



UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

www.ladybug.uconn.edu



Like us on Facebook!

MARCH IS FOR BLUE MOONS, MAPLE FLOWERS & MACRONUTRIENTS

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.

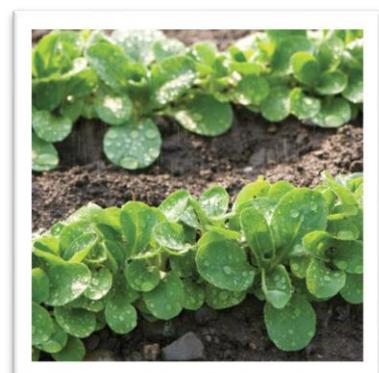
Pest Patrol/Current Concerns/Topics of Interest:



Crocuses by dmp, UConn



Red Maple Flowers by dmp, UConn



Mache or Corn Salad from:
www.johnnyseeds.com

Wide Winter Temperature Fluctuations

This has been a winter of wide and often wild fluctuations. One day temperatures are approaching 60 F and the next day it snows. That arctic blast from late 2017 into mid-January was one of the longest streaks of sub-freezing temperatures that our region has experienced. This was followed by record high

temperatures in February. Early bulbs have begun to bloom. More research is needed and being done but one explanation is that ‘kinks’ occur in the [polar jet stream](#).

Forcing Red Maples and Other Woodyies into Bloom

Impatient for spring? Why not force some branches from flowering trees and shrubs? This time of year it will take from 2 to 4 weeks for most early spring bloomers to open their flower buds. Cut stems of forsythia, red maples, quince, flowering almonds and peaches. If temperatures are above freezing when collected, recut the stems at an angle and place in a vase of water and floral preservative. Keep in a bright location and out of direct sunlight. Depending on the species of plant, the flower buds will open in the next few weeks. The earlier they naturally bloom, the faster they will force. Check out this [fact sheet](#) for more information on forcing woody plants into bloom.

Now is the Time to Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micronutrients



Photo by dmp, UConn

Beat the spring rush and send your soil sample in for testing now. Our standard nutrient analysis includes pH, macro- and micronutrients, a lead scan and as long as we know what you are growing, the results will contain limestone and fertilizer recommendations. The cost is \$12/sample. You are welcome to come to the lab with your ‘one cup of soil’ but most people are content to simply place their sample in a zippered bag and mail it in. For details on submitting a sample, go to www.soiltest.uconn.edu.

Slow Down for Frogs & Salamanders on the Move

The fluctuating winter temperatures are not only exasperating to us waiting for spring weather to finally arrive but they are bring [amphibians](#) out of hibernation in some areas earlier than usual. Typically, they begin coming out in mid-March and travel to breeding ponds, frequently crossing roads where they often are struck by cars. Installing ‘salamander barriers’ is one solution but finding funding for them is

challenging. Whenever driving on backroads on warmer, rainy nights, keep an eye out for amphibians and do your best to avoid them.



Photo by dmp, UConn 2018

Plant Mache, Asian Greens & Mustards Late March, Weather Permitting

Depending on the weather, a number of early greens can be seeded into garden beds later this month. Corn salad, also known as mache, has a sweet, nutty flavor and the tender leaves are primarily used fresh in salads. Mustard greens range in heat from mild to spicy. Use baby leaves in salads and more mature ones in stir-fries or steamed. Milder Asian greens likewise can be used fresh when young and generally are added to cooked dishes when mature. Most greens seeds can be sown when soil temperatures reach 40 F. Mini-hooped coverings can be used for an even earlier start.



Photo by dmp, UConn 2018

Ten Tips for the March Gardener:

1. Plant cool-season annuals, such as pansies, snapdragons, and calendulas at the end of the month, weather permitting.
2. Using sterile growing mix for starting seeds reduces problems with damping-off fungi. Avoid overwatering, which encourages root rots.
3. Once your garden beds thaw, remove old garden debris such as leaves, stalks, and seed heads to reduce the presence of any overwintering diseases and pests.
4. Before new shoots emerge, cut back last year's stalks on perennials and grasses.
5. Divide hosta when shoots appear. Clumps can be dug up, split and replanted.
6. Pot up begonia and caladium bulbs. Place in a warm, bright location to encourage growth.
7. Prune any houseplants that have gotten leggy to encourage new growth.
8. Seeds of vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and herbs that require 10-12 weeks of growth before transplanting can be started indoors now.
9. Direct plant seeds of cold weather vegetables like spinach, peas, lettuce and broccoli as soon as soil is workable.
10. Start your lawn mower, check to see if it needs service, and get the blades sharpened.

