



March is for Minor Bulbs, Mealybugs, and Maple Syrup



MINOR BULBS



Minor bulbs, such as scillas, snowdrops, species crocus, chionodoxa, netted iris and more, add early color to the drab, late winter landscape as well as serving as a source of nectar and pollen to early arising insect species. The best attribute of just about all of these early bloomers is their tendency to naturalize, covering large swaths of earth with the joyful colors of spring. Think about where they can fit into your landscape.

[Minor Bulbs](#)

MEALYBUGS



Both Mealybug Photos by Leanne Pundt, UConn

Of all houseplant pests, mealybugs are one of the most difficult to control. They are tiny, soft-bodied, oval-shaped insects covered with white, powdery wax secretions. Mealybugs feed on plant sap and cause yellowing, stunting and distortion of plant parts. Some species lay eggs while others give birth to live young. Regularly inspect houseplants for symptoms and signs of insect damage. Tropical houseplants such as citrus, orchids and hibiscus are particularly susceptible to mealybug damage. If caught in initial stages, infestations may be reduced or eliminated by pruning out infected portions of the plant, or by treating with horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and forceful sprays with water. Repeat applications of products are usually necessary. For more severe infestations, it is best to discard the infested plant before the mealybugs can move on to your other houseplants. Written for greenhouse growers, this fact sheet offers more extensive information on mealybugs and additional control options:

[Mealybugs](#)

IT'S MAPLE SYRUP TIME



Photo by Lisa Rivers

In Connecticut, early February through late March (weather permitting) is maple syrup season. Sap runs heavy with freezing nights and warmer sunny days. Sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*) are the tree species most tapped for syrup. Trees have to be at least 40 years old (11 inches in diameter) for tapping to begin. Did you know it takes approximately 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup? Check out CT Maple Syrup Weekend, March 19 and 20, 2022: www.ctmaple.org/maple-weekend.html.

If you can't make it, here's a listing of sugar houses in Connecticut: www.ctmaple.org/where-to-buy-ct-maple-products---list-by-town.html

BIRD HIGHLIGHT - WOOD DUCKS



Male and female on nesting box



Male Wood Duck

Wood ducks perch and nest in tree cavities. They are often seen flying into and walking around in the woods. These small ducks are very shy and are readily flushed into flight, especially during breeding season. Males are spectacular seen in sunlight with their crested brilliant green head, chestnut neck and throat, creamy sides, and red eyes. Wood ducks can be found in wooded swamps, marshes, streams, ponds, and small lakes, especially where there is cover along the shore from cattails, fallen limbs and low-hanging vegetation. They migrate to southern states and Central America and return to New England in late March to early April.

Wood Ducks

Plant Highlight- Spring Blooming Witch hazel

Hamamelis vernalis is a witch hazel native to the Ozarks, eastern North America. It is a multi-stemmed, large shrub and blooms in late winter here in New England- usually sometime in

March. *H. vernalis* has been bred with two Asian species- Chinese witch hazel (*H. mollis*) and Japanese witch hazel (*H. japonica*)



Spring-blooming Witch Hazel

March Gardening Tips

- [Seeds](#) that require 10-12 weeks of growth before transplanting can be started indoors now.
- Plant cool-season annuals, such as pansies, snapdragons, and calendulas at the end of the month, weather permitting.
- Use sterile growing mix for starting seeds – this will reduce problems with damping-off fungi.
- Avoid overwatering, which encourages root rot pathogens.
- Once your garden beds thaw, remove old garden debris such as leaves, stalks, and seed heads to reduce the presence of any overwintering diseases and pests.
- Before new shoots emerge, cut back last year's stalks on perennials and grasses.
- Divide Hosta when shoots appear. Clumps can be dug up, split and replanted.

- Prune old, leggy growth from heather (which flowers on new growth in late summer) but prune heath (which sets its flower buds in late spring) just enough to shape it in the early spring.
- Pot up begonia and caladium bulbs. Place in a warm, bright location to encourage growth.
- Prune any houseplants that have gotten leggy to encourage new growth.
- Houseplants may now be [fertilized](#) monthly as their growth resumes. Be sure to follow recommended rates for the plant in question!
- [Thin bramble plantings](#) (raspberries, blackberries, etc.) to increase air circulation and reduce stem and leaf disease problems.
- [Fertilize blueberries](#) before budbreak.
- [MORE MARCH TIPS](#)

March is a good time to renovate an old garden. As soon as soil allows, undesirable plants can be dug out and soil prepped for new plants or seeding.



Spotted Lantern Fly Quarantine



CT Agricultural Experiment Station



PA Department of Agriculture

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has issued a Quarantine Order with defined restricted areas for the exotic pest spotted lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*. The quarantine order was renewed January 1, 2022 and will remain in effect until December 31, 2022. The purpose of this quarantine is to attempt to stop the spread of this exotic, damaging pest.

