JANUARY IS FOR JAPANESE KERRIA, JERUSALEM CHERRY & BLUE JUNIPERS!

Hello Fellow Gardeners! You are receiving this email because you have provided us with your email address either when 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:

Grow Japanese Kerria for Attractive Green Stems in Winter
While Japanese kerria (Kerria japonica) is usually grown for its bright gold, single or double blossoms appearing in late April or May, in the winter time the slender, apple green stems stand out nicely against a white snow cover. Plants can reach 3 to 6 feet high depending on the cultivar. The stems gracefully arch over as they mature. This plant does send up suckers so place in a semi-shaded site where it can spread a bit.  http://hort.uconn.edu/detail.php?pid=239
Keep Children and Pets Away from Jerusalem Cherry Plants
Jerusalem cherries are a winter-fruiting annual often sold around the holidays because of their decorative and colorful fruits. They are quite attractive with shiny, dark green leaves and round fruits of yellow, orange or red. Their flowers look a lot like pepper or tomato blossoms and that is because they are members of the same family, the nightshades. Unlike tomatoes or peppers, however, the fruits of the Jerusalem cherry are toxic and may cause severe gastrointestinal irritation and adversely affect the central nervous system. Those with curious kids or pets may want to steer clear of this plant. Others can enjoy the plant for its seasonal beauty. Jerusalem cherries prefer sunny, cool conditions and to be kept moist and well fertilized during periods of active growth. Check out our safe and toxic plant list: http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/houseplants--safe-or-poisonous.php

Winter Heaths for Winter Flowers
Heaths and heathers are low growing evergreen shrubs that favor acidic soils like rhododendrons and azaleas. One of their most notable features is their bloom period from winter through early spring, depending on the temperature. The delicate appearance of the urn-shaped, pinkish flowers belies their hardiness. To learn more about these amazing plants that brave winters cold, check out this week’s ladybug blog: https://uconnladybug.wordpress.com/

Some Maples & Other Woody Plants Still Holding Their Leaves
Some red and Japanese maples are hanging on to their leaves. The warm fall kept the trees from activating the abscission process of releasing the leaf stems from the branch, a process normally triggered by shorter days and colder temperatures. A sudden drop to cold temperatures in early November froze the cells used in the leaf release process. If trees still have leaves during heavy snow falls, the leaves collect more snow than a bare branch would, weighing down the branch and making it much more likely to break from the heavier snow load. Smaller trees can be brushed off, but larger ones are just too big for folks to remove the snow. (Photo by dmp, UConn 1-1-2018)
This Arctic Blast May Slow Spread of Emerald Ash Borer
According to the USDA Forest Service, at minus 20 F, emerald ash borer larvae start to freeze. While this kind of cold is more likely to be seen in the upper Midwest, perhaps these frigid temperatures will keep some insect pests in check.
https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive_species/eab/control_management/cold_hardiness/

Bagworms on Arborvitae & Other Plants
Several callers have asked about the elongated structures of needles and leaves that they are finding on arborvitae, junipers and other evergreens. These are casings constructed during this past year by bagworms. They carry this bag along with them as they feed. Later after pupating and mating, eggs are deposited in the bags and will overwinter. The eggs hatch once warm weather returns and feeding on both evergreen and some deciduous plants begins again. One method of control is to remove these bags if reachable and dispose of them in the trash. http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/bagworm.php
Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include controlling mice in homes, insects brought in with firewood, spots on leaves of houseplants, wilting of houseplants due to root rots and exposure to cold, starting seeds and forcing bulbs. 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.

The Facts About GMOs
Genetically engineered plants, animals and microorganisms (popularly known as GMOs) and how they are used are hotly debated topics. Many people aren’t sure what they are or if they are safe for consumption, the environment, or even society. There is a lot of confusing and sometimes inaccurate information available and it can be difficult to separate out the facts. A group of twelve faculty from four different departments in UConn’s College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources has developed a website (www.gmo.uconn.edu) to help provide factual, science-based information for both consumers and professionals. Have a look and if you have any questions, get in touch with one of the members of our team.

Ten Tips for the January Gardener:
1. Use your gift certificates to purchase gardening books, tools or garden ornaments.
2. When using a snowblower, direct the snowy discharge away from shrub plantings.
3. Cut amaryllis flower stalks down after bloom.
4. Inspect houseplants for insect pests.
5. Give houseplants a quarter turn each time you water so they will not lean toward the light.
6. Treat yourself to some new houseplants to brighten long winter days.
7. Liven up winter meals with windowsill herbs.
8. Check out Advanced Garden Master classes that are open to the public by going to: https://uconnmastergardeners.gosignmeup.com/.
9. Peruse seed and nursery catalogs on cold winter nights. Make up your wish list.
10. If starting seeds under fluorescent lights, check bulbs for dark rings on the ends of the tubes.
    These bulbs should be replaced.

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:
UConn Extension Vegetable & Small Fruit Growers’ Conference
Monday, January 8, 2018. Maneely’s Conference Center, Windsor, CT. For more information contact: MacKenzie.White@UConn.edu, 860 875-3331

Solid Ground Farmer Trainings
The training calendar for year 2 of Solid Ground Farmer Trainings is now available on our webpage! We have some excellent new offerings this year, including 100 & 200-level Farm Financial trainings, Finding Your Market, Cover Crop Intensives, and more. Please check out the topics, trainers and dates/locations offered there to see when you'll be able to join us this winter! The webpage is always the most up-to-date place to get information on the dates and time (and potential weather cancellations) for this training series.

