

From: Paul Parent Garden Club <newsletter@paulparentclub.com>
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Edition 11.50	Paul Parent Garden Club News	December 15, 2011
 <p data-bbox="568 483 826 510">FEATURED QUOTE :</p> <p data-bbox="344 517 1034 591">"Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all." ~ Stanley Horowitz</p> <div data-bbox="528 685 751 719" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 140px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="217 763 1050 860">Wreaths are back for the holidays--and better than ever. All wreaths are 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="217 887 628 909">Click here for more information and pictures!</p> <div data-bbox="395 994 879 1028" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 15px; width: 303px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p data-bbox="217 1070 1058 1144">This fall and winter, let's add an old-fashioned southern flowering plant to our collection of indoor houseplants. This tropical plant is a shrub in the southern part of the country and real easy to grow as a foundation plant around most southern homes.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1160 1066 1234">The southern gardener uses this plant much like we do azaleas and rhododendrons in the northern part of the country. Its beautiful foliage is as important as the flower buds the plant makes in late summer for fall and winter flowers.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1249 1066 1375">Gardenias (also known as Cape jasmine) have glossy, dark green leaves that are almost leathery in appearance. The leaf is oval in shape with a pointed leaf tip often growing one and half inches to three inches long and one to one and half inches wide. When you look at the leaf you will notice a sunken vein running from end to end on the leaf. Also, sunken side veins run from this center vein to the sides of the leaf, like bones from a fish.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1391 1066 1541">The newer growth is not as dark as mature leaves on the plant, but this distinctive color difference makes the foliage stand out. However, if you have a plant in your home now and it has yellow leaves on the lower part of the plant it could be the result of the plant growing in a location that is too shady for the plant. From September to May your gardenias will do best in a window with full sun--if possible--or at least bright most of the day. Outside during the summer, keep them in the shade.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1556 1066 1659">The foliage is nice but the flowers are the crowning glory of this plant. The flowers are double with many rows of petals and resemble rose flowers. The flowers can grow from 1.5 to 3 inches in diameter, and as they begin to open the flowers will fill the room with a powerful perfume scent. The fragrance will last until the flower falls from the plant.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1675 1066 1800">Its rich creamy-white color will last on the plant for several weeks before turning creamy-yellow and falling from the plant. The flower buds look like Soft Serve Ice-Cream Cones, pale green in color and covered with whirled flower petal covers. As the buds open, they seem to slowly turn white. Most stems will make 3 to 5 buds on the tip of the branches; these will open one at a time, lengthening the flowering time on the plant.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1816 1066 1966">Keep the plant outside until September as the plant will make flower buds better if the air temperature is below 70 degrees and the days grow shorter. Now the tricky part: gardenias love humidity and moisture on the foliage. Gardenias will not grow in a house with forced hot air heat or in a room that has a wood or coal stove in it. Forced hot water heat is not a problem if it comes from oil ,but if it comes from natural gas the plant will die quickly, as any unused gas fumes are toxic to the plant.</p> <p data-bbox="217 1982 1066 2107">When the plant is inside the house <i>always</i> keep it on a tray filled with small stones and add water to the tray of stones daily. Daily misting with warm water is very important when the flower buds get ready to open. If your flower buds are falling from the plant before opening, the air around the plant is too dry, so use a humidifier to add moisture to the air; it will help the plant, and you'll breathe better, too. One more thing, keep plants away from drafts.</p> <p data-bbox="217 2123 1066 2145">Fertilize every two weeks from May to September and monthly after that with Mir-Acid fertilizer.</p>		<p data-bbox="1126 495 1342 517">Gifts for the Gardener</p> <p data-bbox="1078 544 1366 618">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 831">E-Mail: Click to contact us.</p> <p data-bbox="1078 853 1382 958">Telephone: (207) 985-6972 (800) 259-9231 (Sunday 6 AM to 10 AM)</p> <p data-bbox="1078 981 1222 1032">Fax: (207) 985-6972</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1055 1310 1160">Address: Paul Parent Garden Club 2 Blueberry Pines Dr Kennebunk, ME 04043</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1182 1310 1256">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 1568">(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 1597 1206 1619">Your e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1637 1158 1659">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1675 1206 1697">Your name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1715 1158 1738">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1753 1206 1776">Their e-mail</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1794 1158 1816">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1832 1206 1854">Their name</p> <p data-bbox="1078 1872 1158 1895">[]</p> <p data-bbox="1174 1921 1286 1944">[Send >>]</p> <p data-bbox="1110 2119 1358 2141">Where can I find Paul on</p>

Gardenias love acid soils, so never use limestone near this plant or it will stop growing.

