Read Entire Newsletter

June is For Catalpa Tree, Heuchera and Giant Silk Moths

Northern Catalpa Tree- Catalpa speciosa
This medium to large native tree has large heart-shaped leaves, showy panicles of white flowers and long bean-like seedpods that dangle in the fall. Interesting all year, this tree is generally used as a specimen shade tree. Pollinators like bees and night-flying moths are attracted to the flowers.

**Northern Catalpa**

**Heuchera- Coral bells**

Heuchera are carefree plants that can tolerate a variety of light and soil conditions including poor soil, drought and full sun to shade. Foliage comes in a wide range of colors and patterns. Butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds are attracted to the dainty flowers. Shown above are ‘Eye Spy’ on the left and ‘Midnight Rose’ on the right.

**Heuchera**

**Giant Silk Moths**
Giant Silk Moths

The Giant silk moths, family Saturnidae, have wingspans that range from 4-6 inches, and they are among the largest of North American moths. Species include the Cecropia, shown above on the left, the Polyphemus on the right, Luna, Io and several other moths. Flight times may be as early as mid-May and often these moths are seen during the day where they were attracted to lights near commercial buildings or homes the previous night. Lights left on at night can disrupt mating of many moths, as well as that of many other insects. Adults have vestigial mouthparts and cannot feed.

Vegetable Garden Tip

To protect vegetable crops from insect pests, if the plants do not require pollination, consider using row covers. Installed properly and in a timely manner, pests like cabbage caterpillar pests and spinach leaf miner will be unable to attack plants.

Floating Row Covers

Animal Highlight- Crayfish
Normally thought of as an aquatic animal found especially under rocks in fresh water like streams, lakes, rivers and ponds, some species of crayfish burrow into moist soils far from a water source. The crayfish shown above was one of many found on May 29 just starting to form burrows in a grassy meadow some little distance from a nearby woodland stream. When alarmed, they sit back and raise their pincers.

**Crayfish of Connecticut**

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**Maple Eyespot Gall Midge**

Eyed maple galls are caused by an ocellate gall midge. Spiffy red and yellow spots are caused due to a chemical response by the leaves of red maple to the egg-laying of the female and the feeding of the midge. Each spot contains one midge larva feeding inside the gall, safe from predators. These galls are not destructive to the tree as they occur in very low numbers.

**Maple Eyespot Gall Midge And Other Galls**

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**Plant Highlight- Comfrey**
Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*, has bell shaped purple or white blooms in drooping umbels that attract pollinators. Blooms start in May and may be extended past June somewhat by deadheading. It is a nutrient-dense perennial that is often added to compost piles. Depending on where sited, it can be aggressive, but some people use that quality to fill in waste areas.

**Comfrey**

**Insect Highlight- *Enallagma* spp. Damselflies**

The *Enallagma* genus of American bluet damselflies are found in open marshy habitats and woodland wetlands from early May through October. They are small to medium sized damselflies and are mostly blue with various black markings. Like dragonflies, damselflies are predatory, and they eat mosquitoes, flies and many other insects that fly during the day.

**Azure Bluet Damselfly**
This Month’s Head-scratcher Client Question

Some kind of larvae were in bathroom, and seemed to be eating wood or something because frass (fecal pellets of chewing insects) were seen. Insect pupated and became an adult, which was brought to our office. It was determined that this was a yellow flour beetle *Tenebrio molitor*, and its larvae were eating Styrofoam from containers stored in the bathroom. This beetle is being researched as a possible biodegrader of Styrofoam on a large scale.

*Tenebrio molitor* Larvae Eat Styrofoam

Spotted Lanternfly

Be on the lookout for this invasive and very damaging insect. Report any sightings to the Connecticut Agricultural experiment Station. Follow the instructions on the [Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Spotted Lanternfly sample submission form](#) to send a dead specimen sample.

- Take lots of photos and carefully note the location to report your finding to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) at [ReportSLF@ct.gov](mailto:ReportSLF@ct.gov).
Containers and Planters- Use Almost Anything!

As long as there is good drainage, the sky is the limit as far as selecting a good object for container plantings. Average potting soil with good moisture retention and good aeration is suitable for most containers. Read packaging labels of potting soils, as many now come with fertilizers that can sometimes last an entire growing season.

Pest Alert- Slugs

Slug Control In Home Gardens
Slugs attack plants, vegetables, and fruits from spring through fall, especially where there is abundant moisture and shade during the day. They have a file-like radula with which they rasp and chew plant material. Damage appears as irregular holes leaves and other plant material like tomatoes, pictured above, right. They can be frustrating to control, especially in wet years.