Check out even more [monthly gardening tips for March!](#)

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

Sustainable Pest Management for Your Organic Garden presented by UConn Home & Garden Education Center's plant pathologist, Joan Allen. Wednesday, March 21, 2018. East Haddam Senior Center, Moodus, CT. Free and open to all.

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: [UConn Master Gardener Program](#)

2018 Coastal Certificate Program March 12, 14, 19, 21 from 6 to 9 pm, March 18 from 10 am to 2 pm. Connecticut College, New London, CT. Coordinator: Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant

Forest Pests: Emerald Ash Borer & More Tuesday, March 10, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Windham County Extension Center, Brooklyn, CT. Instructor: Jude Hsiang

The Plain Truth About Beekeeping – Part 2 Wednesday, March 21, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Chunnie Town Farm, East Haddam, CT. Instructor: Linda Stuhlman

Latin for Gardeners Saturday, March 24, 2018 from 10 am to noon. New London County Extension Center, Norwich, CT. Instructor: Jude Hsiang

Gardening as if the World Depends on Us Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Litchfield County Extension Center, Torrington, CT. Instructor: Tovah Martin

CT DEEP

Meet the North American Porcupine, Saturday, March 10, 2018, 10 to 11 am. Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby, CT.

Gardener's Roundtable Saturday, March 24, 2018, 10 to 11:30 am. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Bark ID for Goodwin Trees Friday, March 23, 2018, 3:30 to 5:30 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

Colonial Gardens Saturday, March 31, 2018, 1 to 3 pm. James L Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton, CT.

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

SAVE THE DATE: (click on hyperlinks for additional information)

[Small Compost Systems Operator Training](#). Monday, March 12, 2018. Mansfield Town Hall Council Chamber Mansfield, CT

[Rhode Island Compost Conference](#), Thursday March 8, 2018. Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

[CT NOFA Winter Conference](#), Saturday March 10, 2018. Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT

The **[SWCS Southern New England Chapter's annual Winter Conference](#)**, Friday, March 16, 2018 in Sturbridge, MA at the Publick House Historic Inn.

[CT Master Gardener Association 2018 Symposium](#), Nature's Puzzle – Putting the Pieces Together, Saturday, March 17, 2018 Connecticut College, New London, CT.

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

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 12/20/2017

Annual Connecticut 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](#)

[Eastern Connecticut Conservation District](#)

[Northwest Conservation District](#)

[Southwest Conservation District](#) (no plant sale this year)

[Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District](#)

Connecticut College Events

Creating Rain Gardens with UConn's Mike Dietz. Tuesday, March 13, 2018 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm. At Public Library of New London.

The Art and Science of Pruning, March 31, 2018 from 10 am to noon. Lecture/demonstration

Growing Plants from Seed, April 4, 2018, 6:30 to 8:30
More information and registration at [Conn College website](#).

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Forage-based diets on dairy farms produce nutritionally enhanced milk

Diet, bugs and beating high blood pressure

Vegetarian and Mediterranean diet may be equally effective in preventing heart disease

High levels of microplastics found in Northwest Atlantic fish

5 Health benefits of mint that make it cooler than ever

Eating yogurt may reduce cardiovascular disease risk

CLIMATE CORNER

Mammals and birds could have best shot at surviving climate change

Changing weather patterns throwing ecosystems out of whack

A good life for all within the planet's means

WHO KNEW?

The Global Sanitation Crisis is a Huge Problem – The Wash Initiative Can Solve It

Daffodils to fight cancer: Anti-cancer effect of a daffodil extract

Being raised in greener neighborhoods may have beneficial effects on brain development

The more kinds of bees, the better for humans

Consumer and industrial products now a dominant urban air pollution source

Viruses—Lots of Them—Are Falling from the Sky

Did You Know?

The United States relies on an estimated 1.2 million miles of lead pipes for municipal delivery of drinking water and much of this aging infrastructure is reaching or has exceeded its lifespan. In 2012, the American Water Works estimated that a complete overhaul of the country's aging water system would cost about \$1 trillion.

From: <https://www.ecori.org/>

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

UCONN SCIENCE OF GMOS: www.gmo.uconn.edu

CALIBRACHOA 'BLUE MOON'



Photo by [Proven Winners](#)

Not only will there be a blue moon in the sky this month, but chances are you will be able to find ‘*Superbells Blue Moon*’ calibrachoa at your local garden center this spring. Calibrachoa is a wonderful annual for containers. It blooms throughout the growing season until done in by the frost, is heat tolerant and attracts hummingbirds. This plant can grow almost a foot high and tends to trail making it perfect for the front of containers or hanging baskets. Calibrachos do best in full to part sun and require a well-draining potting mix. Fertilize plants regularly and prune if they appear leggy in late summer. No deadheading is required.

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.

March 2018 DMP