



UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

www.ladybug.uconn.edu



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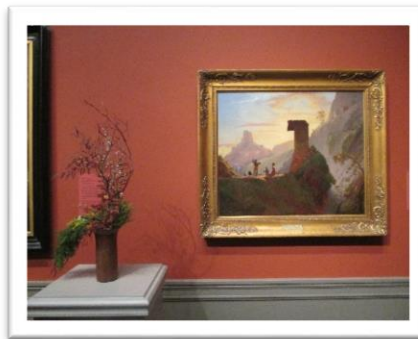
APRIL IS FOR AESCLEPIAS, ART & FLOWER SHOW & ARBOR DAY

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:



Arctic conditions in early spring by dmp



Floral Interpretation by dmp



Celebrate Arbor Day, hickory by dmp

Cold Weather Puts Damper on Gardening Activities

Although the saying goes that March 'comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb', those who remember the first few days of March with temperatures in the 60's might think the opposite. About half of the time, temperatures were below historic averages last month. Snow still remains in many yards and gardening activities have been put on hold. Early flowering bulbs will likely perk up as the snow melts. Hold off on planting early crops of lettuce, radishes and peas until the soil thaws and warms. There is still plenty of time to send in your soil to be tested. Go to: www.soiltest.uconn.edu for more information.

36th Annual Fine Art & Flower Show at Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art was founded by Daniel Wadsworth in 1842. It is America's oldest public art museum and is home to nearly 50,000 works of art. On April 28th through the 30th the museum will be holding their Fine Art & Flower Show. Delight in more than 60 floral interpretations of artworks from the museum's collections! Learn floral arranging techniques on Saturday at 2 pm and meet

and greet the arrangers in the galleries on Sunday beginning at 1 pm. Visit: www.thewadsworth.org/flowers for prices and hours.

Celebrate Arbor Day

Arbor Day is an environmental holiday where citizens and groups are encouraged to plant trees and care for the already existing trees. Arbor Day was founded by J. Sterling Morton on April 10th, 1872 in Nebraska City, Nebraska where over an estimated one million trees were planted on that single day. Pick up some pointers on planting shrubs and trees at:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/shrubs/hgic1052.html>

URI Winter Moth Update

Winter moths may be hatching out soon. See what eggs look like and learn of some control suggestions.

<http://web.uri.edu/ipm/2017-2/>

Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include gypsy moths, forgotten daffodil bulbs, grafting of apple trees, pruning grapes, crabgrass control and organic fertilizers. If you have specific questions, gardening queries or pest problems, check out our website, 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. Your County Cooperative Extension Centers are also listed on the website.

Ten Tips for the April Gardener:

1. Connecticut is still in a drought so set up 1 or 2 rain barrels at downspouts to water garden beds, flower beds, and containers.
2. Dead spots in the [lawn](#) can be patched in early April. Topdress bare areas with a mix of topsoil and compost, reseed, and keep moist until germination.
3. Prune ornamental grasses, sedums, perennial hibiscus and buddleias to a height of 6 inches before new growth appears.
4. Sow peas, carrots, radishes, lettuces and spinach. Plant seedlings of cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli, weather permitting.
5. Complete removal of diseased, weak or crossing branches on shrubs and small trees. Celebrate Arbor Day on April 25th by planting a tree.
6. Spread fertilizer under roses, apple trees and small fruits except strawberries which are fertilized in late August.
7. Check fruit trees for tent caterpillars; they emerge around the same time leaves sprout. Blast nests with a strong spray of water to destroy them.
8. Spot spray or hand-dig dandelions or use a broadleaf herbicide to prevent injury to lawn grasses. If digging, wait until after a rain when soil is soft.
9. Pull back mulch from perennials to allow the soil to warm up but be prepared to temporarily re-cover them if heavy frosts are predicted.
10. Start dahlia tubers in pots indoors in a cool spot. Pinch back tips when plants reach 6 inches and transplant outdoors when the ground temperature reaches 60° F.

Join in the Big Bug Hunt to Beat Garden Pests!

Major citizen science project tracks garden bugs to identify when and how they spread

Key points

1. The Big Bug Hunt is an international research project to track when and how garden bugs spread.
2. Participants are helping to create a pest-alert system that will warn gardeners when pests are heading their way.
3. Anyone can take part and reporting a bug takes seconds. The more reports received, the quicker the pest-alert system can be developed.
4. Now, in its second year, The Big Bug Hunt has already identified patterns in the way some major pests spread. Additional reports will improve accuracy and speed development of the pest-alert system.

