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# June is for Yellowwood, Fireflies and Mandevilla Vine



## Yellowwood- *Cladrastis kentukea*



Yellowwood is native from southeastern Illinois south to Oklahoma and Mississippi, and east to North Carolina. It is not a common tree even in its native range, but will do well here in Connecticut. Right now, it is blooming on the Storrs UConn campus outside the Young Building, showing off a profusion of highly fragrant, white flower panicles. A medium-sized tree with a broad canopy, branches start just feet off the ground. This tree provides 4 seasons of interest with showy flowers, gray bark, striking fall color and attractive form.

### Yellowwood

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## Fireflies/Lightning bugs- *Family: Lampyridae*



Firefly light display season in Connecticut peaks in June and July. During this breeding season, you can visit places like fields or meadows where there is low light pollution and high vegetation and water nearby to see them put on a

spectacular show. In Pennsylvania, residents revere their beloved state insect with a festival each year at the end of June. Firefly larvae are considered beneficial predators and can be found in leaf litter. However, these luminary beetles are on the decline due to light pollution and habitat loss. You can help support the firefly lifecycle in your own backyard by reducing unnecessary outdoor lights during firefly breeding season.

## Fireflies

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### **Mandevilla Vine- *Mandevilla sanderi***



Mandevilla vines are annual vines with colorful, trumpet-like flowers that attract hummingbirds. They are great for a trellis, for climbing walls, or for use in containers. Flowers may be red, pink, yellow or white. Some people have success bringing them indoors for the winter and then re-planting outside the next year. Keep well watered in the summer. Mandevilla with larger leaves grow much faster than those with smaller leaves.

### **Mandevilla Sanderi**

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## Raised Beds



Lettuce in raised bed. Photo by D. Pettinelli

**A common misconception concerning raised beds is that they should be filled with compost or commercial mixes for best results. Typically, these types of materials should be used to augment existing native or purchased mineral topsoil and not by themselves. These materials often have very high amounts of organic matter in them and hold too much water during wet periods and on the other extreme, during drought conditions, they are difficult to rewet. They also may contain excessive amounts of nutrients and lose their structural integrity over a few years resulting in planting media that has a difficult time supplying water and air to plant roots. Read more about the proper way to fill raised beds:**

**<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1328/>**

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## Insect Highlight-Viburnum Leaf Beetles



If the leaves of viburnums are skeletonized, check undersides of leaves for viburnum leaf beetle larvae. Viburnums may be severely damaged if populations of these beetles is high. Especially fond of arrowwood and cranberry viburnums, control may be achieved by turning over leaves and crushing the larvae by hand. Foliage can also be sprayed with an appropriate control product that will be ingested as larvae feed.

### [Viburnum leaf beetle](#)

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## Disease Highlight- Beech Leaf Disease



Above: early symptoms of BLD show interveinal banding

This disease complex of American, European and Oriental beech is associated with a foliar nematode species, *Litylenchus crenatae*. The disease causes damage to a tree's leaves, leading to reduced vigor and can eventually kill the tree. Both cultivated beech and native wild beech trees have been reported to have BLD in Connecticut. It is not clearly understood how the disease spreads or how long it takes for symptoms to appear. Early symptoms are dark green bands between leaf veins, and later leaves may curl, wither or turn leathery.

## Beech Leaf Disease

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## Plant Highlight- Mor- Colorful Weigela



*Weigela florida* 'Morcolzam', Mor-Colorful Weigela, is a low (to 3 feet tall), mounded shrub with variegated leaves and a profusion of multi-colored flowers along its stems. Branches arch gracefully from multiple stems. Weigela are a favorite of hummingbirds. This particular plant will fill out to the ground and has a life span of 30 years.

