



UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

www.ladybug.uconn.edu

MARCH IS FOR MONARCHS, MYSTIQUE BLUE ORCHIDS, MOCKINGBIRDS, MULTIFLORA ROSES & MARSALA !

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:



Monarchs on Tithonia DMP



Northern Mockingbird by Sy Schiff



Mystique 'Black Velvet' www.growertalks.com

Monarchs on Threatened Species List?

Few people fail to recognize the bright orange and black monarch butterflies that for so many years have slowly made their long journey from Mexico to our back yard and back throughout the growing season and four generations. Now, these beloved butterflies are in trouble. On average, Monarch Watch counts about 300 million monarchs as they migrate through the U. S. This past year only 55 million were counted and over this past winter only 1.13 hectares in Mexico were inhabited by overwintering monarchs which is the second lowest acreage on record. Most know that monarchs are dependent on milkweed. The adult butterflies feed on the nectar and pollen and lay eggs on milkweed plants which serve as a food source for their caterpillars. The reduction in monarch populations is well correlated with the reduction in milkweed plants especially in the Midwest where both increased use of herbicides and reduction in buffer strips between plantings have virtually eliminated wild milkweed plants in some areas. What can you do? Visit www.monarchwatch.org to find out how you can create a monarch waystation and <http://www.fws.gov/savethemonarch/> for more information on what the governments of the U.S. and Mexico are doing to save this butterfly and how you can make a difference.

Mockingbirds & Multiflora Roses:

Mockingbirds are medium sized songbirds that are now native to pretty much most of the United States. They are mostly grey in color with white wing bars, wing patches and tail feathers. They are famous for their mimicry, from other birds to human derived noises such as sirens. As the Asian multiflora rose was planted throughout the northeast starting in the 1930's for erosion control, the mockingbird savoring the rose hips produced by the plants has also migrated northwards and has played a role in spreading the seeds of this invasive and now pretty ubiquitous plant.

http://www.bbg.org/news/birds_of_brooklyn_northern_mockingbird/

'Black Velvet' from Mystique Orchid Series

Either you love the blue orchids or you hate them. Black Velvet was the winner of this year's Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition 'Favorite New Flowering Plant Award. Here a burgundy flower was inked with blue giving this most unusual effect. This plant is brought to you by Silver Vase, Inc – Orchids and Bromeliads.

Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include salt damage to plants, pruning damaged tree limbs, leaf-footed bugs in homes and ailing houseplants. If you have specific questions, gardening queries or pest problems, check out our website, www.ladybug.uconn.edu or call the UConn Home & Garden Education Center (877) 486-6271 (toll-free in CT). Your County Cooperative Extension Centers are also listed on the website.

LET'S CELEBRATE! 2015 is the INTERNATIONAL YEAR of SOILS

Watch the International Year of Soils : Soils Support Urban Life

Soils are the firm foundation for civilizations, both past and present. Though we sometimes lose sight of soil in our cities we must remember that a structure is only as strong as its foundation. We have cut deep into the soil...our footprint indelibly stamped on the landscape.

View the latest IYS video highlighting March's theme about how soils support agriculture:

<https://www.soils.org/iys/monthly-videos>

Learn more about International Year of Soils at www.soils.org/IYS

"Each soil has its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past." -Charles Kellogg, The Soils That Support Us, 1956

Ten Tips for the March Gardener:

1. Make plans to attend the UConn Garden Conference on March 19, 2015. Go to www.2015garden.uconn.edu for additional information.
2. Send your soil sample to the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory before April 1st to avoid the spring rush. Add limestone, fertilizer or organic materials as recommended but wait until mid-April to fertilize the lawn.
3. Start seeds of annual flowers and vegetables that require 10-12 weeks of growth before transplanting such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant.
4. Direct plant seeds of cold weather vegetables such as spinach, peas, lettuce, and broccoli as soon as the soil is workable.
5. Also, as the ground becomes workable, de-thatch any areas of the lawn that have an inch or more of thatch then reseed any bare spots.

6. Consider putting in raised garden beds in any areas where the soil is especially poor, compacted or does not drain well.
7. Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, snapdragons, and calendulas at the end of the month if the weather permits.
8. Carefully remove winter mulches from planting beds as the snow melts and the temperatures warm.
9. Save plastic milk jugs or 2-liter bottles to use as individual hot caps for small garden plants. Remember to remove them for watering or if the temperature rises.
10. Prune apple and pear trees as well as blueberry bushes during mild spells. If everbearing raspberries were not cut down last fall, prune the canes to the ground now.

