



UConn Home & Garden Education Center Knowledge to Grow On!

www.ladybug.uconn.edu



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APRIL IS FOR APRIL SNOWSTORMS, AN ALLERGY SCALE & ANNA'S PROMISE

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:



April 3, 2016 by dmp



Female blacklegged tick by Jeffrey Hahn
UMN Extension



Do Nasturtiums Cause Allergies? by dmp

Cold, Snowy Start to April May Have Damaged Some Flowers & Leaf Buds

A good many of us woke up to snow the first Sunday in April followed by even more on Monday and temperatures in the 20's on Tuesday morning. Thursday's rain melted what remained but this return to winter conditions may have adversely affected leaf or flower buds that have opened or were just about to. Forsythia, magnolias, flowering cherries and others had started blooming and their flowers may have been damaged by the plummeting temperatures. Mostly the damage to flowers is cosmetic but this may affect the yields of peach and other early blooming fruit trees. Also, damaged flowers may not produce as much pollen for bees and other pollinators. Emerging leaf buds may have suffered slight to serious damage and probably we will have to wait until they expand to know the extent. The past few weeks of warmer weather stimulated many trees and shrubs to come out of dormancy and begin to grow.

Ticks Making an Early Appearance

The mild winter and warm March weather means that ticks are out and active early this year. The deer or blacklegged tick that can transmit Lyme and two other diseases may be noticed once temperatures reach the

mid-30s. The Center has already started receiving calls on tick identification and control. When walking in grassy, brushy or wooded areas be mindful that ticks are out. Perform a tick check when you come in. Check your dog as well. If a tick attaches to you and you want it identified, call the Center at (877) 486-6271. For testing for the presence of diseases, go to: <http://cvmdl.uconn.edu/service/tick.php>

Did You Know There is an Allergy Scale? (from Perennial Pulse <http://www.ballpublishing.com/perennialpulse>)

The OPALS (Ogren Plant Allergy Scale) was developed by Tom Ogren, a world authority on pollen and author of "Allergy Free Gardening" [<http://www.allergyfree-gardening.com/>]. The OPALS table is an invaluable rating system that measures the potential of a plant to cause allergic reactions in humans. Over 130 different criteria are used to determine the allergy rankings for each plant.

OPALS uses a numeric scale to rank plants ranging from 1 (least allergenic) to 10 (most allergenic). The plants with ratings 1 to 4 are considered allergy friendly, while those with a 5 to 10 rating have a higher potential to trigger allergies.

OPALS has been around for a couple of decades (since 1996 to be exact) and has been used worldwide by individuals, allergy and asthma coalitions, cities, schools, parks, hospitals, state departments of health, lung associations and by the USDA.

There seems to be a great opportunity to implement the OPALS ratings on a larger scale. This system will allow customers to make an educated decision on their plant choices. Even if your customers don't have allergies or care about them, marketing plants with OPALS ratings will let them know that we care about them.

You can learn more about the Ogren Plant Allergy Scale (OPALS) by visiting the websites of [Queux Plant Centre](#) and [Society for Allergy Friendly Environmental Gardening](#).



Topics that the Center is getting calls or emails on include snow damage to daffodils, pruning blueberries, using dormant oil on apples, black knot on cherries and plums, vole damage, mole tunnels, crabgrass and seeding lawns. 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.

April is National Gardening Month

Back when Reagan was President, the National Gardening Bureau along with a couple dozen other horticultural organizations advocated for a National Gardening Week. The President signed the proclamation and during April 12 – 18, 1987 the first National Gardening week celebrations occurred. Lobbying efforts in 2002 extended the celebration over the whole month of April and we have been celebrating it since 2003. Visit the National Garden Month's official website to learn more about why nurturing a garden is good for us:

www.NationalGardenMonth.org

Ten Tips for the April Gardener:

1. Continue to apply horticultural oil sprays to control insect pests on fruit trees if temperature is over 40°F.
2. Sow peas, carrots, radishes, lettuces, and spinach. Plant seedlings of cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli, weather permitting.
3. For an instant spring show, fill containers with forced spring bulbs from supermarkets and garden centers.
4. Prune back bedraggled looking ground covers and fertilize lightly after April 15.
5. Check fruit trees for tent caterpillars; they emerge around the same time as leaves sprout. Blast nests with a strong spray of water to destroy them.
6. Remove any remaining last year's leaves from roses and spread a thin layer of new mulch underneath them to control diseases that may have over-wintered.
7. Divide overcrowded summer or fall blooming perennials. Check for insects such as the iris borer and discard any pest or disease ridden plants.
8. Place seedlings in cold frames around April 25 or later to harden off before transplanting.
9. Prune ornamental grasses and sedums to a height between 6 and 12 inches before new growth starts.
10. Sow cool-weather edible greens and lettuces in window boxes or shallow containers that can be brought inside if temperatures dip below freezing.

