Hello Fellow Gardeners! You are receiving this email because you have provided us with your email address either when subscribing to our quarterly newsletter, having your soil analyzed, or testing the horticultural prowess and investigative abilities of our incredibly well-versed staff at the UConn Home & Garden Education Center! Or, we just might have thought you would enjoy this e-newsletter. If you do not wish to receive our monthly email updates on gardening tips, pest problems, events and other information, please email us at ladybug@uconn.edu and ask to be removed from this list.

Pest Patrol/Current Concerns/Topics of Interest:

Climate Change is Affecting Bird Migration
From [www.Hortmag.com](http://www.Hortmag.com): “Researchers at the University of Edinburgh reported late last year that migrating birds are traveling to their breeding grounds earlier as global temperatures are rising. They looked at hundreds of different species across five continents for the study, including birds with long and short migrations, and analyzed the data collected over nearly 265 years by scientists as well as back-yard birders. It was determined that every degree (C) of increased global temperature (averaged yearly) brings the birds to their breeding grounds one day earlier. The study showed short-distance migrants as more apt to arrive early – making the long-distance migrants actually late when they arrived on time. The latter group might then face a shortage of food and nesting spots. To read the report in the Journal of Animal Ecology, see [www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2656.12612/full](http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2656.12612/full).”

Brown Marmorated Stinkbugs Wake Up From Winter Slumber
The Center has been getting calls about ¾ inch shield-shaped insects found inside homes, especially during some of the warmer days we have recently been experiencing. These are brown marmorated stink bugs. They are native to Asia but have made their way to the U.S. and have caused substantial damage to fruit, vegetable and other farm crops in the mid-Atlantic region. More recently, they have made their way into Connecticut. Adults search for sheltered areas to overwinter and this often means our homes. The warmer days arouse them and they leave their winter homes. These stink bugs will not harm you or any household items but they can cause damage to outdoor plants so put an end to them. The reason they are called stinkbugs is that they have odor glands and when crushed emit a scent that is light but distinctive. Some people are allergic to them and a contact dermatitis can occur if crushed with bare hands so use a fly swatter or paper towel. [link to article]

**Although Tempting, It’s Too Early to Remove Winter Mulches**
Fluctuating temperatures seem to be the trend these last few weeks. Remember it is officially winter until March 20th. On those warm days it is tempting to start cleaning up the gardens. Do so with some trepidation. Stay off of wet soils. If you are leaving footprints, it is too wet to walk on. Also, while you can cut back dead stalks and broken stems, don’t remove all of the leaves and other debris that are covering your perennials. Leave a light layer to buffer plants from the temperature swings which are likely to continue.

Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include boxwood leaf miner, pruning apple trees, care of poinsettias, Conservation District plant sales, springtails and soil testing. If you have specific questions, gardening queries or pest problems, check out our website, [www.ladybug.uconn.edu](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu), call the UConn Home & Garden Education Center (877) 486-6271 (toll-free in CT) or email us at [ladybug@uconn.edu](mailto:ladybug@uconn.edu). Your County Cooperative Extension Centers are also listed on the website.

**Ten Tips for the March Gardener:**
1. Pot up begonia and caladium bulbs. Place in a warm, bright location to encourage growth.

2. Remove and destroy infested foliage on arborvitae and juniper to control leafminer. Look for browned foliage that is hollowed out to detect the problem.

3. Carefully remove winter mulches from planting beds as snow melts and temperatures warm.

4. Get your soil tested through the [UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](http://soiltesting.uconn.edu) before any major planting or fertilizing venture. Soils sent in before April 1 usually avoid the spring rush.

5. Start your lawn mower; check to see if it needs service including blade sharpening.

6. Move woody plants before they begin new spring growth; transplant as soon as the soil is workable.

7. Start seeds of tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants indoors.

8. On trees, shrubs, fruiting bushes and vines, prune off and destroy cankered twigs and any branches showing dieback. Prune shortly before budbreak, or wait until just after leaves have expanded.