As always, these trainings are **FREE** to growers. Please RSVP to me (charlotte.ross@uconn.edu) if you plan to come to a training, or be in touch with any questions.

This series is funded by the USDA Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program, coordinated through UConn Extension, and offered in collaboration with the many Agricultural Learning Partners that host trainings and support CT Farmer learning across the state.

Beekeepers School The Connecticut Beekeepers Association (CBA) Beekeeping School. Saturday, Jan 20 2018 at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven and Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018 at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village. The school’s hours are 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration fee is $50. For more information or to register, go to: [http://ctbees.org/bee-school/](http://ctbees.org/bee-school/).

**UCCONN GARDEN MASTER CLASSES** are offered through the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program. These classes provide continuing education for Certified Master Gardeners as part of the Advanced Master Gardener certification process. These classes are also open to the **General Public**. Anyone with an interest in gardening and horticulture is welcome. For a list of classes go to: [http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/garden-master-classes/](http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/garden-master-classes/)

**Five Ways to Cover Ground & Give the Lawnmower a Rest** Wednesday, Jan 17, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford, CT. Instructor: Kathy Connolly

**The Unsung Season, Gardens in Winter** Saturday, Jan 27, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford CT. Instructor: Karen Bussolini

**Houseplants: Plants in Containers in the House** Monday, Jan 29, 2018 from 6 to 8 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam CT. Instructor: Elaine Massa

**Social Media & Other Technology for the Master Gardener** Thursday, Feb 1, 2018 from 1 to 3 pm. Hartford County Extension Center, West Hartford, CT. Instructor: Gail Kalison Reynolds

**Plant Pruning Basics** Monday, Feb 5, 2018 from 10 am to noon. New Haven County Extension Center, North Haven CT. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox
Propagation by Specialized Stems for the Home Gardener  Saturday, Feb 10, 2018 from 10 am to noon. New London County Extension Center, Norwich, CT. Instructor: Adam Wheeler

Livable Garden Design  Sunday, Feb 11 and Feb 25, 2018 from 1 to 4 pm. Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon CT. Instructor: Sarah Bailey

CT DEEP
The Ecohouse: Tour of a Sustainable Home  Saturday, Jan 13, 2018, 3 – 4 pm. Sustainable Home, Hampton, CT.

Treasures of the Forest: A Study of Local Terrestrial Orchids  Saturday, Jan 13, 2018 1 – 2 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

The Apiary Series: Starting Your Hive  Sunday, Jan 14, 2018 2 – 3 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Black Bears in Connecticut  Saturday, Jan 20, 2018 2 – 3 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Winter Tree ID for Beginners  Saturday, Jan 20, 2018 10 am - noon. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Bobcats in Connecticut  Thursday, Jan 25, 2018 6 pm. Sessions Woods WMA Education Center, Burlington, CT.

Living in Harmony With Mother Earth: East Direction  Saturday, Jan 27, 1 – 2:30 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

The Fascinating World of Bugs  Saturday, Jan 27, 10 am – noon. Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby, CT.

Gardener’s Roundtable  Saturday, January 27, 10 – 11:30 am. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

How Permaculture Practices Can Benefit Your Yard & Garden  Sunday, January 28, 2018 1 – 2:30 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

For more information and additional programs visit ct.gov/deep/calendar


SAVE THE DATE: CT NOFA Winter Conference, Saturday March 10, 2018. Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT  
http://www.ctnofa.org/

SAVE THE DATE: The SWCS Southern New England Chapter's annual Winter Conference, Friday, March 16, 2018 in Sturbridge, MA at the Publick House Historic Inn. This year’s focus is Forestry, and in conjunction with this conference, EnviroCert International, Inc. (ECI) will be leading review courses and a next day exam for several professional certifications including but not limited to the CPESC and CESSWI. Registration for the ECI courses and exams are currently available at  
http://booking.envirocertintl.org/, and is a separate registration from the Winter Conference. Registration for the SWCS SNEC Winter Conference will open soon!  
www.swcssnec.org

http://www.ctmga.org/

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Weekly fish consumption linked to better sleep, higher IQ

Drinking hot tea every day linked to lower glaucoma risk

Garlic Can Fight Chronic Infections

Study Finds Consuming Nuts Strengthens Brainwave Function

A peanut a day keeps the cardiologist away?

CLIMATE CORNER
More-severe climate model predictions could be the most accurate

Climate change may favor large plant eaters over small competitors

Curbing climate change

High-resolution climate models present alarming new projections for US

WHO KNEW?
Mass of warm rock rising beneath New England

Invasive plants have unprecedented ability to pioneer new continents and climates
Evergreen plants are especially appreciated during the drab winter months. A favorite of many is the upright blue juniper ‘Wichita Blue’ providing a strong, vertical element in the landscape. It matures at a height of 10 to 15 feet and a width of only 4 to 6 feet at its base. Use them as individual accents or plant a row as a hedge or windbreak. Junipers should be planted in full sun and once established they are drought tolerant, hardy and rarely bothered by deer. ‘Wichita Blue’ has lovely, stiff silvery-blue needles. ‘Blue Heaven’ and ‘Blue Arrow’ are two other Juniper scopulorum cultivars selected for their notable blue foliage color.
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 visiting our website, [www.ladybug.uconn.edu].

January 2018 DMP