



UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

www.ladybug.uconn.edu



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SEPTEMBER is for Squash Bugs, Milkweed Seeds and Smoke Signal Little Bluestem

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:



Squash bug by Joan Allen, UConn



Milkweed seed pods by Joan Allen, UConn



Milkweed bugs feeding on seedpods
by Pamm Cooper, UConn

Squelch Those Squash Bugs

Especially now with the foliage of summer squash, zucchini and pumpkins looking pretty sparse after attacks by downy and powdery mildew, those greyish insects that you see congregating on the fruit look like an alien invasion. These creatures are most likely squash bugs. While the number of them on squash or pumpkins appear alarming, damage by them at this time is usually light as they primarily fed on the leaves earlier in the growing season. Adults will overwinter while juveniles, referred to as nymphs, are typically killed by hard frosts. The adults spend the winter in garden debris or other sheltered places, emerge next spring and lay eggs on plants in the Cucurbitaceae family. Eggs hatch into nymphs that turn into adults and the cycle repeats itself. It is too late for control measures this year but contact the horticulturists at the UConn Home & Garden Education Center for information on squash bug control for next season (877) 486-6271 or www.ladybug.uconn.edu.

Saving Milkweed Seeds

Many gardeners are aware of the plight of the monarch butterfly. Population declines due to habitat loss, herbicide use, lower availability of host plants and pollen producing plants, and temperature and precipitation swings due to climate change have caused the monarch butterfly population to plummet in recent years. Organizations like [Monarch Watch](#) and others have encouraged residents throughout the migration range of the monarch to plant species of milkweed (*Asclepius*) that can feed the Monarch caterpillars as well as a diversity of other plant species that can supply nectar and other support to the adult butterflies, either on their way up north or, to fuel them for their journey south to overwinter. One way to increase the number of milkweed species in your garden is to collect and sow the seeds from plants either in the wild or in your gardens. Seedpods are similar looking for *Asclepius* species and are rather conical in shape and on the top part of the stem. As they dry, the pods turn brown and open to reveal seeds with feathery plumes (called coma). Left to their own devices, the seeds become airborne and the colony of milkweed spreads both by seeds and by underground rhizomes from parent plants. Many gardeners collect some seeds and sow them in areas they desire plants to grow but because germination is sporadic also start some inside in late winter. Here is some information about propagating milkweed seeds: <http://www.monarchwatch.org/milkweed/prop.htm>

Who's Eating My Milkweed Seeds?

Now that you have decided to save and plant some milkweed seeds, the next step is to find ripened ones. Those with large patches of common milkweed (*A. syriaca*) may find plenty of seed pods to collect (never take more than 1/3) but for those with butterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*) and swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*) in smaller gardens may notice that between the voracious monarch butterfly larvae and milkweed bugs, there are not a lot of seed pods left to harvest. Best suggestions are to order seeds and plant them indoors in the spring or buy plants next year and hope that these two obligate feeders leave some pods to mature and spread their wealth next year.

Insect Invaders

With cooler weather on the horizon, we can look forward to our spectacular fall foliage season and also to many species of insects looking for housing accommodations for the winter, often in our homes. Some of the likely suspects are the Asian lady beetle, the leaf-footed plant bug, the boxelder bug and the brown marmorated stink bug. While each insect invader has different characteristics, the control suggestions in these fact sheets will do much to keeping many of them out of your homes this winter season:

http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/insect_alerts/brown_marmorated_stink_bug_insect_alert.pdf and <https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/fact-sheets/house-invaders>

Cure for Fire Blight?

