OCTOBER is for Outwitting Hungry Squirrels, 'Orange Blaze' Kniphofia, and Onion Black Mold

Outwitting Hungry Squirrels

Due to an abundance of acorns, pine cones, and other food sources in 2017, the 2018 population of squirrels and chipmunks has exploded. As the larger-than-normal numbers of these rodents look for food they are causing damage to fruit and vegetable crops across the state. The UConn Home and Garden Education Center has received numerous calls this season from exasperated homeowners attempting to control both species. The best defense is barrier fencing or netting to keep voracious creatures away from ripening crops where they often take a single bite and then move on, a very frustrating practice! For additional control suggestions please visit our fact sheets on Squirrels and Field Rodents: Mice, Voles, Chipmunks, and Moles. Outwit hungry squirrels and chipmunks by planting new bulbs in established groundcovers.

Orange Blaze Kniphofia

Let Orange Blaze set your landscape ablaze with its eye-popping bright orange flowers. This is one of six new Proven Winners introductions to the Pyromania collection of kniphofia. It’s one of the most compact cultivars of the collection with flowers proportionate to the foliage. It reaches up 24-30” tall when in bloom. This Zone 5B herbaceous perennial red hot poker reblooms all season and provides color late in the season. It is attractive to bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, and is resistant to deer and rabbits.
**Onion Black Mold**

Black mold, caused by *Aspergillus niger*, occurs on both onions and garlic in the field and in storage. The fungus is first evident at the top or sides of the bulb where disease or injury has caused an opening in the skin. The fungus develops between dry, dead outer scales and the first inner fleshy scales of the bulb. Invaded scales initially become water soaked. Under dry conditions diseased scales dry and shrivel, and black masses of spores are visible between outer scales. Diseased scales may also be invaded by soft rot bacteria, causing the whole bulb to deteriorate into a watery soft rot. Crop rotation, good soil drainage, and the use of clean seed or healthy transplants will help prevent the occurrence of the diseases. Handling of bulbs to avoid bruising also reduces injury and invasion sites for the fungus.

**Osprey Nation**

Osprey Nation is Connecticut Audubon Society’s citizen science partnership, launched in the summer of 2014, to monitor the health of our state’s Ospreys. The goal of Osprey Nation is to create a long-term record of data that will give the conservation community a better understanding of the health of Connecticut’s Osprey population. The network of Osprey Nation stewards collects and sends data on the birds’ arrival dates each spring, the location of nests, nesting success and departure dates to the CT Audubon Society site. The data is entered on a map for everyone to view. Osprey Nation is a partnership with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. It was only several decades ago that the widespread use of DDT brought these great fish-eating raptors to the brink of extinction. But with a ban on this toxic pesticide and the efforts of government biologists, conservation groups and individuals, ospreys have made a dramatic comeback.

Image by Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

[Osprey Nation link]
Fall Foliage for 2018

The New England fall foliage forecast for 2018 is a good one! Fall foliage colors tend to be good in years where the spring was wet and mild, the summer has a sufficient amount of rainfall (which we did although there were a few periods of dryness), and late summer/early autumn has sunny warm days and cooler nights. So far, so good. Take a scenic drive to observe the changing fall foliage. The CT DEEP has 7 different fall foliage driving routes for Connecticut that encompass a good portion of the state with colorful names such as Yankee Roots and Traditional New England.

Image by Pamm Cooper, 2016

CT DEEP Fall Foliage Driving Routes

Ten Tips for the October Gardener

Click on highlighted links for additional information.

1. Replace spent annuals with frost tolerant hardy mums, asters, pansies, sedum, or kale.
2. Remove, bag and trash any Gypsy moth, Bagworm, or Eastern tent caterpillar egg masses or spray them with a commercial horticultural oil to smother them.
3. Bring houseplants back inside before the first frost. Scout for insects and rinse the foliage and containers.
4. Mulch perennial beds using a loose organic material such as bark chips or shredded leaves to keep down weeds, preserve moisture, and give roots a longer time to grow before the soil freezes.
5. Renovate the lawn by thatching or aerating if needed. Keep any areas that were seeded in September well-watered.
6. Plant garlic from October 1st to November 15th. Place each clove pointed-side up at a depth of 2-4” about 6” apart.
7. Limit herbaceous plant material located a few feet away from the house to eliminate hiding places for insects and mice, which could wind up indoors as temperatures plummet.
8. Lift and store tender bulbs, i.e. cannas, dahlias and gladiolus after first frost
9. Cut asparagus ferns to the ground once they have been hit with a frost and turned brown.
10. Limestone can be applied to lawns and garden areas until the ground freezes. Do not add fertilizer this late in the year, as much of the nutrients will be lost through leaching and in surface runoff.

For a more extensive list of tips visit Gardening Tips for October.
Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

Beat the spring rush and send your soil sample in for testing now. Our standard nutrient analysis includes pH, macro- and micro nutrients, 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 UConn Soil and Nutrient Laboratory.