FREE COMPOST WEBINARS – REGISTER NOW!!!

2022 Connecticut Compost Webinar Series



MARCH 30 | 3-6PM

TRACK 2: ON-FARM
COMPOSTING AND
BIOCHAR IN COMPOST

REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR THIS MEETING:
[BIT.LY/ON-FARM-COMPOSTING](https://bit.ly/on-farm-composting)



MARCH 23 | 3-6PM

TRACK 1: COMPOST BASICS
AND SCIENCE OF COMPOST

REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR THIS MEETING:
[BIT.LY/COMPOST-BASICS](https://bit.ly/compost-basics)



APRIL 6 | 3-6PM

TRACK 3: LARGE MUNICIPAL &
COMMERCIAL SCALE
COMPOSTING

REGISTER IN ADVANCE FOR THIS MEETING:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/MUN-STATE-COMPOSTING](https://bit.ly/mun-state-composting)

This program is made possible by our planning partners.



MORE INFO: WWW.CTRCD.ORG/CONNECTICUT-COMPOST-WEBINAR

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.

UMass Landscape Message

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs!

[Hot Water Seed Treatment](#)

[The 5 Biggest Seed Starting Mistakes & How to Avoid Them](#)

[Roses for Valentine's Day](#)

[Importance of Soil Organic Matter for Crop and Soil Health](#)

[A Key Change In Seed Catalogs](#)

Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

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: <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

[Connecticut Trail Finder](#)- Connecticut Trail Finder is a new resource for those looking to explore the Nutmeg State's 2,000 miles of trails.

[James L. Goodwin State Forest](#)- trail maps are available on-line. Contact them for any upcoming guided tours and other events. Register by March 18 for their Master Naturalist Program.

[Bradley Mountain Farm](#)- this farm in Southington has events all year featuring walks with their friendly goats and other fun programs.

See eagles, osprey & seals. March is a perfect time to watch wildlife. Take a boat tour to view the [majestic eagles](#), or land tour with experienced tour operators. See the breathtaking sights of bald eagles at [Shepaug Dam Observation Area](#) in Southbury.

Plan a day trip to the tropics. Receive a truly tropical experience by heading into the [Butterfly Enclosure](#) at the [Connecticut Science Center](#)! Experience 40-50 different species of magnificent and educational butterflies free-flying right above your head.

[Connecticut College Arboretum](#) -The Benefits of Winter Pruning
Saturday, March 19, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Science and Nature

[CT Bird Atlas Tracks State Birds](#) with Eye Toward Conservation: A UConn team leads a massive community research effort to catalogue birds across the state.

[How Climate Change Will Affect Plants](#) : We human beings need plants for our survival. Everything we eat consists of plants or animals that depend on plants somewhere along the food chain. Plants also form the backbone of natural ecosystems, and they absorb about 30 percent of all the carbon dioxide emitted by humans each year. But as the impacts of climate change worsen, how are higher levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere and warmer temperatures affecting the plant world?

[Birch Trees Remove Microplastics From The Soil](#) With the help of trees, microplastic-polluted soils could be remediated. For the first time, researchers at the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB) have shown that birch trees absorb microplastics

through their roots during the growth phase. Good news, because soils are many times more polluted with microplastics than oceans are.

Food for thought

Is there really seaweed in ice cream? Why do wintergreen Life Savers™ spark when you bite them? Read about these and other interesting [food science fun facts](#)



Weather and the Environment

Use this [interactive cloud atlas](#) guide from Penn State to get an image and brief description of cloud types.



WINNING CHOICES!



From Proven Winners: With spring just around the corner, we're gearing up for another spectacular planting season, and Truffula™ Pink *Gomphrena* is at the top of our wish list! These whimsical pink pom-pom blooms create a one-of-a-kind show on a tough, durable plant—winning Truffula Pink over 70 awards and the love of gardeners across the country since its debut in 2019. This heat & drought tolerant annual bursts into bloom high above other annuals at 22"-28" tall, making it perfect in containers as a thriller or in the middle of the border. A favorite of butterflies & bees, Truffula Pink will be positively buzzing with pollinators on warm, sunny days, and it makes an excellent cut flower due to its long vase life.

Check out [All America Selection Winners](#) as well as the many offerings by plant enthusiasts such as Proven Winners.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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 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 each year at the CT Flower & Garden Show- bring your gardening questions and soil samples for free pH testing.**
- **Publish free weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter. Please subscribe!**
- **Publish fact sheets and weekly newspaper articles.**

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.

UConn | **COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
EXTENSION

Copyright © 2022 UConn Extension, all rights reserved. UConn Extension is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and program provider.

[Unsubscribe](#)

UConn Extension 1376 Storrs Road Unit 4134 Storrs, Connecticut 06269 United States (860)
486-9228