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April is for Violas, Bloodroot and Vernal Pools





Violas



Violas, which include pansies, violets and Johnny-jump-ups are normally grown as cool-season annuals which will often self-sow. While pansies and violets fade away or stop flowering in hot weather, the Johnny jump-up- *Viola cornuta* or *Viola tricolor* are more heat resistant and may flower spring- early fall. Above: Viola Penny(TM) yellow jump-up



Common blue violet, *Viola sororia*, is variable in color. This native wildflower blooms from April - June and has broad heart-shaped leaves.

Pansies vs. Johnny jump- up Violas

Common blue violet

Bloodroot



Native bloodroot *Sanguinaria canadensis* can form colonies in open woodlands and is one of the first wildflowers to bloom in New England. Its common name comes from the vivid red sap in the rootstock. Early native pollinators visit this flower. a unique feature is the single leaf that is wrapped around the flower stem before opening



Blood root

Vernal pools



Vernal pools teem with life- in early spring wood frogs and spring peepers herald the arrival of warmer weather. Shortly, they will be filled with the egg masses of frogs, salamanders, toads and newts and later with their gilled young. They are also good watering holes for many animals and birds until they dry up later in the summer.



Gilled form of the spotted salamander

Vernal pools

Pollination requirements of tree fruits



Before buying fruit trees, make sure of the pollination requirements of the variety you intend to buy. Most apples need another variety that will bloom earlier/ later in order to pollinate properly to produce fruit in higher yields. Other trees may be self-fruitful and require no other variety in order to achieve adequate pollination.

Pollination requirements of tree fruits

Deer resistant landscape plants



Deer are a nuisance for many gardeners, and it is a challenge to keep them from browsing on or decimating certain plants, such as hostas, phlox, arborvitae, tulips and myriad other plants. Deer clipped off almost every leaf of the annual sweet potato vine one night, above.



***Pieris japonica*- Japanese andromeda- is one shrub that comes in a variety of sizes, shapes and flower colors and has an added plus of being disliked by deer.**

Deer resistant native plants

Landscape plants rated by deer resistance

Great-horned owl



Great horned owls breed early in the Northeast, hatching young as early as February. Although they often use old nests built by hawks or other large birds,

they will nest in large cavities, platforms and in buildings. Prey range in size from small rodents like mice and voles to rabbits, skunks, geese, and other birds. They eat mostly mammals and birds.

Great horned owl

Plant Highlight- ferns



Ferns are excellent deer resistant plants for shade, partial shade, or even full sun conditions, depending upon genus. Above is the Christmas fern *Polystichum acrostichoides*.



Royal fern, *Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis*, forms a vase-shaped clump. Royal ferns will tolerate shade, but grow best in sun if soils are kept very moist.



Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) tucked into a shady section on the left, just beside a sunnier area to the right of the steps. These are very large, gracefully arching ferns and need some space and a moist soil.

Ferns of New England

Insect highlight- eastern tent caterpillar



Eastern tent caterpillars *Malacosoma americanum* hatch, as leafing out occurs, from eggs masses laid on twigs of small wild cherries, especially black cherry *Prunus serotina*, or sometimes on apple . Tents are made from silk at the forks of branches and caterpillars hide there by day, and come out to feed on leaves by day. Many birds will pick apart tents to get the caterpillars. Since caterpillars are done feeding by late May to early June, trees will produce new leaves and recover.

Eastern tent caterpillars

Wire grid support for peonies



Peonies are a perennial that tend to become droopy with heavy flowers, especially after rains. One method of support is a square made of metal grids with holes large enough for plants stems to grow inside of without rubbing as plants grow. Chicken wire was used in above image. The grid is laid flat on top of peonies as they emerge in the spring. As peonies grow through the grid, lift it up carefully until the mesh is high enough on the stems to provide support.



Wire mesh is where the arrow is in image above, well hidden by the peony. Peonies can be cut back below the mesh and wire can be reused the next spring.

Marking perennials



If you install new perennials, consider saving the plastic tag and inserting it in the soil behind the plant for the winter to identify it as it starts growth the next spring, as in image above. Below, a golf tee has been placed in the ground where these daffodils are growing to locate where more bulbs can be added to the clump in the fall.



Upcoming Webinars

Practical Recommendations for Improving Brassica Insect Pest Management- UMASS

Event date/time: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 - 12:00pm to 1:00pm
Event Type: Online

Ask The Entomologist-UMASS

Ask UMass Extension Entomologist Tawny Simisky your questions about early season and invasive insect and mite pests of trees and shrubs!

Event date/time: Thursday, April 22, 2021 - 10:00am
Event Type: Online

CLEAR 2021 Webinar Series UCONN

Center for Land Use Education & Research (CLEAR) Webinar series covers many free land use education webinars from April-June 2021

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

[Fungus Gnats: a Pesky Pest](#)

[Things of Interest in the March Landscape](#)

[Celebrate with Shamrocks](#)



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Gardening Tips for April

Pull back mulch from perennials to allow the soil to warm up but be prepared to temporarily recover them if heavy frosts are predicted.

Get the jump on weeds in garden beds by pulling out any that overwinter and applying mulch.

For an instant spring show, fill containers with purchased forced spring bulbs from supermarkets and garden centers.

Transplant houseplants that need repotting.

Direct sow peas, carrots, radishes, lettuces, and spinach every two weeks through mid-May for staggered harvests.

Place seedlings in cold frames around April 25 or later to harden off.

Check fruit trees for Eastern tent caterpillars, they emerge around the same time as leaves sprout. Blast nests with a strong spray of water to destroy them.

Celebrate Arbor Day on April 26th by planting a tree. Choose planting sites based on exposure to sun, shade, wind and distance from water source.

Set up a bat house early in the month to encourage them to roost. Visit the DEEP's Bats fact sheet for information and bat house plans.

Seed areas of lawn that have thinned out as temperatures get above 50 degrees. Do not put out pre-emergent crabgrass control until after forsythia is in full bloom but before lilacs/flowering dogwoods begin bloom

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



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.

Click on the Following Links to Visit Any of Our Sites:

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[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](#)

Things to do/events

[Yale Marsh Botanical Garden](#)- Visitors who are not from Yale are welcome to visit for self-guided walking tours of this extensive collection of plants including naturalistic beds and wildflower plantings

[Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge](#)- ten units across 70 miles of the Ct. coastline provide opportunities for viewing birds, wildlife and several historic buildings including the Falkner Island lighthouse

[Connecticut College Arboretum](#)- there are several trails, including a native plant collection featuring spring wildflowers and the Nancy Moss Native Azalea Collection

[James L. Goodwin State Forest](#)- trail maps are available on-line. Contact them for any upcoming guided tours and other events



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

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

[Invasive Mobile Apps](#)

Food for thought

Ducks are helping control weed and insect pests in rice fields

[Ducks in rice fields](#)

Who knew?

Lanternfly's attraction to vertical silhouettes could help monitor, trap it

[Telephone poles and lanternflies](#)

Conservation and the environment-

Placement of and design of of bat houses is critical for survival of any bats living in them.

[Think twice about that bat box](#)

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.

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