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

SAVE THE DATE:

March 19, 2015 – UConn Garden Conference. Rome Ballroom, UConn Storrs Campus.

The 2015 UConn Garden Conference features an exciting lineup of top national speakers and local experts on various aspects of garden design, maintenance, and plant selection. This all-day conference offers valuable educational opportunities for gardeners of all levels, from the casual gardener to the Advanced Master Gardener. The speakers featured at the conference will include:

- Keynote speaker, author, and acclaimed photojournalist **Mark Hirsch**, who will present a talk based on his inspirational book *That Tree*.
- **Art Wolk**, award-winning bulb grower, writer and lecturer, speaking on *Bulb Forcing for Beginners & the Seriously Smitten*.
- Landscape designer **Amy Sampson**, owner of AES Landscape Design & Consultation, talking about *Residential Landscape Design Principles*.
- Smithsonian Gardens Horticulturist **James Gagliardi**, speaking on *Creating Seasonal Interest for Winter Gardens*.
- Professional Environmentalist and Wild Foods Enthusiast **Russ Cohen**, speaking on *Edible Native Plants for Your Landscape*.

Program and registration information, including online registration, is available at

www.2015garden.uconn.edu. A pre-registration fee of \$90 per person is due by March 12. The fee is \$100 per person if postmarked after March 12 or for walk-ins. **A registration discount of \$20 per person if registering groups of 3 or more together is available.** Student registration is \$25 with valid school ID. Registration is limited and nonrefundable. Please make checks payable to the **University of Connecticut and send to Joan Allen, University of Connecticut, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, 1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4067, Storrs, CT 06269-4067.**

Included with your registration: an information packet, lunch, morning and afternoon snacks, free parking, and selected autographed books plus a wide array of gardening books for sale at the Garden Conference bookstore. Plants are also available for purchase.

If you have questions about the conference, please contact Joan Allen at 860-486-6740, email: joan.allen@uconn.edu or visit our website at: www.2015garden.uconn.edu.

March 7-8, 2015. The Connecticut Horse Symposium is scheduled for March 7-8, 2015. This year's symposium will feature clinics on dressage by Meg Brauch 9-12 Saturday morning; showmanship, trail, and Western horsemanship by Brooke Fowlers 1-4 PM Saturday and Draft Horse Driving by Cedar Knoll Farm 9-12 Sunday. Horses will be available for use in the clinics by those in the Horse Practicum and participants are invited to bring their own horses. In addition to the demonstrations, there will be a vendor fair and a UConn women's polo match as well as other demonstrations. Please go to <http://animalscience.uconn.edu/horseSymp/index.php> for more information or contact: Jenifer Nadeau at jenifer.nadeau@uconn.edu

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

Native Plants for Native Birds Wednesday, Mar. 18, 2015 from 6 to 8 pm. Tolland County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Mar 11th. Instructor: Michael Cocoran

Rhododendrons Part 3 Monday, Mar 23, 2015 from 7 – 9 pm. Hartford County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Mar 16th. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox

Gardening for Wildlife Wednesday, Mar 25, 2015 from 6 to 8 pm. Tolland County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Mar 18th. Instructor: Katharine Kosiba

Pruning and Twig Wreath Making Workshop Thursday, Apr 2, 2015 from 6 to 8 pm. Windham County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Mar 26th. Instructor: Lisa Withers

Vernal Pools: Why Are They Important Saturday, Apr 4, 2015 from 10 am to noon. New London County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Mar 26th. Instructor: Ed Pawlak

Marsh Botanical Garden Tuesday, Apr 7, 2015 from 5 – 7 pm. Marsh Botanical Garden . Deadline for registration: Mar 31st. Instructor: Eric Larson. Limit: 24. Contact judith.hsiang@uconn.edu if interested.

Aquaponic Gardening. Saturday, Apr 11, 2015 from 2 – 4 pm. Bigelow Brook Farm. Eastford, CT. Deadline for Registration: Apr 4th. Instructor: Rob Torcellini

Gardening for the Five Senses Tuesday, Apr 11, 2015 from 1 to 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Apr 7th. Instructor: Tovah Martin

Let UConn Blooms Bring The "Tropics" To You

Tired of the snow? Had enough of the cold weather? UConn Blooms has the right prescription, a beautiful Phalaenopsis orchid to give you color and long lasting enjoyment! Our latest crop of orchids require a bright light location but no direct sunlight. Keep it moist and in most instances that means just 2 ice cubes a week. These primitive and mysterious plants will pique your interest with their beautiful moth like flowers. You could use a little bit of Tahiti right now!

