FEBRUARY IS FOR FORKED ROOTS, FREE SOIL pH TESTS & INSECTS FROM FIREWOOD!

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:

No, These Carrots Aren’t Huddling Together to Stay Warm!
Sometimes curious things happen in the vegetable garden. Take these forked carrot roots for instance. Like many conditions in nature, there could be multiple explanations for this growth pattern according to Joan Allen, who runs the UConn Plant Diagnostic Lab in Storrs. Perhaps fresh manure was added in the spring and the salts in the manure killed the root tips and caused this forking. Extremely compacted or
rocky soil can also result in forked roots. If parts of the roots are soft or brown, they may have been infected by a root disease. Also, infection by root-knot nematodes may show up as warty bumps or ‘hairy roots’. Soil fertility imbalances can sometimes result in forked or abnormal root formation. If you need your vegetables checked for diseases or nematodes, contact the UConn Plant Diagnostic Lab. www.plant.lab.uconn.edu.

**Bring a Half Cup of Soil & Your Gardening Questions to the CT Flower Show**

We’d love to meet you at the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show which will be held February 22 – 25, 2018 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, CT. Bring a half cup of soil for a free soil pH test by the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab (www.soiltest.uconn.edu). Limestone or sulfur recommendations are given if needed. UConn Home & Garden Education Center staff along with UConn Master Gardeners will be there all four days to answer your gardening questions. Aside from the remarkable landscapes set up by Connecticut businesses and societies, there are over 300 vendor booths filled with flowers, plants, gardening supplies and more. A favorite for many is the exquisite floral arrangements and settings by the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. http://ctflowershow.com/

**Are Insects from Firewood Bugging You?**

This cold winter weather has many of us supplementing our traditional heat sources with either wood burning stoves or fireplaces. Especially when cold, wintry conditions are predicted, logs are often brought into the cellar or the house so they will not need to be fetched while the snow is falling and winds howling. Sometimes along with the wood come unwanted guests – namely insects who thought they had found a snug abode for the winter. These may include both long-horned and short-horned beetles, pill bugs and centipedes. Occasionally the logs may harbor termites or carpenter ants. The majority of these insects pose no threat to us or to our homes but are considered a nuisance. http://blog-yard-garden-news.extension.umn.edu/2018/01/firewood-insects-only-nuisance.html

**Temperature Swings are Causing Plants to Frost Heave**

![Frost-heaved plant and frost-heaved plant covered with evergreen boughs. Photos by dmp, UConn](image)

This past month has seen pretty wide ranging swings in temperature. This would not be as much of a problem if there was a nice layer of snow covering the gardens and keeping the ground at a more constant temperature. Because of these vast fluctuations, many shallow rooted plants, like coral bells
and mums, as well as those set in later in the fall that did not have enough time to establish good root systems, may be poking out of the ground. Check out your garden beds and if plants are heaved out of the ground, try to gently replant if the soil is not frozen. If it is, cover the roots with some potting soil, mulch or evergreen boughs to protect them from freezing and desiccation.

**Winter Moth Numbers at Record Low – at Least in Massachusetts**
Dr. Joseph Elkinton, Professor of Environmental Conservation at UMass, Amherst has found the winter moth population in MA to be at an all time low. This invasive pest feeds on maples, oaks, apples and other deciduous plants. Tiny caterpillars hatch out just as buds are breaking and feed on the expanding leaf tissue often causing severe damage. In Connecticut, winter moths have been spotted primarily near the Rhode Island border but they will likely continue to spread over time. Check out the "Trouble Maker of the Month" article available in UMass Extension's most recent Hort Notes newsletter: [https://ag.umass.edu/…/n…/hort-notes/hort-notes-2018-vol-292](https://ag.umass.edu/…/n…/hort-notes/hort-notes-2018-vol-292).

![Photo from UMass](image)

**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](http://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 February Gardener:**

2. Begin fertilizing houseplants with a water-soluble fertilizer once they resume active growth.

3. During stretches of mild weather, turn the compost pile to provide aeration. If you are storing any roots or tubers over winter, compost any that are soft or moldy.
4. Finish purchasing this season’s seeds and organize them by planting dates. Also, purchase seed flats, containers, peat pellets and seed starting media as necessary.

5. Use sawdust, sand, or cat litter to provide traction on icy surfaces; sodium salts can be toxic to many plants.

6. Prune dead or damaged limbs from any trees and shrubs, and begin pruning apple and pear trees as weather allows.

7. Start some seeds indoors under lights; onions, leeks, and slow-growing flowers need to grow for 10 to 12 weeks before going in your garden. Also, check lightbulbs and replace if necessary.