Events/ Programs/Save the Dates:

April 20, 2016 - Urban Agriculture: A way to reduce food desert communities in Connecticut

Urban agriculture may be an alternative for Connecticut and similar states to increase farmland acreage, increase the number of farmers, reduce food desert areas, and engage urban residents, like Hispanics, in food production. Presented by **German Cutz, Ed.D.**, Sustainable Families & Communities Educator, UConn Extension held from 11 AM - 12 PM in ATL 109, UConn Storrs Campus. Informal discussion and refreshments to follow presentation.

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

Environmental Leadership Tuesday, April 19, 2016 1 to 3 pm. Fairfield County Extension Center.

Deadline for registration: April 12th. Instructor: Dr. Robert Ricard.

Creating a Sustainable Home Landscape Wednesday, April 20, 2016 from 6 pm to 8 pm. Tolland County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: April 13th. Instructor: Dr. Deborah Lee.

Dinosaur Park Walkabout Saturday, April 23, 2016 from 10 am to noon. Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill, CT. Deadline for Registration: April 15th. Instructor: Kevin Wilcox

Groundcovers for Durable Landscaping Monday, April 25, 2016 from 10 am to 12 pm. Middlesex County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: April 18, 2016. Instructor: Kathy Connolly

Woodland Beauties: Epimedium & more Tuesday, April 26, 2016 from 6 to 8 pm. New Haven Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Apr 19th. Instructor: Andy Brand

Genetically Modifying Our Foods: 10,000 years of experience in altering our foods' genome Saturday, April 30, 2016 from 10 am to noon. New London County Extension Center. Deadline for registration: Apr. 22nd. Instructor: Paul Armand

UConn Blooms – Springtime Flowers

Do these chilly, early spring days have you searching for something colorful? Pick up some flowers from UConn Blooms! We carry everything from orchids to fresh cut roses to colorful floral arrangements. Stop by our store located in the Floriculture Building on Rt. 195 to see what we have to offer. Order online at uconnblooms@uconn.edu or by phone at (860) 486 – 6000. **UConn Blooms operates in two locations, inside the UConn Co-op and its main storefront in the Floriculture Building.**

UConn Blooms 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.



KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Broccoli may offer protection against liver cancer, study shows

How diet shaped human evolution

Eating beans, peas, chickpeas or lentils may help lose weight and keep it off

Pros and cons of mandatory GMO labeling

Are chefs the answer to improving school foods? A Connecticut school district is giving it a shot.

CLIMATE CORNER

Gambling our way against climate change

Human influence on climate dates back to 1930s, new research finds

Eastern US forests more vulnerable to drought than before 1800s

Strong effects of climate change on common bird populations in both Europe and the USA

WHO KNEW ?

Poop happens (and so can E. Coli) <http://s.uconn.edu/poophappensecolimayfollow>

Your modern lifestyle is made possible by creating tons of waste

Welfare recipients seen as immoral for buying ethical products

Eastern Monarch butterflies at risk of extinction unless numbers increase

New Seaweed-Based Material Could Replace Plastic Packaging

On April 1st, up to a million people may lose their SNAP benefits.

Bee flower choices altered by exposure to pesticides

Rooftop solar energy could provide almost 40 percent of US electricity

So long lithium, hello bacteria batteries?

UConn PLANT DIAGNOSTIC LAB WEBSITE: www.plant.lab.uconn.edu

UConn SOIL NUTRIENT ANALYSIS LAB WEBSITE: www.soiltest.uconn.edu

UConn EXTENSION WEBSITE: www.extension.uconn.edu

UConn FOOD SAFETY WEBSITE: www.foodsafety.uconn.edu

UConn SUSTAINABLE LIVING WEBSITE: www.sustainableliving.uconn.edu

Anna's Promise from Weeks Roses



Thanks to Weeks Roses, Downton Abbey can live on in your rose garden. It was announced in 2013 that Weeks had acquired the right to breed roses inspired by the TV series, and to that end they've launched the Downton Abbey Rose Collection.

It features varieties such as Anna's Promise (pictured, and introduced last spring), named for Anna Bates, the lady's maid to Lady Mary Crawley; and this year's introduction, Pretty Lady Rose, named for Lady Rose MacClare. Two more are coming in 2017: Violet's Pride, named for the Dowager Countess Violet Crawley (Dame Maggie Smith's character); and Edith's Darling, named for Lady Edith Crawley's daughter, Marigold.

For more information, visit www.WeeksRoses.com.

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 \$12/year (new price starting March 1st) or sign up for free email version.** Find the subscription form at <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/newsletter/index.html>