BigBugHunt.com

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

Late March through Mid-May - Colorblends Spring Garden in Bridgeport. Now in its 3rd year, it features 40,000 flower bulbs selected to bloom in sequence all spring. Open to the public each spring; dawn to dusk, no fee, plenty of street parking. 893 Clinton Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06604. Up-to-date bloom reports are posted on: [Facebook.com/ColorblendsHouseAndSpringGarden](https://www.facebook.com/ColorblendsHouseAndSpringGarden) and ColorblendsSpringGarden.com.

April 21-22, 2017 – Talk (21) & Tree Walk(22) by Dr. Michael Dirr. Talk – The Origins of New Shade & Ornamental Trees: The Roles of Serendipity & Breeding. UMass Amherst. For more details and registration information, go to: ag.umass.edu/landscape/events/umass-earth-day-arbor-day-celebration-with-dr-michael-dirr

Garden Master Classes (open to all, fee, <http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/>)

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.

Ethnobotany Friday, Apr 28, 2017 from 1 to 3 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam. Deadline for registration: Apr 14th. Instructor: Manuel Lizarralde.

Enhancing Your Backyard for Wildlife Saturday, Apr 29, 2017 from 10 am to 1 pm. Sessions Woods, Burlington. Deadline for registration: Apr 15th. Instructor: Peter Picone.

Grow Your Own Meadow – Large or Small Saturday, May 6, 2017 from 10 am to noon. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam. Deadline for registration: Apr 21st. Instructor: Kathy Connolly.

Behind The Scenes at a Flower Farm (aka Grow Your Own Bouquets) Tuesday, May 9, 2017 from 1 to 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center, Bethel. Deadline for registration: Apr 25th. Instructor: Evelyn Lee.

Weeds for Your Needs Wednesday, May 17, 2017 from noon to 2 pm. Windham County Extension Center, Brooklyn. Deadline for registration: May 3rd. Instructor: Pam Brundage.

Spring Bouquets at UConn Blooms

Purple, pink, lavender, white, yellow and green – it's time for spring flowers. UConn Blooms has a splendid selection. Buy one or two for your desk bud vase or a whole bouquet to brighten your day. Select from iris, tulips, snapdragons and daisies. Add some delicate baby's breath and that says 'Spring!'

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! 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.

Sign up for the next **floral design** class, Wednesday April 12 when we will create an **Easter Arrangement in a Basket** -spring color flowers for your holiday table. There is a \$30.00 preregistration fee to be paid one week prior to the workshop. Call to register.

UConn Blooms 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.



KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Blueberry concentrate improves brain function in older people

Sulforaphane, a phytochemical in broccoli sprouts, ameliorates obesity

Can Prunes Reverse Bone Loss?

A hot cup of attention tempered with chocolate, please

Probiotics may not always be a silver bullet for better health

Here is some exciting new research on how capsaicin found in hot peppers can fight breast cancer.

Memphis Meats has, as reported by *The Wall St. Journal* “has created the world’s first chicken strips grown from self-reproducing cells

CLIMATE CORNER

Future climate change will affect plants and soil differently

Diet and global climate change

Climate change and an 'overlooked' nutrient: Silica

WHO KNEW ?

Mighty American chestnut poised for return to America's forests

Making 'mulch' ado of ant hills

'Super sponge' promises effective toxic clean-up of lakes and more

Spiders eat astronomical numbers of insects

Timberland's new line of shoes and backpacks is made from plastic bottles.

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

Perennial Plant of the Year 2017: *Asclepias tuberosa*



With all the "buzz" about bees and butterflies, why not celebrate an excellent plant known for its ability to support insects and birds and serve as the primary caterpillar food for a beloved North American native butterfly? The Perennial Plant Association is proud to announce *Asclepias tuberosa* as its **2017 Perennial Plant of the Year™**.

Hardiness USDA Zones 4 to 9

Light - Butterfly weed grows best in full sun.

Soil - Grows best in well-drained soils and it is drought tolerant.

Uses - Butterfly weed is a perfect selection for full-sun meadow or prairie gardens as well as formal to semi-formal urban gardens. Flower arrangers find the plants make long-lasting cut flowers.

Unique Qualities - *Asclepias tuberosa* are butterfly magnets. Flowers are a nectar source for many butterflies and leaves are a food source for the monarch butterfly caterpillars.

Maintenance - Butterfly weed is subject to no serious insect or disease problems. Deer usually avoid butterfly weed.

Picture and text from: <http://perennialplant.org/index.php/component/k2/item/190-2017-perennial-plant-of-the-year>

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>

April 2017 DMP