8. Build a birdfeeder for a fun indoor project. Hang it at least six feet off the ground to keep predators away and keep it full of seed or suet.

9. Check on your gardening supplies. Clay pots can be soaked overnight in a 1:1 solution of water and vinegar and scrubbed down. Clean the metal parts of tools and sharpen if needed.

10. Contact your local garden club for a list of upcoming lectures, workshops, or courses. Check out even more monthly tips at: [http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/gardening-tips-february.php](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/gardening-tips-february.php)

**Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:**

**Connecticut Flower & Garden Show**, The UConn Home & Garden Education Center and UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab will be at the show all 4 days. Bring some soil in for a free pH test and your gardening questions to be answered by UConn staff and Master Gardeners. Come hear our talks and introduce yourself. Dawn Pettinelli will speak on **When Good Worms Go Bad** on Thursday, Feb. 22 at 11 am, Pamm Cooper will present **Ways to Enhance Wildlife Habitat** on Friday at 3:30 and Carol Quish will talk about **Backyard Composting** on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 2 pm.

**Solid Ground Farmer Trainings**
The training calendar for year 2 of [Solid Ground Farmer Trainings](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/gardening-tips-february.php) 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.

**UCONN 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/

**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

**Tropical Storms, Hurricanes and Superstorms: Impacts & Influence on Tree Diseases** Thursday, Feb 15, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford, CT. Instructor: Dr. Robert Marra

**Big, Bigger, Biggest – Growing Giant Pumpkins** Saturday, Feb 17, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Windham County Extension Center, Brooklyn, CT. Instructor: Matt DeBacco

**Planting for Birds & Pollinators: Gardening for Wildlife** Monday, Feb 19, 2018 from 3 – 5 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam, CT. Instructor: Ellen Falbowski

**It’s a Big, Bug World** Tuesday, Feb 27, 2018 from 1 – 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center, Bethel, CT. Instructor: Nicole Christensen

**The Plain Truth About Bee Keeping Part 1** Wednesday, Feb 28, 2018 from 10 am – noon. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam, CT. Instructor: Linda Stuhlman

**Behind the Scenes at a Flower Farm** Saturday, March 10, 2018 from noon to 2 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center, Haddam, CT. Instructor: Evelyn Lee

**Vegetable Varieties & the All-America Selections** Thursday, March 1, 2018 from 10 am to 2 pm. Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon, CT. Instructor: Robert Durgy

**Coastal Certificate Program** March 12, 14, 19, 21 from 6 – 9 pm, March 18 from 10 am to 2 pm. Connecticut College, New London, CT. Coordinator: Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant

**CT DEEP**
Vegetable Gardening with John Lorusso (UConn Master Gardener Coordinator Windham County), Saturday, February 10, 2018 1 – 3 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Gardener’s Roundtable Saturday, February 17, 10 – 11:30 am. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.
Tips & Tools for Organic Management of Vegetable Insect Pests (Dr. Ana Legrand, UConn Assistant Extension Professor) Saturday, February 17, 2018 1 – 2 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Black Bears in Connecticut: When, Where & How Many (Dr. Tracy Rittenhouse, UConn Assistant Professor) Saturday, February 24, 2018 1 – 2 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

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

SAVE THE DATE: Creating & Improving Pollinator Habitat Conference, Tuesday February 27, 2018 (snow date March 1), CT Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven, CT www.ct.gov/caes/pollinators


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


UConn Extension Vegetable IPM Program

February 10th – Ag Re$ource Fair A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford (Contact: chelsey.solidground@gmail.com)

February 13th – Spring Bedding Plant Program, Litchfield County Extension Center, Torrington (Contact: Leanne.pundt@uconn.edu)

February 17th – Tips and Tools for Organic Management of Vegetable Insect Pests, James L. Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton (Contact: jasper.sha@ct.gov)

February 21st – Risk Management School, Nonnewaug High School, Woodbury (Contact: mackenzie.white@uconn.edu)

February 22nd – Risk Management School, Scout Hall, East Windsor (Contact: mackenzie.white@uconn.edu)

February 22nd – Spring Bedding Plant Program, Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon (Contact: Leanne.pundt@uconn.edu)
February 27th - Pollinator Habitat Conference, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven (Contact: tracy.zarrillo@ct.gov)

FREE One-on-One Agricultural Advising Sessions – Offered at 7 Locations!
These One-on-One sessions provide you with the opportunity to sit down in a confidential setting with an agri-business professional for up to one hour to discuss farm related questions, concerns, and techniques to help your agribusiness succeed into the future.
Final schedule coming soon! Contact: mackenzie.white@uconn.edu