Repot in late winter when it has finished flowering; use a soil with lots of organic matter. When you replot the plant, cut back the tips of every branch to stimulate new growth--and watch it fill in and grow thicker faster. Keep the soil moist when growing outside, but cut back the watering when it is in bloom. Also never mist the flower when misting the foliage and buds, as water applied to the opened flower will make it turn brown.

If you purchase a plant from a florist or greenhouse, look at the pot shape. If the pot has straight sides and the soil looks like all compost it is the original soil it was grown in and this plant should be repotted when you get home--or have the greenhouse replot it for you. The soil used to grow the plant is artificial and will dry up quickly. Also the plant is probably root-bound, so please replot into a larger pot with fresh soil to help hold moisture around the developing root system.

Gardenias are beautiful, fragrant and worth all the work that comes with them. Try one this fall or winter as your home may be perfect for this wonderful plant.

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We have moved the garden indoors now due to the weather outside. But, you can still grow peppers on your kitchen window if you like small beautiful plants with a lot of color. That's right, the Ornamental Pepper and it is Explosive with flowers, fruit and rich green foliage. Besides that it is easy to grow on your window sill, any window sill.

Your local garden center will have them available for the Christmas season. Like the vegetable in the garden, the ornamental pepper is very similar, with clusters of star-like flowers that develop on the top of the plant. Soon the flowers fall and a fiery cluster of small green fruit develops. Keep watching and before your eyes, they begin to change to yellow, orange, red, purple and lavender. The shapes of the fruit will differ from variety to variety. The pepper can be round, drum-shaped, or pointed. Some of the newer varieties will also have different colored foliage--even shades of purple. These plants are closely related to the garden pepper. Each flower cluster will develop 8 to 10 peppers on it and the plant can have 8 to 12 clusters of fruit on it.

The foliage part of the plant is poisonous, but not the fruit. The fruit will burn the top of your mouth off, so be careful with small children. Your cats will not bother these plants. They will learn quickly and not bother them. The pepper contains the alkaloid capsaicin, which can range from hot to "on fire." If you like really hot stuff, this is for you.

Ornamental peppers come from East Asia. They grow from 4 to 10 inches tall and 6 to 12 inches wide. They love the bright light and sun. If you can keep them cool they will last longer for you in the house as they are a annual flowering plant. They love temperatures below 70 degrees F. Keep moist but never wet or they will fall apart on you. Fertilize every other week with house plant fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro. Give plants lots of room or insects will move into crowded windows.

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Kalanchoe (*Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*) is a naturally blooming succulent that offers up an array of blooms in many festive colors. Kalanchoe [kal-an-KO-ee or kal-LAN-cho] is a perky little plant that is easy to care for. Whether planted in a decorative basket or grouped together in a basket on the kitchen windowsill, kalanchoes will not disappoint you. In Florida, they are also called "Palm Beach Bells."

Kalanchoes, become increasingly popular as a gift plant, feature dark-green succulent leaves topped by masses of miniature, brightly colored blossoms in shades of red, orange, yellow, or salmon-pink. In their native Madagascar, the plants bloom only during the spring months, but with a little attention, they can produce blooms in any season. Bright light all year, and warmth during the summer, cooler during the winter.

Kalanchoes are similar to poinsettias and chrysanthemums, which initiate their flowering in response to short days. Growers pull opaque shade fabric over their plants for 14 hours each night until the plants initiate flower buds. You can accomplish the same thing by placing a box over your plant for the same "short day" period. I put them in the basement window like the Christmas cactus and they will bloom again. Normal flowering time is 6 to 8 weeks if kept cool.

Sunday mornings?

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Kalanchoes prefer to be watered deeply, but like to dry out between waterings. Keep moist in the spring to fall, and almost dry during the winter. Feel the soil with your finger and if it is moist leave it alone.

