



January is for Tree and Shrub Protection, *Ilex* for Winter Wildlife and Red-tailed Hawks





Winter protection for shrubs and trees



Heavy snows can damage certain shrubs and ornamental trees such as Arborvitaes. Branches may break or bow down under the weight of snow and sometimes bowed branches do not recover their original form. Above- shrub protected from being crushed by heavy snow sliding off the roof. Animals can also damage trees, especially voles and deer. Below, these arborvitaes have fencing to keep deer from browsing branches within reach.





Pamm Cooper photo

Winter protection for trees and shrubs

Ilex for winter wildlife food source



American holly (*Ilex opaca*), winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) and inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) are excellent ornamental ilex for winter food sources for birds and small animals. As in all holly family plants, a male must be planted nearby to ensure pollination for fruit production on female plants. Above- a female holly.



Male holly on left, above and female on far right with berries.

American holly



Planting above on the UConn campus includes inkberry (foreground) and winterberry (far left) with a viburnum species in between that also has fruit. Many birds including cedar waxwings, robins, cardinals and bluebirds visit these plants for food in the winter, especially in January.



Winterberry

Winterberry, above, can have variations in color of fruit, mature size and amount of fruit produced. The cultivar 'Heavy Berry' is notable for prolific fruit production. See link below for cultivars of note and cross-pollinators needed for pollination.



Inkberry, above, has small black fruit that persist in winter. This shrub comes in many forms and sizes and some cultivars are used as a suitable substitute for boxwoods.

Inkberry

Red-tailed hawk



Red-tailed hawks are the second largest of the North America Buteos. They are often seen on dead branches, lamp posts and signs along highways where they get a good view of prey moving in open areas. Adults have the reddish brown tail feathers which give them their common name.



This hawk was watching as leaves were raked from an area of unmown grass. It swooped down as voles scurried for cover.

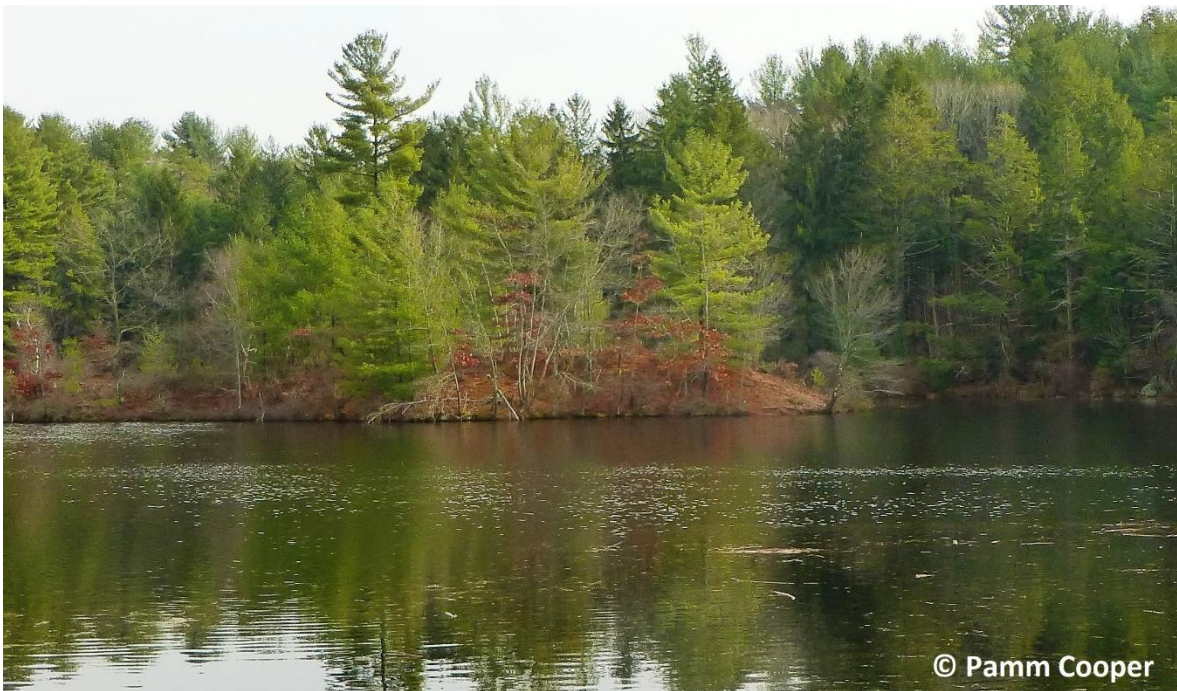
Red-tailed hawks

2020 Drought recovery



© Pamm Cooper

Moderate to severe drought conditions this year have been alleviated somewhat by several heavy rains this fall and into winter. Top image is of Buckingham Reservoir in early September, image below was taken in mid-December. Island area on right in image above is again surrounded by water in center of image below. Here's hoping we recover completely before next spring.



