



### UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

[www.ladybug.uconn.edu](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu)

#### **JANUARY IS FOR JUNCOS, SUMMER JEWEL WHITE & JACK FROST**

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](mailto:ladybug@uconn.edu) and ask to be removed from this list.

#### **Pest Patrol/Current Concerns/Topics of Interest:**



From: <http://www.stockfreeimages.com/p1/junco.html>



Jack Frost from [zazzle.com](http://zazzle.com)



Summer Jewel White Salvia  
from: [www.all-americanselections.org](http://www.all-americanselections.org)

#### **Winter Visitors – The Dark-Eyed Junco**

After spending the summer in Canada and western forests, flocks of juncos move down to the New England area and further south for the winter. They are ground feeders but will often be seen at bird feeding stations as well as below. Often they hang out in flocks and enjoy black sunflower seeds. To hear their call, check out [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/dark-eyed\\_junco/sounds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/dark-eyed_junco/sounds)

#### **2015 All America Selection Bedding Plant Winner:**

‘Summer Jewel White’ is an upright salvia reaching a bit more than a foot in height with a prolific bloom count. Large white blossoms are produced earlier than other white salvias and are attractive to bees and butterflies. ‘Summer Jewel White’ stands up well to heat, wind and rain. A definite addition to white gardens!

#### **Jack Frost**

Jack Frost, the fictitious personification of snow, ice and all things cold, is frequently encountered in a number of holiday movies, performances and literature. In some versions he is a sad, lonely character while others

portray him as a villain. We have been pretty fortunate to avoid many close encounters with him this past month as this has been the 9<sup>th</sup> warmest December on record in Hartford. Weather records show Hartford receiving only 0.7 inches of snow this past month. Checking out the more recent forecasts, it seems an Arctic blast may be on its way – so say hello to Jack! (and hope he moves on quickly!)

Other items that the Center is getting calls or emails on include amaryllis, Asian lady beetles, alternatives to deicing salts, fig tree care and spider mites on houseplants. If you have specific questions, gardening queries or pest problems, check out our website, [www.ladybug.uconn.edu](http://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**

Soils are not only the foundation of our landscapes, they are the foundation of life. Soils grow our food, purify our water, support our buildings and roads, supply plants with nutrients, decompose our wastes and provide habitat for the soil food web upon which all life depends. Make a resolution to learn more about soils this year and let's stop treating our soils like dirt! Check out <https://www.soils.org/IYS> for starters.



### **Ten Tips for the January Gardener:**

1. Check out the Garden Master classes that are available throughout the state at <http://mastergardener.uconn.edu/>. Most classes are open to both Master Gardeners and the general public.
2. If driveways or sidewalks have been treated with a de-icer that contains sodium chloride do not pile this snow on plants or in areas where the melting snow will drain on to them. Consider using sand, sawdust, litter, or one of the commercial products that are labeled as safe for plants.
3. Fill bird feeders regularly, supplying a variety of seed and suet to accommodate a variety of tastes. Clean feeders and baths monthly with a solution of 1 part bleach and 9 parts water, rinsing thoroughly. A heater in the bird bath ensures a usable water supply.
4. Remove snow from evergreens as soon as possible after a storm. Prune storm-damaged limbs to prevent further tearing of the bark. Prop up ice-covered branches until the ice melts instead of attempting to remove it.
5. Avoid heavy traffic on the dormant winter lawn. The crowns of grass plants may be severely damaged.

6. Prepare your hand tools for the upcoming season. Sharpen the blades, oil the levers, and remove any rust. Painting the handles red or orange will make the tools easier to locate when they are laid down in the lawn or garden.
7. If a thaw occurs apply anti-desiccant sprays to broad-leaved evergreens. Anti-desiccants are best sprayed if the temperature reaches 40 degrees and no precipitation is forecasted for a few days. Spray both the tops and the undersides of the leaves.
8. Post-holiday Christmas trees and evergreen boughs can be used to mulch tender perennials and shrubs.
9. Protect the bark of young fruit trees from hungry mice by keeping mulch several inches from the trunk or by putting wire-screen mouse guards around the trunk of the trees.
10. Inspect ornamental trees and shrubs for scale insects. Make a note to treat any infestations with dormant oil after the temperature is above 40 degrees but before the plants leaf out.

## Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

### SAVE THE DATE:

**January 17, 2014 – The Bobcat: CT’s Secretive Wild Cat.** Sponsored by CT DEEP Wildlife Division and Friends of Sessions Woods. Free but pre-registration required. Call (860) 675-8130 M-F 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Program suitable for ages 10 and older. Adults must accompany minors under the age of 12. Starts at 1:30 pm and will feature a Powerpoint presentation by Natural Resource Educator, Laura Rogers-Castro. Held at Sessions Woods, Burlington, CT.