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

Time to Till? Maybe Not!
On Hostas and Houseplants
Outdoors in May
Plastic Bin Composting Tips

Gardening Tips for June

- Sow seeds of fast-growing annuals like marigolds, zinnias, and cosmos directly in the garden.
- Scout for aphids, especially on newer leaves and plant stems. Spray them off with water, crush by hand or use a low-toxicity insecticide such as insecticidal soap to control them. Some products must be sprayed directly on the insect to be effective. Read labels for proper use.
- This is a good time to take cuttings of trees and shrubs, such as chokeberry, butterfly bush, spirea, serviceberry, hydrangea, dogwood, and magnolia, to root for new plantings.
- When deadheading rhododendrons twist spent flower heads off carefully to avoid breaking off the leaf buds which are just below flowers.
- Watch for and control blackspot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.
- During hot, dry weather, do not stress lawns by mowing. Keep grass higher in summer to help reduce water loss in soil and reduce weed encroachment.
- Mosquitoes breed in standing water. To discourage them, change the water in bird baths and outdoor pet dishes every few days.
- Check container plants daily during hot weather, they will need water often.
- Plant summer-flowering tubers and bulbs such as cannas, caladium, gladiolas, and dahlias.
- You can move houseplants outside to the deck or patio and enjoy them outdoors for the summer. It is best to gradually introduce them to more direct sunlight to prevent the leaves from being burned.
- There is still time to sow seeds of beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, and summer squash.
- Heavy rains encourage slug problems. Check for slugs during rainy periods and hand pick the pests.
• Earwigs hide under bottoms of planters, near plant bases under mulch or other places near food plants during the day, and they feed at night. If plants are being damaged at night, earwigs may be the culprit. Spray foliage with an appropriate control product, or hunt for them at night with a flashlight and dispose of as you see fit.
• Water newly planted trees and shrubs as needed during their first summer.

For a more extensive list of tips visit Gardening Tips for June

Rain barrels are particularly useful during dry summers. Make sure there is a screen so that insects, like mosquitoes cannot get in and lay eggs. Since the water typically is directed from asphalt roofs, it may be contaminated with bird/animal droppings so just use the water on non-edible plants.

Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

Send your soil sample in for testing now. For details on submitting a sample, go to UConn Soil and Nutrient Laboratory.

Photo by dmp, UConn

New Prices for Testing at the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab

Effective January 1, 2022, lab fees will be increased slightly for most soil analyses. Our standard nutrient analysis including the pre-paid kits (which includes pH) and soil textural analysis will be $15/sample and our soluble salts and pH only tests will be $5. For all soil test pricing, see link below

https://soiltest.uconn.edu/price.php

UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory
Click on the Following Links to Visit Any of Our Sites:

- UConn Extension
- UConn Food Safety
- UConn Home & Garden Education Center
- UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory
- UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory
- UConn Master Gardener Program
- UConn Garden Master Classes - All open to the public
- UConn Science of GMOs

Things to do/events
**Tuesday Tours at Spring Valley Student Farm** - you are invited to tour UConn’s student farm this summer on Tuesdays. SVSF also has a farmer’s market on campus. Contact jessica.larkin-wells@uconn.edu for information on both farm tours and the farmer’s market

**Aquatic Insects of CT - Fly Tying Workshop** - there is limited registration for fly-tying workshop June 25 at the UConn Torrey Life Science Building

**James L. Goodwin State Forest** - trail maps are available on-line. Contact them for any upcoming guided tours and other events

**Connecticut Trail Finder** - a good resource to find trails in Connecticut

**Bradley Mountain Farm** - this farm in Southington has events all year featuring walks with their friendly goats and other fun programs

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**Science Fun Facts**

Learn about bats, hairy plants, how new species are named and other interesting science and nature facts.

**Weather Folklore- Fact or Fiction?**

Learn about the wooly bear, dew and rain prediction, red sky at night predictions and other weather folklore (or facts?)

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

*UConn Extension Home & Garden Education Center: We are on a collaborative journey working together with farmers, families, communities and businesses to educate and solve problems concerning food, health and sustainability.*

*Join us.*
WHAT WE DO AT THE UCONN HOME AND GARDEN EDUCATION CENTER

- Plant, insect, plant disease identification and control options.
- Advise clients on plant selection and cultural requirements.
- Diagnose plant problems.
- Accept samples for diagnosis samples either by drop-off or mail.
- Present on gardening topics including IPM, pollinators, lawns, invasive plants and insects, landscaping and gardening with native plants, gardening to support bees, birds and wildlife, soils, compost and other horticultural topics.
- Staff a booth at the annual CT Flower & Garden Show- bring your garden questions and soil samples for free pH testing.
- Publish weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter. Please subscribe!
- Publish fact sheets and weekly newspaper articles

Subscribe to the UMass Landscape Message

UMass Extension's Landscape Message is an educational newsletter intended to inform and guide Massachusetts Green Industry professionals in the management of our collective landscape. Detailed reports from scouts and Extension specialists on growing conditions, pest activity, and cultural practices for the management of woody ornamentals, trees, and turf are regular features.