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October is for Witch Hazel, Black Cohosh, and Bird Migration





The Home and Garden Center has started a Youtube channel with videos geared for the home gardener. Here are some fun ones we hope you enjoy!

[Check out our Home and Garden Channel!](#)

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON - Read our latest Ladybug blogs

The UConn Home & Garden Education Center has been posting weekly blogs on a variety of horticultural topics since Dawn Pettinelli first initiated the UConn Ladybug Blog in 2009.

Over the years, contributors have included UConn faculty, staff, adjuncts, students and even a few guest columnists, each providing a different take on what's happening in their gardens or yards, the latest horticultural news, ways to deal with plant pests, gardens of merit and much more.

More than 700 posts have been published and at last count, there had been 1,384,555 visits to our site.

This year the UConn Ladybug Blog won a Silver Award from Garden Comm 2022 Media Awards! Our submission was among 165 entries evaluated by a team of distinguished judges with both gardening and communications expertise.



Butterfly House at Coastal Maine Botanic Garden. Photo by dmp2022

[Trolling for a More Sustainable World](#)



This unique geranium with beautiful dark leaves would make a great houseplant over the winter. Photo by mrl2022.

[Bringing the Outdoors in for the Winter](#)



[Things to See Outdoors in Late September](#)

Witch Hazel - *Hamamelis virginiana*



Witch hazel is a small native tree that blooms as leaves turn yellow in October. The flowers have thready, yellow petals and are a valuable resource for bees and other insects that are still active in the fall. This plant does well in full sun or part shade and is found naturally in the understory of moist woodland areas or along stream edges. Mature height can reach 20 feet. Witch hazel processing has been a big industry in Connecticut, both in Essex, until recently,

and in East Hampton.

Native Witch Hazel

Witch Hazel History in Connecticut

Black Cohosh - Black Snakeroot *Actaea racemosa*



Previously known as *Cimicifuga racemosa*, *Actaea racemosa* is also called bugbane, black cohosh and black snakeroot. Plants can get to 6 feet tall and are a great late season backdrop to garden beds. Bloom time is late September- October. Flower spikes smell like grape and are attractive to pollinators and butterflies.

Black Cohosh

Migrating Birds



October is the time when large numbers of migratory bird species are seen as they pass through Connecticut to their southern overwintering grounds. Above, left, is a yellow-rumped warbler eating cedar berries, and on the right are some migratory Canada geese. Not all Canada geese migrate. Some robins remain all winter, while the migrating flocks are seen now. Some shore birds overwinter here in Connecticut, and will arrive soon from their northern breeding grounds.

[Bird Migration Basics](#)

Plant Highlight - Annuals for Pollinators and Migrating Butterflies





Migrating butterflies and late season pollinators visit many long- lasting annual flowers including *Tithonia* sunflowers, *Lantata*, balloon milkweed and Cosmos, clockwise from upper left. Petunias, marigolds, zinnias and many other annuals are also good sources of pollen and nectar for these insects. Many of these are easily started from seed every year.

[Annuals for Pollinators \(and Butterflies\)](#)

[Tithonia Mexican Sunflower](#)

Early Red Fall Colors





Three native plants that turn red early in the fall are staghorn sumac, Virginia creeper and red maples. Virginia creeper is a vine and can climb up tree trunks, telephone poles and other tall objects, giving them a touch of vibrant a red color. Red, or swamp, maples occur in wetlands and where soils are moist, so if you see trees with some red leaves in early fall and it is likely a swamp maple denoting the presence of a stream, pond or other wetland. Blueberry leaves turn vibrant red later in the season.

Crossbreeding the Native American Chestnut



Image from Lindsay Rush of
Mitchell College in New London



Through transgenics and crossbreeding scientists hope to bring back a former giant of the Eastern American forest; the American chestnut tree, *Castanea dentata*, a keystone species made functionally extinct by blight over a century ago. Here, scientists are cross-pollinating surviving American chestnut stock with other blight-resistant chestnuts. In a few months they will harvest the genetically altered seeds produced and plant them in a test field. The goal is to create an almost pure American chestnut tree that can fully resist chestnut blight.

Gene-editing the American Chestnut

Disease Highlight - Tar Spot of Maple



Tar spot is caused by several fungi in the *Phytisma* genus and gives the appearance of droplets of tar sitting on the leaves. The disease is rarely a serious health issue for the tree in question, though it does make for some unsightly foliage in the landscape.



Tar Spot

Disease Highlight - Anthracnose



Anthracnose is the name of several fungal diseases that causes circular necrotic lesions on leaves, stems, and the surface of fruits and vegetables. The most common way anthracnose is introduced is through splashing water and soil which allows the fungal spores to sporulate.



Gerald Holmes, Strawberry Center, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Bugwood.org

[Anthracnose](#)

Insect Highlight - Turbulent Phosphila Caterpillars



©Pamm Cooper

These caterpillars look like they have a black and white maze on their back. Feeding only on green briar (*Smilax* ssp.) in large groups until later instars,

these caterpillars can be found on leaf undersides, sometimes feeding into late October. The image above shows middle instar caterpillars still hanging out together.

[Turbulent Phosphila](#)

Harvesting and Storing Fruits and Vegetables



See link below to an excellent fact sheet on how to determine if fruits and vegetables are ripe, how to harvest them and best options as to how to store them.