Photo by dmp, UConn
**Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**

Nanotechnology and Crop Disease Suppression Friday, October 12, 2018 from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. Britton Laboratory, Jones Auditorium, [123 Huntington Street, New Haven CT](http://www.newhavenct.gov) Lecturer: Mathews Paret, University of Florida

**Connecticut College**

**Visit the Plant Collections** The Connecticut College Arboretum manages four major plant collections containing 6,195 individual, accessioned living plants.

**Guided Tours** Join Arboretum docents for free guided tours the first and second Sundays of October at 10:00 a.m. starting at the Olin Science Center. October 7th will be a tour of the Native Plant Collection and October 14th will be the Caroline Black Garden.

**Native Oak ID Workshop** Friday, October 5, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. Free Olin Science Center Arboretum curator: Mary Villa

**Dividing Perennials** Sunday, October 14, 2018 2 to 4 p.m. $25 ($15 members) New London Hall, Botany Lab, room 112. Arboretum horticulturalist Leigh Knuttel

**All about Autumn Color Tour** Sunday, October 28, 2018 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Free Meet in front of the Olin Science Center. Arboretum director emeritus Glenn Dreyer

**CT DEEP Programs**

**Fall Grounds Tour at Gillette Castle** Sunday, October 7, 2018 2:00 p.m. Gillette Castle State Park, Haddam, CT

**UConn Equestrian, Western, and Dressage Teams**

![Equestrian Team](image)

**Fall 2018 Shows**

Equestrian Team Show Schedule: Zone 1 Region 5

- September 16-Equestrian Team Tryouts
- September 22-Ken Whelihan Clinic at UConn, Storrs, CT
- October 14-Trinity College, Folly Farm, Simsbury CT
- October 20-Connecticut College, Mystic Valley Hunt Club, Gales Ferry, CT
- November 3-Sacred Heart University, Double M Ranch, Southbury, CT
- November 4-Trinity College, Folly Farm, Simsbury, CT
- November 10-Sacred Heart University, Double M Ranch, Southbury, CT
- November 17-UConn, Storrs,
CT Western Team Show Schedule: Zone 1

- October 13 - Sacred Heart University, Double M Ranch, Southbury, CT
- November 4 - UConn, Storrs, CT
- November 18 - University of Massachusetts, Orange, MA
- December 2 - Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA

Dressage Team Show Schedule: Region B

- October 6 & 7 - University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- October 20 & 21 - University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
- November 10 - Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA.

Contact Coach Alena Meacham

UConn Extension

UConn IPM Update on Winter Squash Chilling Injury

Winter squash and pumpkin are chilling-sensitive and may sustain injury at temperatures below 50° F. Chilling damage is cumulative, and the extent of injury is dependent on both time and temperature. Butternut squash are particularly sensitive to chilling injury. Although chilling injury may not be visible during storage at lower temperatures, the symptoms appear later after warming (usually during transit) as sunken pits in the surface where tissue has been weakened or killed by cold temperatures. Secondary pathogens can invade damaged tissue, resulting in rapid decay. Special care should be exercised to avoid ring injuries, which provide entry for pathogens.

Under proper curing conditions, wounded areas heal themselves by producing corky tissue. Curing at 68-77° F for a week will harden the rind but is detrimental to the taste of some varieties such as Table Queen. Butternut, Delicious, and Hubbard squash and pumpkins respond to this treatment. Storage can then proceed at 52-61° F with 55-75 percent (optimum 60%) relative humidity. Higher humidity favors the development of decay, and lower humidity promotes dehydration and undesirable changes in flesh texture. Good air movement is important in both curing and storage. Squash is ethylene-sensitive, and dark-green-skinned varieties such as acorn are most susceptible to visible yellowing. Ethylene from natural sources such as apples stored in nearby rooms or from poorly vented kerosene or gas heaters in the storage area will cause undesirable yellowing.

Visit the UConn Animal Barns

Everyone is welcome to explore our animal barns that are open to the public and to learn more about the animals that are used in the Department of Animal Science program. Visitors can see dairy and beef cows, sheep, and horses. The poultry units are closed to the public. Young animals can be found in the barns at the following times of year at barns that are opened to the public: baby foals in the summer in outside paddocks at Horse Unit II, lambs during February and March outside only at Livestock Unit 1, dairy calves year-round at the Cattle Resource Unit and beef calves beginning in mid-March outside at Livestock
Unit 1. Every day visitors can view the UConn dairy cows being milked from 12:30 - 3:00 p.m. at the Kellogg Dairy Center.

**UConn Garden Master Classes**

Garden Master Classes such as the following items 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.

_A Conversation About GMOs_ Tuesday, October 2, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Fairfield County Extension Center, Bethel, CT Instructor: Dr. Jean Kreizinger

_Exploring the World of Herbal Teas_ Wednesday, October 3, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Litchfield County Extension Center, 843 University Drive Torrington, CT Instructor: Michelle Winkler

_Birds of Eastern CT_ Sunday, October 9, 2018 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tolland County Agricultural Center, Vernon, CT 06066 Instructor: Carol Millard

_Groundcovers_ Tuesday, October 11, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Edgerton Park Carriage House, New Haven, CT Instructor: Kathy Connolly

**Additional Master Gardener Classes**

2018 UConn Master Composter Program

Become a UConn Master Composter! The purpose of the Master Composter Program is to provide local compost enthusiasts with the tools and information necessary to educate and teach interested community members about composting and reducing the amount of solid waste sent to the state’s incinerators and landfills. Participants would attend classroom sessions at the Tolland County Agricultural Center in Vernon, CT. Two field trips will also be scheduled, with one being mandatory.

Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, October 16, 18, 23 and 25 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm plus on Worm Day which is held on Saturday, October 20th 2018.

A Master Composter Certificate is awarded to those who have attended all program sessions, demonstrated a solid understanding of composting principles and practices, and engaged in a minimum of two outreach activities. Program fee is $100 payable to University of Connecticut. Enrollment will be limited to 24 participants.

**Additional Information on the UConn Master Composter Program**
Worm Day!!!
University of Connecticut Master Composter Program
Saturday, OCTOBER 20, 2018, 10 a.m.—2 p.m Tolland County Agricultural Center 24 Hyde Avenue, Vernon, CT 06066

This is a great opportunity to simply learn about earthworms: Good, Bad, or Invasive?

Or try your hand at vermicomposting and take home a completed vermicomposting bin.

OUR PROGRAM FEATURES:
Dr. Josef Gorres, University of Vermont: Invasive Earthworms in New England & Vermicomposting
Carol Quish, UConn Home & Garden Education Center: Vermicomposting 101

And then MAKE Your Own Worm Farm!

Let us know if you want to make a worm bin as you will need to bring certain supplies and we will need worms!!! $5 suggested donation to cover worm costs.

RSVP by email
Worm Day Supply List
RSVP by phone
KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**New evidence supports the hypothesis that beer may have been motivation to cultivate cereals:** Stanford University archaeologists are turning the history of beer on its head.

**The more pesticides bees eat, the more they like them:** Bumblebees acquire a taste for pesticide-laced food as they become more exposed to it, a behavior showing possible symptoms of addiction.

**Organic farming methods favor pollinators:** An extensive 3-year study has found that organic farming methods can contribute to halting the pollinator decline due to both the absence of insecticides and a higher provision of flower resources.

CLIMATE CORNER

**More ships and more clouds mean cooling in the Arctic:** With sea ice in the Arctic melting at an alarming rate, opportunities for trans-Arctic shipping are opening up, and by mid-century ships will be able to sail right over the North Pole – something not previously possible for humankind.

**Mercury pollution threatens to impair the ability of birds to migrate:** A report from the Connecticut-based Great Hollow Nature Preserve & Ecological Research Center is now warning of a new, invisible threat to bird migration — mercury pollution.

**UConn taking measures to preserve health of ‘Swing Tree’:** The iconic “swing tree” near Mirror Lake at UConn Storrs is undergoing special treatment to help preserve its health, after experts determined recently that it wasn’t absorbing enough water at the roots.

WHO KNEW?

**Goats prefer happy people:** Goats can differentiate between human facial expressions and prefer to interact with happy people, according to a new study led by scientists at Queen Mary University of London.

**Bye bye bugs? Scientists fear non-pest insects are declining:** Pesky mosquitoes, disease-carrying ticks, crop-munching aphids and cockroaches are doing just fine. But the more beneficial flying insects of summer — native bees, moths, butterflies, ladybugs, lovebugs, mayflies and fireflies — appear to be less abundant.

**A cyber cockroach could someday save your life:** Researchers have been exploring bio-robotic platforms for insects for the better part of the past decade.

Ornamental Pepper 'Onyx Red'

Onyx Red, the 2018 All American Selection Flower Winner, is one of those stunning double-take plants that steal the show! This breeding work has resulted in an unprecedented compact, well-branched ornamental pepper adorned with eye-catching dark black foliage. The contrast between the diminutive black foliage and tons of shiny red fruits is striking and makes a bold statement in the garden. Onyx Red plants are continually growing but retain their neat, compact habit, making them a wonderful plant for beds, borders, containers and dramatic mass plantings. These naturally compact plants are perfect in pots as well as in annual beds.
The UConn Home & Garden Education Center (HGEC) is a horticultural informational resource for the citizens of Connecticut and beyond. The staff at the Center reach nearly 400,000 citizens in outreach efforts each year. We’re ready to assist you.

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! 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.

We Need Your Support!

If you enjoy our efforts to keep you informed about horticultural and UConn-related items, please show your support by liking us on Facebook, following us on Pinterest or Instagram, checking out our weekly Ladybug blog, or visiting our the Home & Garden Education center website.

We Need Your Support!

If you enjoy our efforts to keep you informed about horticultural and UConn-related items, please show your support by liking us on Facebook, following us on Pinterest or Instagram, checking out our weekly Ladybug blog, or visiting our the Home & Garden Education center website.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

UConn Extension Home & Garden Education Center: We are on a collaborative journey.

How. We co-create knowledge with farmers, families, communities, and businesses. We educate. We convene groups to help solve problems.


Join us.