9. Direct plant seeds of cold weather vegetables like spinach, peas, lettuce and broccoli as soon as soil is workable.

10. Check trunk and rough branch areas of white pines for cottony white flecks of pine bark adelgid. Plan horticultural oil treatment if needed.
Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

March 10, Greenhouse Fridays. Join Professor Terry Webster for a tour of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Greenhouses, located behind the Torrey Life Sciences Building on North Eagleville Road. Tour begins at 12:15 pm and runs for approximately one hour. Each tour will feature a different part of the greenhouse collection, which contains some 3000 plant species from around the world, including rare and endangered species. Parking is available in the North Parking Garage (North Eagleville Road, fee charged). No fee or registration required for the tour. For more information, contact: Terry Webster at jtwebster95@charter.net

March 9, 2017 – Fruit Workshop I: Pests & Diseases of Small Fruits, March 9th at Windham County Extension Center in Brooklyn. Review of common and important problems of grape, strawberry, blueberry, brambles, currants & gooseberries. Target audience is farmers; all are welcome. More info: http://plant.lab.uconn.edu/workshops/ or contact: Joan Allen, joan.allen@uconn.edu or 860-486-6740, Mary Concklin, mary.concklin@uconn.edu or 860-486-6449.
March 11-12, 2017 – CT NOFA Winter Conference. Western CT State University, Danbury, CT. CT NOFA's Annual Winter Conference is the premier event where farmers, landscapers, foodies, gardeners, and community leaders convene to learn innovative practices, share ideas, and network with others! [http://ctnofa.org/winterconference/](http://ctnofa.org/winterconference/)

March 13, 2017 – Annual Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources. University of Connecticut, Laurel Hall, Storrs campus. This is a multidisciplinary conference bringing together individuals working with natural resources and environmental management in Connecticut to share research, information, and ideas. The Conference registration is $50 ($25 students) and includes refreshments and lunch voucher. For information and updates, and to register, please visit the conference website: [http://ccnr2017.weebly.com/](http://ccnr2017.weebly.com/)


April 27, 2017 – Free Screening of Hometown Habitat: Stories of Bringing Nature Home at the Colchester Library with a discussion to follow. Sponsored by CT College Arboretum. [www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum](http://www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum), 189

**Garden Master Classes** (open to all, fee, [http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/](http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/))

**Coastal Certificate: Sound Gardening, Sustainable Landscaping for Clean Waters** 5 classes from March 20 to April 5. This is a train the trainer program – see catalog for more information. CT Audubon Center at Milford Point, Milford, CT. Deadline for registration: Mar 6th. Coordinator: Judy Preston

**Right Plant/Right Place/ Stormwise** Tuesday, Mar 21, 2017 from 10 am to noon. New Haven County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Mar 10th. Instructor: Jeffrey Ward PhD.

**Fleeting Beauty: Spring Wildflowers & Ephemerals in the Northeast** Saturday, Mar 25, 2017 from 10 am to 1 pm. Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford. Deadline for Registration: Mar 11th. Instructor: Ulrich Lorimer

**Raspberry Cultivation** Monday, Mar 27, 2017 from 1 to 3 pm. Auer Farm, Bloomfield. Deadline for Registration: Mar 13th. Instructor: Mary Concklin

**Composting with Worms** Thursday, Mar 30, 2017 from 6 to 8 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam. Deadline for registration: Mar 16th. Instructor: Gail Kalison Reynolds.

**Terrariums and You** Saturday, Apr 1, 2017 from 10 am to noon. Litchfield County Extension Center, Torrington. Deadline for registration: Mar 18th. Instructor: Tovah Martin.
Herbes: Our Ancient Relationship With Plants Made Modern  Tuesday, Apr 4, 2017 from 1 to 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center, Bethel. Deadline for registration: Mar 21st. Instructor: Carole Barber.

Exploring the World of Herbal Teas  Wednesday, Apr 19, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon. Deadline for registration: Apr 5th. Instructor: Judith Dreyer.

Put on Your Garden Gloves & Start Writing  Wednesday, Apr 19, 2017 from 10 am to noon. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam. Deadline for registration: Apr 5th. Instructor: Toni Leland.

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**Spring Tulips at UConn Blooms**

Need a touch of spring? UConn Blooms has Holland tulips for sale in a variety of colors. What better flower to brighten a desk, enhance a table or put a smile on someone's face. After a cold and dreary winter, tulips will make your spirits soar! Research from Rutgers University shows that the presence of flowers has an immediate impact on happiness and increases enjoyment and life satisfaction.
We have a full assortment of beautiful flowers in our cooler. You can buy one or ten depending on the size of your vase. Remember, if it holds water, it can hold a flower! Iris, sunflowers, daisies and roses will make your day sparkle. UConn Blooms also has a greenhouse stocked with tropical plants and even potted tulips, daffodils and hyacinths. UConn's on-campus flower and plant shop is open daily from 10:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

UConnBlooms is located in the Floriculture Building on Route 195 (1395 Storrs Road) across from the yellow barn. Parking is available alongside our greenhouses in the driveway. We will deliver on campus. Call us at (860) 486-6000 to order early. Look for us online at https://web9.uits.uconn.edu/uconnblooms/ or email uconnblooms@uconn.edu.