Just announced this week is a possible cure for fire blight. This is a serious bacterial disease of apples, pears and other members of the Rosaceae family. It is spread by splashing rain and pollinators and although some copper compounds and antibiotics could help stem its spread, the disease is difficult to control. With new developments, scientists (some from Connecticut) now believe they are on a path to be able to counter this destructive pathogen. <http://s.uconn.edu/potentialfireblightcure>

Emerald Ash Borer Found in UConn Forest

The emerald ash borer is a tiny, emerald green insect from Asia. It was first noticed in the U.S. in 2002 and sightings were confirmed in Connecticut in 2012. UConn forestry faculty noticed emerald ash borer damage on trees on Horsebarn Hill and have developed some management plans. Throughout the U.S, millions of trees have already been killed by this exotic pest. Learn about UConn's efforts to control the emerald ash borer. [Read more.](#)

Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include tar spot on maples, wasps, lawn renovation, tussock moths, trumpet vine control, stink bugs, powdery mildew and wild turkeys. 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 September Gardener:

1. Get a jump on next year's lawn and gardens by having a soil test done through the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory: www.soiltest.uconn.edu.
2. Now is the time to de-thatch and aerate lawns to promote root growth.
3. Remove bagworm egg masses from evergreen shrubs and gypsy moth and eastern tent caterpillar egg masses from deciduous trees to eliminate the spring hatch from over-wintered eggs.
4. Apply fall fertilizer to lawns no later than October 15th.
5. Continue to water any new shrub or tree plantings until the first hard frost.
6. Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only one and a half to two inches below ground level. Planting them deeper than two inches may keep them from blooming.
7. Rake up leaves, twigs, and fruit from crabapple trees and throw them in the garbage or bury them to help control apple scab disease.
8. Fill containers with fall mums, asters and ornamental kales.
9. As tomatoes end their production, cut down plants, pick up any debris and put dead/diseased plant parts in the trash or take to a landfill. Many diseases will over-winter on old infected leaves and stems so these are best removed from the property.
10. Dig and store tender bulbs like caladiums and tuberous begonias before they are hit by a hard frost. Let the foliage wither and die and store in slightly moistened peat moss.

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

September 21, October 19, November 16. Green Forum at Auer Farm. 6:30 to 9:00. Auer Farm

UConn's Hartford Cooperative Extension Council presents

THE FIRST ANNUAL GREEN FORUM @ AUERFARM

2017 TOPIC: FOOD WASTE

September 21, October 19, and November 16, 2017
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
158 Auer Farm Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002



For registration and info go to: www.s.uconn.edu/3uk. \$25 for 3 lectures on food waste, landfill alternatives and hunger.

UConn Native Plants and Pollinators Conference

STUDENT UNION BALLROOM (ROOM 330)
2100 Hillside Road, Storrs, CT 06269
October 19, 2017



Register online on the IPM website (www.ipm.uconn.edu)
Early Registration \$50.00, by Friday, September 8, 2017
\$60.00 after September 8, 2017
Students \$25.00 with valid school ID

Registration fee includes parking, morning refreshments, and lunch.

Sessions include **‘Lifestyles of Pollinators’** by Dr. David Wagner, EEB, UConn, **‘Native Perennials for Bees, Butterflies, and Birds’** by Emily DeBolt, Fiddlehead Creek Nursery, NY, **‘Selecting Native Shrubs for Season-long Pollinator Support’** Dr. Jessica Lubell, PSLA, UConn, **‘Research Update: Examining Pollinator Attraction of Shrub Nativars’** by Jacob Ricker, Grad Student, PSLA, UConn and **‘Native Trees for Pollinators’** by Andrew Brand, Broken Arrow Nursery, CT



2017 UConn Master Composter Program

Become a UConn Master Composter! The purpose of the Master Composter Program is to provide local compost enthusiasts with the tools and information necessary to educate and teach interested community members about composting and reducing the amount of solid waste sent to the state’s incinerators and landfills. Participants would attend classroom sessions at the Fairfield County Extension Center in Bethel,

CT. Two Saturday field trips will also be scheduled, with one being mandatory. Classes begin Thursday, October 6th and will run for 4 consecutive Thursdays, plus on Worm Day which is Saturday October 21st.