Lawn and garden ornaments- a matter of preference

Large or small, lawn and garden ornaments add a personal flavor to the landscape.



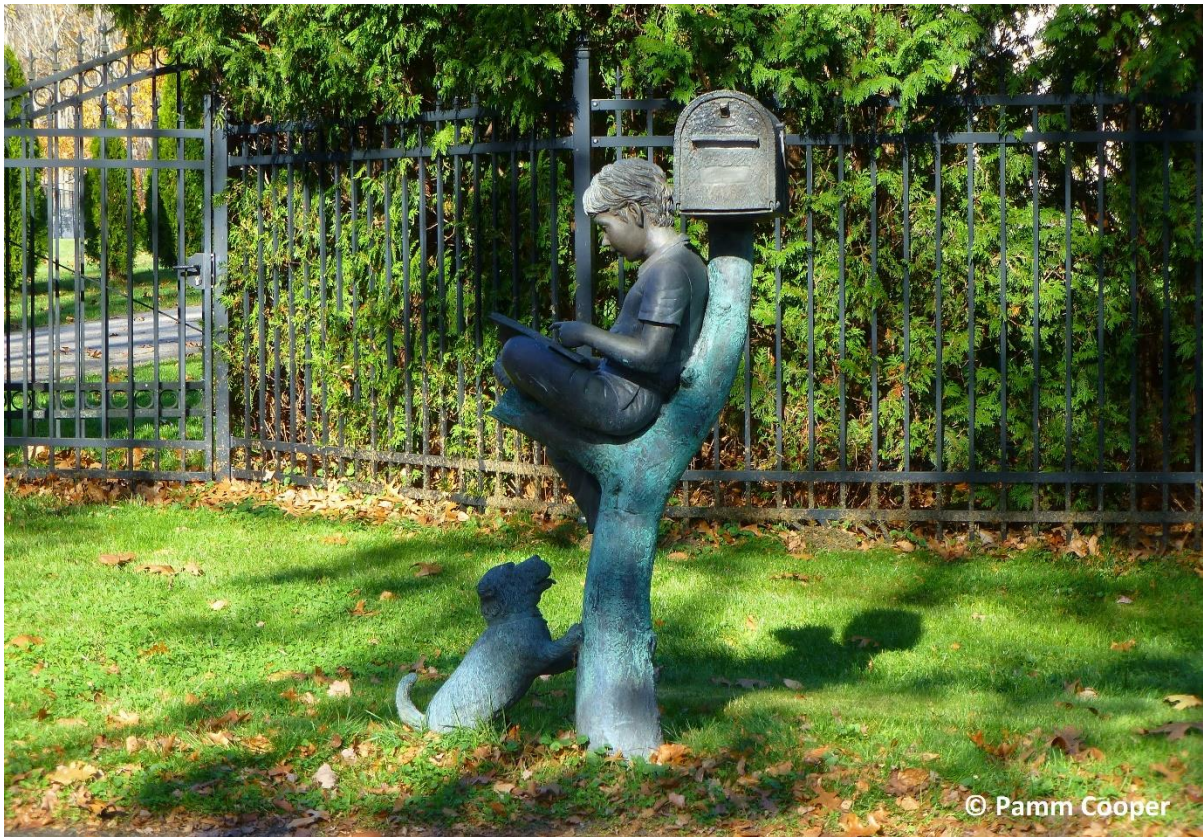
A lot of buoys make up this huge ship sculpture above



© Pamm Cooper



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Tree leaves that persist into winter



Leaves of native American beech trees hang on to their leaves throughout the winter. Besides their smooth, gray bark, this is a good way to identify these trees in the wild. Some oaks also retain leaves, especially on their lower branches. There are several possible reasons that trees might hold onto their leaves.

Why leaves persist on beech and oaks

Painted rocks on hiking trails



Anyone who does a lot of hiking may have noticed an abundance of decorated small rocks scattered along the trail. Sometimes they have instructions on the bottom of the rock that tell the finder which Facebook group to post a photo to once it's found. Then the finder can hide it in a new location for someone else to find. Popular hiding spots include parks, playgrounds and family-friendly hiking trails.



Lotus



Lotus at the Lotus Garden at Wickham Park in Manchester. There are two different species of lotus with the *Nelumbo lutea* the native American species and *Nelumbo nucifera* which is native to the Orient, parts of Australia and several other specific places. See link in 'Who Knew?' at the end of this newsletter for a fascinating look at a woman who makes silk thread from *N. nucifera* flower stem fibers in her native country of Vietnam.