[Harvesting and Storing Fruits and Vegetables](#)

Leaf Clean-up and Pollinators



Lawn leaf clean-up is essential for healthy grass next spring. But what about leaves in garden and landscape beds? Ask Extension, in cooperation with the USDA has an interesting article by Nathaniel Walton concerning whether to delay spring clean- up of gardens to help overwintering pollinators. What was done in the fall is the key here.

[Delaying Spring Clean Up to Help Overwintering Pollinators](#)

Food For Thought

[The Myth of Native Plant Superiority](#)

While planting native plants, it is worth considering the micro-climate conditions and how the plant will respond to different planting sites.

[Should I wait to clean up the garden in order to help conserve insects?](#)

The answer is, it depends.

[From the Soil to the Sky](#)

Every day, about one quadrillion gallons of water are silently pumped from the ground to the treetops. Earth's plant life accomplishes this staggering feat using only sunlight. It takes energy to lift all this liquid, but just how much was an open question until this year.

[Earth harbours 20,000,000,000,000,000 ants](#)

Have you ever wondered exactly how many ants live on Earth? Possibly not, but it's certainly a question we've asked ourselves.

Gardening Tips for October

1. Add a touch of fall to your home and landscape with sedum, hardy mums, asters, and fall pansies.
2. Take a scenic drive to observe the changing fall foliage. The CT DEEP has [fall foliage driving routes for Connecticut](#).

3. Pot up hyacinths, tulips, and other pre-cooled bulbs and store in a cool, dark place until ready to force.
4. [Squash and pumpkins](#) should be harvested when they have bright color and a thick, hard skin. These vegetables will be abundant in farmer's markets and will make a colorful and healthy addition to fall dinners.
5. Plant garlic from October 1st to November 15th. Place each clove pointed-side up at a depth of 2-4" about 6" apart.
6. Beets, parsnips, and carrots can be covered with a thick layer of straw or leaves and left in the ground for harvest, as needed, during the winter. This may not be an option in areas with heavy [vole](#) populations.
7. Rosemary is not hardy in most areas of CT. Bring plants in before temperatures drop too low but check plants thoroughly for mealybugs.
8. Remove plant debris from the vegetable garden. Bag any diseased plant parts and put it in the trash or take it to a landfill but do not compost.
9. Avoid the spring rush and have your soil tested now by the [UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#).
10. [Renovate the lawn](#) by thatching or aerating if needed.
11. Drain garden hoses and store in a shed, garage, or basement for the winter. Turn off all outside faucets.

Read more October tips [here](#).

Glitters & Glows[®] Arrowwood Viburnum *Viburnum dentatum* var. *deamii*

Looking for a native shrub that provides attractive flowers and also berries sought after by wildlife? Then give 'Glitters & Glows' arrowwood viburnums a try. Container grown offerings contain one plant of each cultivar, 'All That Glitters' and 'All That Glows'. This is to promote cross-fertilization ensuring good berry production. Many native viburnums are self-incompatible so having two that can cross pollinate is a key to a fabulous fall show of beautiful blue berries. Plants grow well in sun or part shade, reach 4 to 5 feet in height and width and are hardy from USDA zones 4 to 8. Birds love the berries and also the shelter these plants provide while deer mostly ignore them. The name, arrowwood, was given to the plant as it was believed that Native Americans used the straight stems as arrow shafts.



From: www.provenwinners.com



Voles can sometimes be deterred by inserting a pot in the ground with the bottom cut out. Leave a couple of inches of the pot above the soil surface, and insert the plant inside the pot.

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.



Soil samples can be submitted any time of the year that they can be collected. Fall is the optimum time to send them in. The turnaround time is quicker and if amendments, such as limestone, are recommended, they can be added in the fall as it takes 6 to 18 months for the limestone to change the soil pH.

<https://soiltesting.cahnr.uconn.edu/price/>

Things to do/events

Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) VIRTUAL Symposium: Strategies for Managing Invasive Plants: Assess, Remove, Replace & Restore

[Registration](#)

New England Fruit and Vegetable Conference December 13,14,15 2022. This is in Manchester, New Hampshire.

[Registration](#)

Many farms and orchards have activities for the fall including:

[Lapsley Orchard Fall Festival October 9](#)

[2022 Fall Festival Vendor Opportunities Auer Fram Bloomfield](#) Includes a scarecrow contest

[Flashlight Night at The Farm's Corn Maze at The Farm, Woodbury CT](#)

[Kid-friendly walk-through haunted petting zoo Flamig Farm West Simsbury](#)

[Cruises aboard Onrust](#) - the Connecticut River Museum in Essex offers cruises aboard the historic sailing vessel, the Onrust

[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

[UConn Summer Riding Programs](#)- check out programs for all levels of riders, beginner to advanced, offered this summer

Vegetable pest alerts and how to harvest and store vegetables

[Vegetable Pest Alerts](#)

[Harvesting and Storing](#)

[Home Grown Vegetables](#)

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 problems

Receive samples for diagnosis samples either by drop- off or
mail

Do 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

Have a booth every year at the Flower and Garden Show- bring
soil samples for pH testing

Publish weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter available for
subscription

Publish fact sheets, newspaper and magazine articles

Helpful Links

[Home & Garden Education Center](#)

[UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory](#)

[Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

[Master Gardener Program](#)

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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.

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