A Master Composter Certificate is awarded to those who have attended all program sessions, demonstrated a solid understanding of composting principles and practices, and engaged in a minimum of two outreach activities. Program fee is \$100 payable to University of Connecticut. Enrollment will be limited to 24 participants. Visit www.ladybug.uconn.edu for more information or call (860) 486-4274.

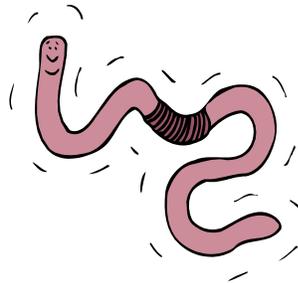
UConn Master Composter Program presents:

WORM DAY, October 21, 2017, 10 am – 1 pm.

What: Learn about invasive and beneficial earthworms, discover how to set up and care for a worm bin with vermicomposting worms, make your own bin to bring home (complete with worms).

Where: Fairfield County Extension Center, Bethel, CT

To register and find out more go to www.ladybug.uconn.edu. Program is free. \$5 donation for worms appreciated.



Saturday, September 23, 2017. MA Master Gardener Association presents their 2nd Annual Gardening Symposium ‘Inspiration for Next Year’s Garden’. 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. Westford Academy, Westford, MA. \$90 registration. Features presentations by Thomas Rainer, landscape architect and author, David L. Culp of Sunny Border, Kathleen Gagan of Peony’s Envy and Janet Macunovich, gardening educator and author. <http://massmastergardeners.org/2017-gardening-symposium/>

Friday, September 29, 2017. CT Horticultural Society’s 2017 Fall Plant Sale & Auction. Tolland Agricultural Center in Vernon. Plant viewing begins at 6:30 pm, sale & silent auction begin at 7 pm, followed by live auction. Free admission. For more information, contact CHS Plant Sale & Auction Committee at auction@cthort.org or call the CHS office at (860) 529-8713 www.cthort.org.

Saturday & Sunday, October 7 & 8. CT Garlic & Harvest Fest. Bethlehem Fairgrounds. Admission fee. www.garlicfestct.com.

For a listing of CT Agricultural Fairs that are happening through October, go to:
<http://www.ctagfairs.org/>

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A shortage of farmworkers in California leaves crops rotting in the fields

The Meat Industry Refuses to Track Drugs on America's Farms—and It's Making Superbugs Worse

World's oldest Italian wine just discovered

U.S. Apple Crop Forecast Down 8%

Introducing your latest Instagram health food trend...Blue Majik.

Clay-based antimicrobial packaging keeps food fresh

CLIMATE CORNER

Al Gore Returns with an Ever-More Inconvenient Truth

Human-caused warming likely led to recent streak of record-breaking temperatures

How Wicked Will Winter 2018 Be in the U.S.?

Climate may quickly drive forest-eating beetles north, says study

How Many More Hurricanes This Year?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/27/climate/nitrogen-fertilizers-climate-change-pollution-waterways-global-warming.html>

WHO KNEW?

The truth about cats' and dogs' environmental impact

Bobwhite quails: Solution to nation's tick problem?

Clay-based antimicrobial packaging keeps food fresh

More than 99 percent of the microbes inside us are unknown to science

A new estimate of biodiversity on Earth

Light pollution as a new threat to pollination

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

UCONN SOIL NUTRIENT ANALYSIS LAB: www.soiltest.uconn.edu

UCONN EXTENSION: www.extension.uconn.edu

UCONN FOOD SAFETY: www.foodsafety.uconn.edu

Little Bluestem ‘Smoke Signals’



Photo from: <https://grasstalk.wordpress.com/2016/11/16/smoke-signal-little-bluestem/>

Both ornamental and native grasses are most appreciated in autumn with their gentle sway in the wind giving movement to the garden and attractive seedpods. Increasing interest in native plants has expanded to include native grasses which are also important for native insect and animal species. Several cultivars of little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) were grown and evaluated at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum with ‘Smoke Signal’ praised for its upright habit and great coloration.

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.

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