American Lotus

Upcoming Webinars



Join UMass, Rhode Island, and Connecticut Extensions in a series of webinars for vegetable growers this January and February. Topics will be added to website soon. To register, click button below.

[Southern New England Vegetable Growers Webinar](#)

Plant Highlight- polypody ferns



The common polypody fern (*Polypodium virginianum*) is a diminutive fern typically found growing on rocks rather than on soil. Fronds only get to a height between 4-8 inches. This fern can be used in bonsai dishes with the native partridgeberry for a feel of a shady forest in the home.

Polypody ferns

Bird highlight- golden crowned kinglet



These tiny songbirds are winter visitors that can be seen fluttering and hovering among trees in wooded areas searching for insects. They have a very high-pitched call with a single note usually done in threes. Often found where brown creepers are also insect hunting. golden crown is readily seen, and may be flashed if bird is alarmed. Males have orange crown feathers.



Golden crowned kinglet

Animal highlight - squirrels and bird feeders



Our gray squirrels are notorious for changing a bird feeder into a squirrel feeder. Keeping them from eating the majority of seed and suet meant for birds can be a modest and frustrating pastime. here, a slippery squirrel baffle has kept squirrels from climbing up to this feeder. So far so good. Some people try Slinkys, but that did not work here. Below, a plastic fireball container with a hole punched through the top and secured above a hanging suet feeder has kept all the furry, gray fuzzballs from access. There are more ways that may work as well, but these have been 100% effective on this property.



Shop Local Connecticut Farmers and Farm Markets

Connecticut State Government – [site](#) that includes listings of where to get produce and meat from local farmers.

CitySeed – organizations that are operating an [outdoor, pre-order farmers market in New Haven](#).

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut – [map and directory](#) of farms, farmers markets, and farm stands.

UConn Extension Vegetable Resource Page

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

[Outdoors in January](#)

[Food of the Gods](#)

[Holiday Plants to Lift Your Spirits](#)

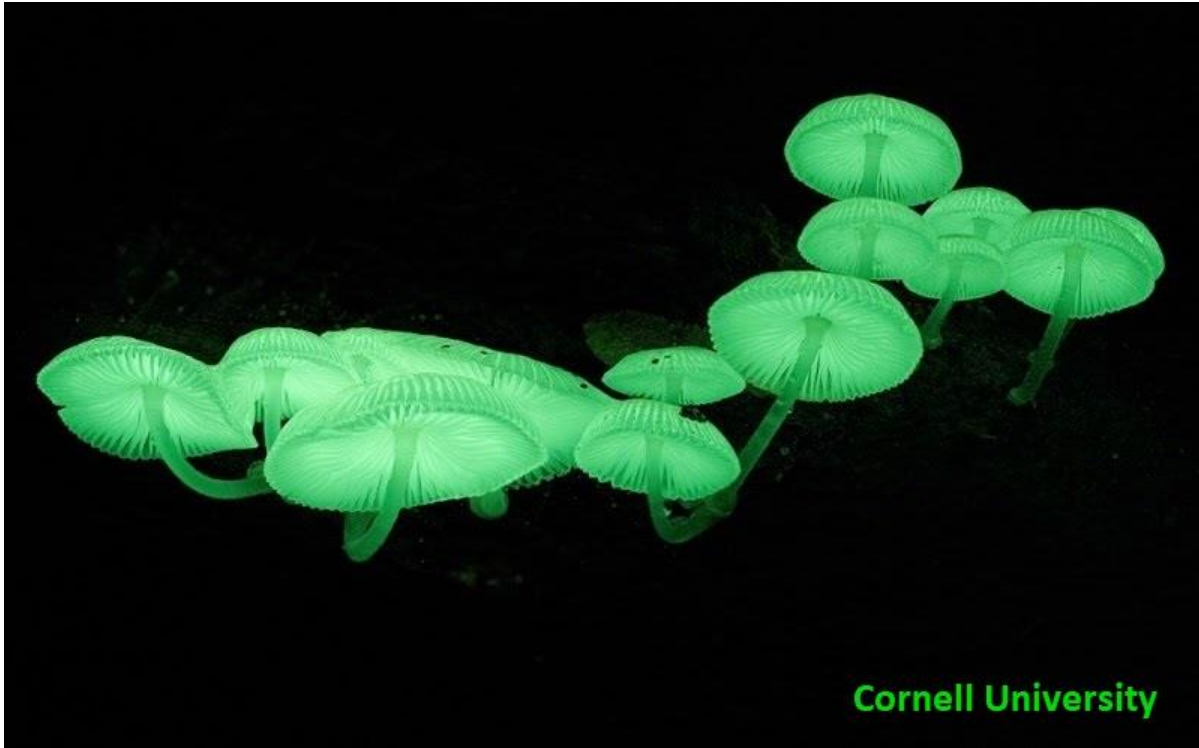
[Plant Evergreens for Holiday Decorating](#)

[December Doings](#)



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Bioluminescent fungi



Walking in the woods at night can provide an opportunity to see certain fungi species that glow eerily in the dark. This phenomenon of bioluminescence is called foxfire or fairy fire and is caused by **the reaction of certain chemicals produced as the fungi consume wood.**

Foxfire



2021 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 6 online classroom sessions from late February through the end of March. More details will be available shortly on the websites below.

