

GARDEN

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It works great, but don't forget to pick up a bag of perlite also, as the potting mix is a bit too dense to start seeds if you intend to transplant the seeds into bigger pots before they are ready to be planted into the garden.

The denseness of the mix will cause a lot of the little rootlets to get broken during the transplant process. Perlite keeps the soil loose so that the roots are much less likely to break. Your little transplants will then be stronger and have less stress after being transplanted.

One of the best street and yard trees is the tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipifera). It can grow as high as 70 to 100 feet, with a 35- to 50-foot spread. It is a lot taller than it is wide. A relative of the magnolia, the tulip tree has large flowers in mid-spring. The flowers may not be easy to see because the tree is quite large.

"The tulip tree does not seem to have any bad habits. No surface roots in the lawn, no insect damage. It is a beautiful tree. Those who have one in their yard grow to cherish it."

Tulip trees must be 10 to 15 years old and as tall as most houses before they flower for the first time.

Tulip trees are a columnar shaped tree, often suitable for narrow spaces where height does not matter. The leaves are a unique shape, being truncated and saddle-shaped at their distal area. The fall color is a bright yellow. All these factors combined make it very ornamental.

Tulip tree flowers are green and orange, but very attractive. Not the color combination our mothers would have tolerated in school clothes way back when. If you can reach the flowers, they make an attractive

centerpiece.

The tulip tree does not seem to have any bad habits. No surface roots in the lawn, no insect damage. The value to wildlife is low, but I think that makes it an excellent tree for planting near your house.

Who wants to attract a lot of wildlife to the area right beside the house? Its lightweight wood is used to construct boxes or for wood pulp. It is a beautiful tree. Those who have one in their yard grow to cherish it.

GARDEN CHORES

- Continue pruning fruit trees and collecting scion wood for grafting.
- If soil conditions allow,

take a chance sowing peas, lettuce, spinach and radish.

• Re-pot root-bound house plants now before vigorous growth occurs. Choose a new container that is only 1 or 2 inches larger in diameter than old pot.

• Stick cuttings of grape vines in rotted peat now before buds swell or new growth starts.

• Any root crops such as horseradish, parsnips, Jerusalem artichokes, or carrots still in the ground from last year should be harvested before new green top growth appears.

• Sow seeds of larkspur, sweet peas, Shirley poppies, and snapdragons where they are to grow outdoors now. To bloom best, these plants must sprout and begin growth well before warm weather arrives.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write: greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

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CUSTARD

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- For the custard:
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) whole milk
 - 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons (45g) all-purpose flour
 - 2 strips of pared lemon zest
 - 1 cinnamon stick
 - 1 3/4 cups (375 g) granulated sugar
 - 7 large egg yolks

Note: If you have the time, place the 1 1/3 cups of flour for the pastry in the freezer for 30 minutes or so before using. If you have strong fingers, also place the 2 tablespoons of diced butter in the freezer at the same time.

1. For the pastry, mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Rub in the 2 tablespoons of chilled butter, until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Gradually add just enough ice water (about 4 to 6 tablespoons) to form a dough. Do not use too much water.

2. Roll out the dough to a rectangle on a lightly floured work surface. Grate half of the frozen butter over the bottom two-thirds of the dough. Fold down the top third and fold up the bottom third as if folding a letter.

3. Turn the folded dough 90 degrees and roll it out into a rectangle again. Repeat the process, grating the remaining frozen butter and fold as before. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and leave to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes.

4. Roll and fold the pastry twice more, each time wrapping the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerating for 30 minutes.

5. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface to a rectangle measuring 8 by 12 inches. Starting from the short side, roll the pastry into a tight log. Cut the log into 12 equal discs.

6. Place 1 disc into a cup of 12-cup muffin pan, swirl-side up. Using lightly wet fingers, carefully press the pastry up the sides with your fingers, working from the center

outward, until the pastry reaches the top. Avoid tearing the dough on the bottom. Repeat with the remaining pastry discs. Chill for 20 minutes.

7. For the custard, pour the milk into a pan and whisk in the flour. Add the strips of lemon zest and the cinnamon stick. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking continuously. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until thick. Remove from the heat.

8. Dissolve sugar in 3/4 cup of water in a small pan over medium heat. Increase the heat and boil until mixture reaches 223 to 235 degrees (if you don't have a candy thermometer, it is the right temperature when a drop placed in a glass of water forms a thread). Gradually whisk the boiling syrup into the milk mixture.

9. Put the egg yolks in a large bowl and strain the milk mixture over the top, whisking to combine. Cover the surface with plastic wrap and allow to cool.

10. Preheat oven to 475

degrees. Pour the custard into the pastry cases, leaving a slight gap at the top (you will have enough custard for 2 batches). Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, until the pastry is golden and crisp and the custard is bubbling with tiny brown spots. Cool the tarts in the pan for 5 minutes, then gently transfer to a wire rack to cool almost completely.

11. These are best served the day they are cooked, preferably still a little warm from the oven. If desired, sprinkle lightly with powdered sugar and cinnamon.

Per serving: 282 calories; 10 g fat; 5 g saturated fat; 126 mg cholesterol; 4 g protein; 46 g carbohydrate; 33 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 213 mg sodium; 55 mg calcium

— Adapted from a recipe by Paul Hollywood.

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DORY

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My contention is that we should vote on which way to go and not just make Daylight Time mandatory. Why is that?

Well, I awake at the same time each morning without benefit of alarm clock. With Daylight Saving Time I sleep an hour or two later and awake with tired eyes, feeling a little groggy all day.

Not everyone is like that and many really want that evening hour of daylight

whereas I prefer it in the morning in spite of being a night owl.

What I have been agitating for for many years is to go back to Standard Time year-round. But, more than that I think the only democratic way to settle it is to let everyone vote to be sure what the majority want — Standard Time, Daylight Time, or continue on switching back and forth.

Regardless of which way the vote would go I would still have a big question to solve.

One set of each time zone clocks sit on my shelf while

the other set is in use so that I needn't turn any dials, just switch clocks.

But who needs 20 clocks all set at the same hour if we stay with one time zone?

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