**February 7, 2015 – Vegetable Pest and Disease Workshops I:** Cucurbits & Brassicas. (For beginning farmers but open to everyone), 9 am – 1 pm, Litchfield County Extension Center. Information and registration can be found at <http://www.extension.uconn.edu/root/feb-veg-wkshp.php> Contact: [joan.allen@uconn.edu](mailto:joan.allen@uconn.edu) or (860) 486-6740

**February 14, 2015 - Vegetable Pest and Disease Workshops II:** Solanaceae & Legumes. (For beginning farmers but open to everyone), 9 am – 1 pm, Tolland County Extension Center. . Information and registration can be found at <http://www.extension.uconn.edu/root/feb-veg-wkshp.php> Contact: [joan.allen@uconn.edu](mailto:joan.allen@uconn.edu) or (860) 486-6740

**February 19 – 22, 2015 – CT Flower and Garden Show, *The Spirit of Spring*.** Bring your garden questions to be answered by UConn Home & Garden Education Center horticulturists and Master Gardener volunteers. Bring ½ cup of soil for a free pH test by UConn Soil Testing Lab staff.

**March 5, 2015 – UConn Perennial Plant Conference.** Speakers include Mike Yanny, Kristen Schwab, Mark Brand, Denise Adams, Kim Stoner, Kelly Norris, Ben Campbell, Mark Dwyer. Rome Ballroom, UConn Storrs Campus. More information to follow.

**March 19, 2015 – UConn Garden Conference.** Speakers include Amy Sampson, Mark Hirsch, James Gagliardi, Art Wolk and Russ Cohen. Rome Ballroom, UConn Storrs Campus. More information to follow.

**December 20, 2014 – March 4, 2015 – Shebaug Bald Eagle Observation Area** open. Located in Southbury, the area is open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays between 9 am and 1 pm. Free of charge bur advance reservations required. Call (800) 368-8954 between 9 am and 3 pm, Tuesdays through Fridays.

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

**Houses & Gardens: Their Intimate Relationship** Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015 from 1 to 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Jan 13th. Instructor: Paige Dickey

**Rhododendrons, Part 3** Monday, Jan 26, 2015 from 7 – 9 pm. Hartford County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Jan. 19th. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox

**Color in the Landscape** Wednesday, Jan 21, 2015 from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford. Deadline for registration: Jan 14th. Instructor: Amy Sampson

**Conifer Culture 1** Saturday, Jan 24, 2015 from 10 am to noon. New Haven County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Jan 17th. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox

**Conifer Culture 2** Saturday, Jan 24, 2015 from 1 to 3 pm. New Haven County Extension Center. Deadline for Registration: Jan 17th. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox

## **WINTER GETTING TO YOU? PICK UP SOME FLOWERS OR A HOUSEPLANT AT UCONN BLOOMS**

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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:dawn.pettinelli@uconn.edu). Thank you!!!

## **KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!**

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Can returning crops to their wild state help feed the world? –Science Daily

<http://s.uconn.edu/canreturningcropstotheirwildstateshelpfeedtheworld>

Scientists trace nanoparticles from plants to caterpillars: Are nanoparticles getting in our food? -- ScienceDaily

<http://s.uconn.edu/arenanoparticlesgettinginourfood>

Herbs and spices enhance heart health as well as flavor | Penn State University

<http://s.uconn.edu/herbsandspicesenhancehearthealth>

The increasing cost of groceries

<http://today.uconn.edu/blog/2014/08/whats-behind-grocery-store-sticker-shock/>

### **CLIMATE CORNER**

How will climate change transform agriculture? -- ScienceDaily

<http://s.uconn.edu/howwillclimatechangetransformagriculture>

### **WHO KNEW ?**

Not just for the holidays, mistletoe could fight obesity-related liver disease -- ScienceDaily

<http://s.uconn.edu/notjustfortheholidays>

More chemical exposure in womb, lower IQ

[http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/prenatal-exposure-to-chemicals-tied-to-lower-iq-at-age-7/?WT.mc\\_id=SA\\_WR\\_20141217](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/prenatal-exposure-to-chemicals-tied-to-lower-iq-at-age-7/?WT.mc_id=SA_WR_20141217)

Are Algae Blooms Linked to Lou Gehrig's Disease?

[http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-algae-blooms-linked-to-lou-gehrig-s-disease/?WT.mc\\_id=SA\\_WR\\_20141217](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-algae-blooms-linked-to-lou-gehrig-s-disease/?WT.mc_id=SA_WR_20141217)

Can the American Chestnut make a comeback?

<http://www.esf.edu/chestnut/>

**UConn Sustainable Living Website:** [www.sustainableliving.uconn.edu](http://www.sustainableliving.uconn.edu)

**UConn Extension Website:** [www.extension.uconn.edu](http://www.extension.uconn.edu)

**UConn Food Safety Website:** [www.foodsafety.uconn.edu](http://www.foodsafety.uconn.edu)

What's black and white... and used to be red all over? World's first tomato plant that grows fruits of either colour is created



Picture from [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2881945/Horticulturalist-create-world-s-black-white-tomato-plant-blending-two-different-strains.html#ixzz3NuTDztyO>

Looking for more new food plants to try? Check out: New Food Trends for 2015 : HGTV Gardens  
<http://s.uconn.edu/2015edible Trends>

## 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](http://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>

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