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. Registration fee. Enrollment will be capped at 24 participants. Visit www.ladybug.uconn.edu or www.soiltest.uconn.edu for more information or call (860) 486-4274

Gardening Tips for January

Brush snow from evergreens as soon as possible after a storm. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion. Serious damage may be caused by heavy snow or ice accumulating on the branches.

Check for tan gypsy moth egg masses on tree trunks and branches. Scrape or brush off and destroy.

Try to stay off lawn areas during winter months as it can damage grass crowns.

Feed the birds regularly and see that they have a supply of clean water. Birds like suet, fruit, nuts, and bread crumbs as well as bird seed.

Check labels and storage instructions of pesticides, some may need to be protected from freezing temperatures to be effective.

When placing your seed and plant orders keep in mind that many seeds have improved insect and/or disease resistance. Watch also for drought-tolerant types. Our fact sheet [Vegetable Garden: Basics and Plant Selection](#) has some useful suggestions.

Turn and prune houseplants regularly to keep them shapely. Pinch back new growth to promote bushy plants.

[For a more extensive list of tips visit Gardening Tips for January](#)



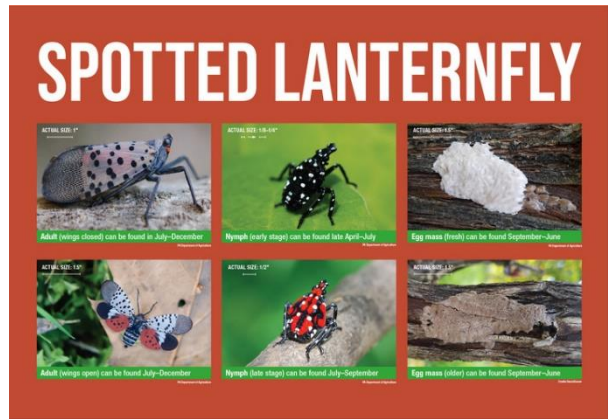
Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

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

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

Spotted Lanternfly



The spotted lanternfly is an invasive sap-feeding planthopper that was discovered in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 2014. It is native to China, India, and Vietnam. It attacks many hosts and has the potential to severely impact Connecticut's farm crops, particularly apples, grapes, and hops, as well as a number of tree species like maple. In the fall, adults can often be found congregating on tree-of-heaven (Ailanthus), willows and other trees. They will lay egg masses on trees and almost any nearby surface. The public is urged to report potential sightings of this invasive pest to ReportSLF@ct.gov. Submission of a photograph with any report is encouraged.

Spotted Lanternfly

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 Science of GMOs](#)

[UConn Master Gardener Program](#)

[UConn Garden Master Classes - All open to the public](#)



[Connecticut
Invasive Plant
Working Group
\(CIPWG\)](#)

[Invasive Mobile
Apps](#)

Invasive Mobile Apps:
Download these
Invasive/Early Detection/
Reporting Apps on your
mobile device!

Events and Things to Do

[CT DEEP](#) Connecticut's system of state parks and forests, state boat launches, and waterways offer fabulous outdoor recreation.

[Connecticut College](#) consider walking on some of the trails on the Connecticut College campus- the Arboretum's native plant collection is open now. They have a wonderful native spring wildflower section.

[Wickham Park](#)- located on the border of Manchester and East Hartford, this park has many unique gardens including one with a pond containing lotus.

[Harkness Park](#)- located in Waterford, expansive grounds and coastline offer opportunities to tour the gardens, have a picnic and go fishing

[Milford Point/Wheeler Marsh](#)- Wheeler Marsh and Milford Point are one of the healthiest remaining tidal marsh/barrier beach systems in Connecticut, and as such host several uncommon plant species.

[Florence Griswold Museum](#)- visit the Artists' Trail, a half-mile walk around the Museum's riverfront landscape and gardens.

Food for thought

Could the Food You Eat Help Fight the Novel Coronavirus?

[Food for thought](#)

Who Knew?

Lotus silk is among the rarest and most expensive fabrics in the world.

Making silk from lotus fibers

UConn Extension Home & Garden Education Center

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 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.

What. Food, Health, and Sustainability.

Join us.

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