And if it's the desert that you crave, we have a wonderful assortment of cacti and succulents in all different shapes and sizes. These easy care plants just need lots of direct sunlight and only require to be watered once every two weeks. Sturdy, funky and hardy, cactus and succulents love neglect.

UConn Blooms also has a wide assortment of fresh cut flowers to brighten up a dreary winter day. We have them loose or in a vase. From long lasting daisies to springtime iris, nothing gets you out of the winter doldrums than flowers. Our student designers will be happy to arrange those flowers for you. We just got in some beautiful Reiger Begonias in pinks, reds and yellows.

UConnBlooms 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 are open from 10:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday and 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.



We Need Your Help – Take Our Invasive Worm Survey

Some of you may be aware of the problems our forest ecosystems, and in some cases our gardens, are experiencing due to the arrival of the invasive earthworm species, *Amyntas*, also known as the crazy snake worm or Alabama jumper. Here is a link from the soil lab's website to a fact sheet on them written by Dr. Josef Gorres of the University of Vermont.

<http://www.uvm.edu/~entlab/Greenhouse%20IPM/Workshops/2014/InvasiveEarthworms.pdf>

Dr. Gorres and I would like your help in assessing the degree to which this species has taken up residence in our state. To gauge their distribution, we are asking that anyone interested take this brief survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2ZFBBMC>

You are welcome to forward this survey to anyone else that might be interested in helping us with our documentation efforts. A summation of your replies will be put on the soil lab's website, www.soiltest.uconn.edu when the results are tabulated. If you want to be individually contacted, you can include your contact information.

If you have questions you can contact: dawn.pettinelli@uconn.edu. Thank you!!!

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

<http://sustainablepulse.com/2015/02/18/swiss-merchant-banker-gives-backing-25-million-factor-gmo-science-project/#.VPO5zNGBHIV>

<http://sustainablepulse.com/2015/02/12/pennsylvania-researchers-discover-glyphosate-herbicide-honey-soy-sauce/#.VPO7z9GBHIU>

Food Additives Linked to Inflammation

<http://grist.org/food/so-can-we-really-feed-the-world-yes-and-heres-how/>

https://www.morningagclips.com/concerns-over-canadas-food-safety/?utm_content=articles&utm_campaign=NLCampaign&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_term=newletteredition&utm_medium=email

<http://labroots.com/user/news/article/id/267343/title/mercury-levels-in-tuna-are-rising>

CLIMATE CORNER

New ozone-destroying gases on the rise; not controlled by treaty

More infectious diseases emerging in animals as climate changes, say zoologists
Climate change may dramatically reduce wheat production, study shows

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2015/02/megadrought-likely-western-us-end-century>

Blame Warmer Temperatures for All This Snow

Early warning signals of abrupt climate change

WHO KNEW ?

Agriculture Among Top Paying College Degrees Of 2015

Fearless birds and big city spiders: Is urbanization pushing earth's evolution to a tipping point?

<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/42153/title/How-Hot-Peppers-Can-Ease-Pain/>

http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150212154422.htm?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily%2Ftop_news%2Ftop_environment+%28ScienceDaily%3A+Top+Environment+News%29

Licorice extract protects the skin from UV-induced stress

Public servants are individually motivated to help environment, study suggests

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

The 2015 Perennial Plant Association's Plant of the year goes to Geranium 'Biokoro'. This is a great groundcover plant forming low-growing mounds of palmate foliage with lots of dainty pale pink flowers. It is hardy to zone 4, deer resistant and attractive to butterflies.



Geranium 'Biokoro' from Walters Gardens

PANTENE COLOR OF THE YEAR - MARSALA!



From Green Profit: If you want all kinds of good, trendy ideas about what colors go with what flowers, check out the December Style issue of *Green Profit* [HERE](#).

Specifically, flip to page 38 for a perfect plant match for Marsala.

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 \$10/YEAR**. Find the subscription form at <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/newsletter/index.html>

THANK YOU LOYAL READERS – PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR FRIENDS!!

“An equal opportunity and program provider “

March 2015, DMP