**Conservation Districts Spring Plant and Seedling Sale**

Large selection of trees, shrubs, fruiting plants, perennials, groundcovers and more. Support your local Conservation Districts!

**North Central Conservation District:** [https://squareup.com/store/CT-NCCD-AUERFARM](https://squareup.com/store/CT-NCCD-AUERFARM)

The Eastern Connecticut Conservation District is taking orders for our annual plant sale. This year, we have expanded the number of plants we are offering that are important food resources for native pollinators. Orders are due postmarked no later than April 5, 2017. If you would like us to send you an e-copy of our Winter newsletter, the ECCD Outlook, with the plant descriptions, please call our office at 860-319-8806.

**Northwest Conservation District:** [http://nwcd.org/](http://nwcd.org/)

**Southwest Conservation District:** 51 Mill Pond Rd, Hamden, CT 06514, (203) 287-8179

**Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District:** 27 Washington St # W, Middletown, CT 06457 (860) 346-3282
KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Fast Food Packaging Contains Potentially Harmful Chemicals

How eating less can slow the aging process

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Mediterranean diet with virgin olive oil may boost 'good' cholesterol

Fifth of world's food lost to over-eating and waste, study finds

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Watching birds near your home is good for your mental health

Grow, mow, mulch: Finding lawn's value

Wild Bee Populations Are out of Sync with Crop Needs

UCONN PLANT DIAGNOSTIC LAB WEBSITE:  www.plant.lab.uconn.edu

UCONN SUSTAINABLE LIVING WEBSITE:  www.sustainableliving.uconn.edu

UCONN EXTENSION WEBSITE: www.extension.uconn.edu

UCONN FOOD SAFETY WEBSITE: www.foodsafety.uconn.edu

Our Wacky Wonderful World - Notes from the Edge of Sanity (From Nursery & Landscape Insider)
Yesterday, I took part in a unique meeting that brought together a variety of public and private sector agriculture (not green industry – agriculture) participants. A major theme of that meeting was something we don’t often consider – or ignore with the hopes it will solve itself. Rural America is in trouble – in fact it is dying. Hospitals are closing, manufacturing is leaving and there’s a serious “brain-drain” taking place as people move closer to urban centers. 

Those in service industries, such as landscape contractors and landscape architects that serve suburban and urban clientele, may not even think a great deal at all about it. But growers, many of which are in rural communities with lower land cost and tax rates, are beginning to see the writing on the wall. It’s partly why migrant labor is increasingly used (along with the fact Americans are lazy). But it's the reduction in skilled labor (with advanced degrees) that has agricultural producers scared. Fewer and fewer college graduates want to move to a rural area. There's a litany of reasons why, from less advanced options for public/private schools (e.g. fewer Advanced Placement classes) to fewer health care options to simply less cultural stimulation. 

Our goal of this day-long meeting was to brainstorm how to attract skilled labor to agriculture. 

One vegetable grower indicated he identified high school seniors in his area at FFA and 4-H events, signs a contract with them in which he pays them a salary while they're a university student and includes in the contract that after graduation the student must honor a five-year post-graduation contract with the company. It's worked in the past, as he has several employees that have remained with the company 10-plus years after the fact. A timber company was offering to forgive (pay off) the balance of student loans after a five-year tenure with the company. Finally, an agriculture chemical manufacturer was giving a $50,000 signing bonus to purchase a home. 

What do you think? Share your thoughts and read what others have to say HERE. 

Matthew Chappell
Editor-at-Large
Nursery & Landscape Insider

We Need Your Support!
If you do enjoy our efforts to keep you informed about horticultural and College-related items, please consider showing your support by liking us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/pages/UConn-Home-Garden-Center/136211899745967, checking out our weekly blog www.uconnladybug.wordpress.com, or subscribing to our printed, 20-page quarterly newsletter for $12/year or sign up for free email version. Find the subscription form at http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/subscribe-to-hg-news.php

March 2017 DMP