English holly usually found on the west coast but numerous on Cape Cod. American holly is hardy, with dull green leaves and small red berries. English holly is not as hardy but has shiny green leaves and large red berries. American holly will grow to 25 feet tall and the English around 15 feet tall. The blue is more a bush type and grows wonderfully as a sheared large bush on the corner of your home. As a cut branch, English holly must go inside or the berries and leaves will turn black with very cold weather, but they are great in a vase of water. American and blue holly will tolerate the cold and do well outside all winter in addition to indoor use.</p> <p><a href="#">Click to print this article.</a></p>		<p><b>Gifts for the Gardener</b></p> <p><a href="#">Here are some great ideas for gifts your favorite gardener will just love!</a></p> <p><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <p><b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="#">Click to contact us.</a></p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p><b>Fax:</b> (207) 985-6972</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p><b>Regular Phone Hours:</b> Mon.-Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM Sunday: 10 AM to 6 PM</p> <p><b>Tell your friends about Paul! Send them a copy of Paul's latest newsletter.</b></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 [     ] Your name [     ] Their e-mail [     ] Their name [     ]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Send &gt;&gt;]</p> <p><b>Where can I find Paul on</b></p>



# Mistletoe

*Nowadays it is mostly used as an excuse to steal a kiss.*

Every holiday seems to have its own flowers and decorations, and Christmas is no exception. We have greens and pine boughs from our yards, but have you ever wondered how some of these other plants were selected for the holiday?

When you consider mistletoe, most people think of kissing. At Christmas, mistletoe is as identified with the holiday as the wishbone is to Thanksgiving tradition. Mistletoe is a parasite plant; that means it lives on tree branches and steals what it needs from that tree. It does make its own food but relies on the host tree for water and other minerals. Mistletoe only dies when the tree dies. It loves to grow on the top branches of trees. It prefers mostly leaf trees but when those are not available, evergreens will do.

The foliage of the mistletoe is leathery and the fruit resembles a cluster of tiny pearls. Be warned, the seed in the fruit are very poisonous! If you have small children, decorate with the plastic berry type. Mistletoe is nearly indestructible, thriving under difficult growing conditions. Wind, rain and drought do not affect its growth. Insects do not like or bother with this plant.

Because the plant grows on the top branches of trees it is not easily harvested for the holidays. Long poles with hooks are used to pull it off the tree. In rural areas, the tree branches that mistletoe grows on are shot off by experienced hunters. This method is much faster and less time consuming--and it's a lot safer than climbing each tree to harvest the plant.

Scandinavian mythology includes the tradition of hanging mistletoe as a cure-all for many ills. Ancient Greeks considered it an antidote to poison. It was also thought to protect from fire and keep out evil spirits and witches. Swiss hunters used bow and arrows to shoot down the plant, and if the falling mistletoe was caught in left hand, it was believed the hunter had a panacea for all his children's diseases. Generations of farmers used it in the fields to protect their crops from insect and diseases.

Today, this plant has only one purpose: keeping the Christmas spirit alive with hospitality, fun and merriment throughout the holiday season. This Christmas, you can have fun with this plant that grows in high places: Be sure to obey the rules of kissing under the mistletoe. Pick a berry, kiss once; two berries, two kisses. When the berries are gone, stop until next year. So, you'd better stock up for the holidays!

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It is now time to decorate the house inside and out for Christmas.

Let us begin outside:

If you are planning to place evergreen roping around the front door and around the lamppost, you will need 7 yards for the average front door. The lamppost will need 3 yards.

Most nurseries sell roping by the yard or by the roll. Most rolls of roping come in 10 yard length and is cut to your order. It will be cheaper to buy the roll if you plan to do both. Now, the softer the evergreen you select the more pliable it will be and easier to attach to the house. Use aluminum nails when attaching to the house; that way it can be left up for next year without rusting and staining the house.

If your house faces south and you live where it does not get so cold during the winter, you may want to use needle evergreen foliage over broadleaf foliage as broadleaf foliage could dry up faster. If it's a must for you, hang up the roping and spray with Wilt-Pruf or Wilt-Stop antidesicant to prolong the life of the evergreens.

The most common evergreen roping materials are mountain laurel and boxwood for broadleaf evergreens. White pine, princess pine, and balsam fir are the best for needle evergreens. Some nurseries have combinations that are very nice also.

If you have whiskey barrels, window boxes or planters you want to fill with cut greens, your selection is endless. The most popular is balsam fir; when mixed with other types of evergreens the various textures make them stand out in your yard. Look for white pine, red pine, black pine, blue spruce, mountain. laurel, boxwood, native holly, and cypress. Now, for a little color with the greens, add Italian ruscus or red alderberries. When pushed into the container filled with soil, the moisture in the soil will keep it fresh until almost spring.

Now indoors:

Any cut greens must be sprayed with an antidesicant like **Wilt Pruf** or **Wilt Stop** before attaching to railings or walls. Apply and let dry first! If you are thinking of adding greens near a fireplace be *sure* to use an antidesicant or they will fall apart quickly. Needle evergreens or princess pine do best inside. For mantels, I suggest that you use west coast greens such as noble fir or silver fir, as these greens dry up BUT will not shed. **KEEP AWAY** from open flames! If you do not touch them once placed, they will not drop needles as much.

Sunday mornings?

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Keep away from the spruce family, as they dry up very quickly. Spruce needles dry up and become very pointed and sharp. Norway and blue spruce are the best for indoor use of the family if you want to use them. KEEP AWAY from white spruce, as once in your home it will produce an odor that resembles cat urine--very unpleasant. Don't forget the mistletoe!

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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

In most of the northern hemisphere, where is the best location to plant tall or climbing plants if you want all plants to get the most sunlight? (North, south, east or west.)

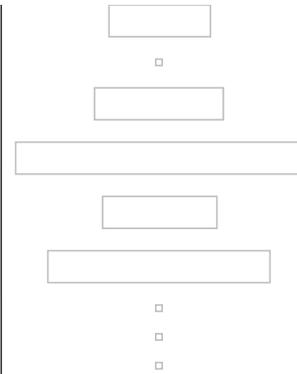
[Click Here to Answer](#)

#### 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

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**Last Week's Question**

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

**Last Week's Winner:**

Peter Dahlborg

**Last Week's Answer:**

Oklahoma in 1907.

**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**

## Microwave Oven Peanut Brittle

**What You'll Need:**

- 1 1/2 cups dry roasted peanuts
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 pinch salt (optional)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

**Step by Step:**

- Grease a baking sheet, and set aside.
- In a glass bowl, combine peanuts, sugar, corn syrup, and salt.
- Cook in microwave for 6 to 7 minutes on high (On 700 Watts--adjust for your microwave as necessary); mixture should be bubbly and peanuts browned.
- Stir in butter and vanilla; cook 2 to 3 minutes longer.
- Quickly stir in baking soda, just until mixture is foamy.
- Pour immediately onto greased baking sheet.
- Let cool 15 minutes, or until set. Break into pieces, and store in an airtight container.

Yield: 16 servings



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