If leaves start to yellow, you are overwatering. If they look like they are shriveling up, your plant might be dehydrated and in need of water. If this happens, remove spent foliage and water thoroughly. Kalanchoes look best when fed every two weeks with a water-soluble plant food, like Miracle-Gro.

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Phalaenopsis

Everyone who loves to garden will be enchanted by orchids, particularly the Phalaenopsis, more commonly known as the moth orchid. Having a single spray in a thin vase on your desk at work can make you feel as if you are still on that tropical vacation you were on so long ago. Yet, we hesitate to spend the money on them because we always thought that they needed special care and pampering to thrive. Perhaps it's all those gardening programs we watch on TV, showing ladies and gentlemen in their glass conservatories taking great pains to grow them for entry in the next flower show!



Au contraire. All this lovely needs is to be hung in diffuse sunlight near a window (not in too bright a light or it will scorch the plant), preferably in a tray with pebbles so that sufficient humidity is provided, with temperatures that are consistent with an average household. The ideal night temperature is 62 to 65 degrees F, with daytime temperatures of 70 to 80 degrees F. Water your Phalaenopsis in the morning with rain, distilled, or reverse-osmosis water about once every 4 to 7 days; never use water that has been softened by a water softener. A light shade should be provided, such as a sheer curtain, but allow your plants a bit more light from the beginning of December throughout the middle of February.

Fertilizer must be provided on a regular basis because most potting media have little. A good general rule is to use a balanced fertilizer, 10-10-10 or 12-12-12, and fertilize "weakly, weekly." In other words, fertilize every week at one-quarter to one-half of the recommended dilution.

These orchids were indeed popular with Victorian growers, but because common "parlor plants" were grown either in the front rooms, or parlors, which usually lacked heat, especially during the winter, or in the back parlors, which were typically overheated during the day and unheated during the night, the Phalaenopsis did not fare well inside.

Many of the modern potted plants that we consider "new" were common houseplants during the mid-late 19th century. As over 50% of the homes in London during the Victorian era had attached greenhouses, it was there, under highly controlled conditions, that the Phalaenopsis thrived. Here in the United States, greenhouses were extremely expensive and rarely found, hence the comparative newness of the popularity of this orchid.

This elegant beauty makes the perfect Christmas gift, as the blooms will last up to 6 months before falling. Just as we carry the spirit of Christmas in our hearts all year 'round, now we can enjoy the symphony of design and color the various Phalaenopses offer up.

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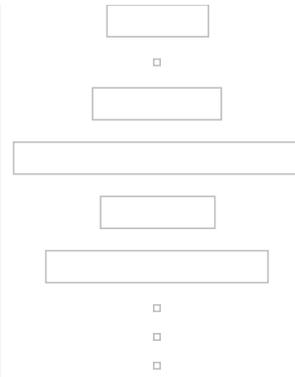


Tour includes the Wisley Gardens, the Chelsea Flower Show, Tower of London, Roman Baths & Pump Room, Riverford Organic Farm, Garden House, Rosemoor Gardens, Lost Garden of Heligan, Village of Megavissey, Stonehenge, the Wilton House Garden Centre and more.

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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...
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- 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

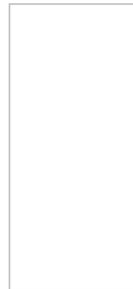
According to an old English rhyme, the thickness of what vegetable skin can help predict a rough winter?

[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

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.)

Last Week's Winner:

Denise Fraser

Last Week's Answer:

North side, so the small plants can get more of the sun.

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!



FEATURE RECIPE
Gingerbread Men

What You'll Need:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 cup margarine, melted
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup unsulfured molasses
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon lemon extract
- 4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

Step by Step:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Lightly grease cookie sheets.

In a large bowl, stir together the sugar, ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, salt, and baking soda.

Mix in the melted margarine, evaporated milk, molasses, vanilla, and lemon extracts. Stir in the flour, 1 cup at a time, mixing well after each addition. The dough should be stiff enough to handle without sticking to fingers. If necessary, increase flour by up to 1/2 cup to prevent sticking.

When the dough is smooth, roll it out to 1/4 inch thick on a floured surface, and cut into cookies. Place cookies on the prepared cookie sheets.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven. The cookies are done when the top springs back when touched.

Remove from cookie sheets and cool on wire racks.

Yield: 5 dozen cookies



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