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2018 Connecticut Horse Symposium  
Saturday, March 3rd  
Sponsored by the CAHNR Department of Animal Science & Country Folks Mane Stream

Events include:
- Sessions with Mike Maloney of Vaqueria Training Center on the fundamentals of Western Dressage
- Hands On Horse Science! Learn about the lameness locator, sadie fitting, take a barn fire safety tour and more!
- Learn how to improve your riding by picking up techniques from the pros!
- UConn Morgan Drill Team & UConn Polo Match
- Vendor Fair & Equine Camp Fair
- Bring your own horse and participate in a clinic (pre-registration required)

As Always a Great Value!

$20 Adults All Day Pass  
$10 2-3pm 
$5 Age 9-18/4-H leaders/ UConn Students/ 4-H Members/ after 1PM

$35 Active Participation: Rider Drive in Clinic ($5 total to use a UConn horse) 
$30 UConn students, Horse Practicum and 4-H Members active participation ($50 total to use a UConn horse)

horsesymposium.uconn.edu  
UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Sponsors and Vendors welcome - call for more info  
Contact Dr. Jenifer Nadeau  
Email: jenifer.nadeau@uconn.edu  
Phone: 860-486-4471  
Fax: 860-486-4375
Equestrian Team Show Schedule
Schools competing are part of Zone 1 Region 5

Spring Shows 2018
January 20 Tournament of Champions, Ohio University
February 4 CCSU, New Britain, CT

February 10 UConn, Storrs, CT
February 24 Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT
March 3 Connecticut College, Gales Ferry, CT
March 31 Regionals, Mystic Valley, Gales Ferry, CT
April 7 Zone Championships, MHC, South Hadley, MA
May 1-6 IHSA Nationals, Harrisburg, VA

Western Team Show Schedule
Schools competing are part of Zone 1

Spring Shows 2018
February 3 UConn, Double Header, Storrs, CT
February 10 Mount Holyoke College, Double Header, South Hadley, MA
February 18 Regionals, SHU, Double M Ranch, Southbury, CT
March 17-18 Semi-Finals, Galva, IL
May 1-6 IHSA Nationals, Harrisburg, VA

Dressage Team Show Schedule
Schools competing are part of Region B

Spring Shows 2018
March 10 Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
March 24 UConn, Storrs, CT
Tentative: March 25 UConn, Storrs, CT
April 26-29 IDA Nationals

Please contact Coach Alena Meacham at 860-486-3377 or Alena.Meacham@UConn.edu for more information.

Revised 1/30/2017

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Mediterranean diet may help protect older adults from becoming frail
Animal carnivores could be our powerful allies

Curcumin improves memory and mood

What is the environmental impact of your lunch-time sandwich?

Bacteria in milk and beef linked to rheumatoid arthritis

Bottled water sales fueled by desire for immortality

CLIMATE CORNER
A changing climate, changing wine

Study predicts a significantly drier world at 2°C

New research suggests that our chocolate supply could be threatened due to climate change

The Top 7 Climate Findings of 2017

Warming Trend Continued in 2017 Across Southern New England

What a Disaster! 2017 Weather Was Truly Historic

WHO KNEW?
Lethal fungus that causes white-nose syndrome may have an Achilles' heel

Forests are the key to fresh water

Forecast Calls for a Snowy Owl Winter

Shale gas is one of the least sustainable ways to produce electricity, research finds

An outdoor cat can damage your sustainability cred

Lightweight robots harvest cucumbers

UCONN PLANT DIAGNOSTIC LAB: www.plant.lab.uconn.edu
UCONN SOIL NUTRIENT ANALYSIS LAB: www.soiltest.uconn.edu
UCONN EXTENSION: www.extension.uconn.edu
Ficus make long-lived and delightful houseplants. The weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*) is a very popular and easy to grow houseplant that will eventually reach several feet in height and width. They can sometimes be purchased as a standard with three stems braided together. Keep plants in bright, indirect light and moderately moist. A common complaint is the plant shedding its leaves. In most cases, the leaf drop is because the plant was exposed to cold drafts or it was moved. Weeping figs prefer temperatures in the 60s and 70s F. Often leaves will drop when the plant is first brought home but if given the right light, water and temperatures, they will regrow in short order.

**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](https://www.facebook.com/pages/UConn-Home-Garden-Center/136211899745967), checking out our weekly blog [www.uconnladybug.wordpress.com](http://www.uconnladybug.wordpress.com) or visiting our website, [www.ladybug.uconn.edu](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu).

February 2018 DMP