## Other Weigela Varieties

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## Vegetable Highlight- Potatoes



Potatoes planted in holes, potato plants with flowers, potato harvest. Photos by D. Pettinelli

**Potatoes are inexpensive enough that many gardeners do not consider allocating some space to them in the vegetable garden. Home-grown potatoes offer a wider selection of varieties than are found in the grocery store. They are quite easy to grow, especially delicious, and if well cared for, produce a bumper crop of potatoes for your eating pleasure. Seed potatoes are placed in holes 6 inches deep or so and covered with soil. As the green shoots emerge, the holes are filled in leaving the top leaf growth uncovered. New potatoes form between where the seed potato was planted and the soil line. If not planted that deeply, soil can be mounded around the plant as it grows to provide maximum space for potato formation.**

<https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-potatoes#hilling-293262>

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## **Animal Highlight- White-tailed Deer Fawns**



**Fawns will be born soon and does can drop them anywhere. Mothers leave fawns during the day to help deter predators, but they do not stray far from their young. Fawns will follow their mother eventually and learn which plants are tasty tidbits in your garden, so repellants should be used when fawns are seen.**

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## KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our Ladybug blogs written weekly

[A New Tool to Fight Weeds](#)

[Outdoors in late April and Early May](#)

[Dandelions-Famine Food to Fabulous Cuisine](#)

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## Upcoming Events and Things to Do

[Yale Marsh Botanical Garden self-guided tours](#)- Marsh Botanical Garden offers support for researchers, faculty, and students at Yale, as well as an informative and eye-catching experience for visitors. The naturalistic beds and wildflower plantings provide color and attract birds and butterflies. In spring, bulb displays and early flowering shrubs and trees add to the season.

[Dennis Farm Preserve](#)- This preserve offers a two-mile trail—a former farm road—through old agricultural land, most of which is now oak forest. The route passes a beaver pond on adjacent 4-H land and returns by way of grassy Old Kings Highway. The forest on the preserve is dominated by red and black oaks, with shrubs including huckleberry, blueberry, mountain laurel and witch hazel. Keep an eye out for great blue and green-backed herons as well as painted turtles in the ponds.

[Onrust Cruises at the Connecticut River Museum in Essex](#)- The Connecticut River Museum hosts the Onrust, a re-creation of the vessel Adriaen Block built in 1614. Onrust is available for public cruises and private charters.



[Tree Walk](#)- Join Arborist John Kehoe as he leads this walk featuring Cedar Hill Cemetery's rare and notable trees.

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## June Gardening Tips

- Nightshade family vegetables can be planted now.
- Use protective covers for berry crops to keep birds from eating fruit. Secure to ground with pegs or staples as some birds will try to get under netting.
- Seeds for annual plants can be sown.
- Scout for insect pests and plant diseases to catch early.
- Plant dahlia and other summer- flowering bulbs.
- Remember to water any trees and shrubs planted earlier this year. Water deeply and less often, not daily. Skip watering if rain occurred that week in an amount sufficient to reach the roots.
- Check leaves that have chewing damage. Many leaf beetles and their larvae are found during the day on the undersides of leaves. Crush any that are found or spray with an appropriate control product. Leaves can be sprayed with some control products and chewing insects will ingest any control product as they feed on treated leaves.
- Fertilize lawns for the last time before hot weather arrives. At the end of the month, raise mowing height an inch so grass can resist heat/drought later in the summer.
- Plant seeds of bush beans every three weeks for a continuous harvest
- Mosquitoes breed in standing water. To discourage them, change the water in bird baths and outdoor pet dishes every few days. Clean gutters of debris as mosquitoes will breed in any wet leaves left there.
- Check squash plants for squash bugs feeding on leaf undersides.

## [More June Gardening Tips](#)

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## Soil Testing

**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 Nutrient Analysis Laboratory.**

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)



## Soil pH

Of all the soil testing parameters the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis lab tests for, soil pH is the easiest to measure and of utmost importance for growing healthy plants. Find out why growing your plants in the proper pH range is linked to their success and how to manage the pH of your soil: <https://soiltesting.cahn.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3514/2022/06/Soil-pH-and-Management.pdf>

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## Before We Go...Can You Relate?



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**For Gardening Questions Visit our Website:**

[UConn Home and Garden Education Center](#)

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**Give presentations on gardening topics including IPM, pollinators, lawns, invasive plants and insects, landscaping and gardening with native plants, gardening to support bees, birds and wildlife**

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**Publish fact sheets, newspaper, and magazine articles**