

September is for Turtlehead, Bear's Head Tooth Fungus and Drought Damage to Plants



Turtlehead- *Chelone glabra*



Both white turtlehead and pink turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*) are native wildflowers that bloom in late summer. These plants are found in moist soils in wetland areas and along stream, pond or lake edges. Bumblebees, among several other species of bees, can push into the flowers to collect pollen and nectar. Turtlehead are easy to grow as long as they are given adequate moisture, especially during dry summers.

Turtlehead

Bear's head Tooth Fungus- *Hericium Americanum*



This impressive fungus Has teeth instead of pores or gills. It can resemble a mass of white icicles dripping down the trunk of a tree. It is common on deciduous trees. We do not advise eating this mushroom because identification mistakes are often made. If you find one, admire it and leave it at that.

[Bear's head Tooth Fungus](#)

Drought (and Heat) Damage to Plants



Because of the excessive drought and heat conditions this year, many plants have been showing signs of stress. Top left- certain native ferns turned brown by July Top right- certain hosta varieties planted in full sun will be damaged in years like this one.

Make sure to select varieties that can tolerate full sun.. Bottom right- Newly planted maple tree succumbed due to lack of water this summer. If plants, even if established perennials and shrubs, are showing signs of drought/ heat stress, water deeply once a week if there is no rainfall. Some of the summer storms dropped over an inch of rain, but most of it ran off, never getting into the ground. In some areas, the ground is dry and powdery over a foot down.

[Drought and Excessive Heat Stress](#)

Lawn Renovation and Repair



Early September is the ideal time to re-seed or renovate declining lawns, especially after the hot, dry summer we just had. Seed will germinate without too much weed competition and have time to develop deeper roots than when seeded in the spring and hot weather is a factor in seeding success. New seedlings will be able to withstand fall leaf cleanup methods the sooner seed is applied before leaf fall begins.

Plant Highlight- Small-flowered Gerardia



Small-flowered gerardia, *Gerardia paupercula*, is a member of the snapdragon family. It blooms August-September and is found in wetlands. It supports butterfly caterpillars of the common buckeye, certain native specialized Megachile bee species and syrphid flies. Flowers only last a day or two.

[Gerardia paupercula](#)

Bird Highlight- Nighthawks



Nighthawks are beginning their annual migration. Look for flocks of these birds just before sunset. As they fly, they will often swirl together in giant circles, going back and forth in a synchronized flight. These are insect-hunting birds, and not so many years ago could be seen flying in large numbers above lit ball fields and parking lots as they hunted for insects attracted to night lights. Wings have a distinct angular form with a white band. Tree swallows will soon be migrating as well.

Nighthawks

Insect Highlight- Wasps and Hornets



Left- Bald-faced hornet nest Center- Wasp eating rotting fig Right- Wasps sipping honey dew off sidewalk under tree with scale insects on it

As the summer begins to wind down and many plants have finished flowering, wasps find it difficult to find nectar. As a result, they begin to look for nourishment elsewhere. It's common this time of year to find wasps hovering around hummingbird feeders, eating honeydew (insect excrement) on any plants that have or had piercing/sucking insects on them, and anything else that contains sugar. It is important to be mindful of this when consuming sugary drinks outside. Putting your drink down and leaving it will attract wasps. This could make for a surprise encounter and a painful experience. Nests are not reused the following year, but wasps are still active in them right now. They will defend their nests until they abandon them after cold weather prevails.



Bald-faced hornets on a hummingbird feeder

Plant Highlight- “Volcano” Mulching



It can be a chronic irritataion for gardeners and responsible landscapers and other people who know better to see excessive mulch placed around the bases of trees. We want to get a rake and wheelbarrow ourselves... When left too high, feeder roots will often remain in the mulch, and some roots eventually girdle around the tree instead of heading into the soil. This girdling due to “volcano” mulching is especially common in maples. Above right image shows a dedicated worker pulling back and removing excessive mulch around a rare slake bark maple, which then revealed large girdling roots which will need to be removed. If trees must be mulched, it should be at the **maximum level** shown in the image below- 2-3 inches and **not touching** the base of the tree.



Mulch Volcanoes

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Gardening Tips for September

- Mid to late September is a great time to add accent plants, like vivid mums and starry asters, that will provide autumn colors in the landscape along with ornamental cabbages and kales.
- Lawn repair and seeding should optimally be done by mid- September so new seedlings can get established before fall leaf cleanup.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs, but wait until late in the month, while leaves are still green.
- Weed and mulch perennial beds using a loose organic material such as bark chips or leaves to keep down weeds, preserve moisture, and give roots a longer time to grow before the soil freezes.
- Outwit hungry [squirrels](#) and [chipmunks](#) by planting hardy bulbs in established groundcovers.
- Lift and store tender bulbs, such as cannas, dahlias and gladiolus, after first frost.
- Perennials like daylilies and bearded irises can still be dug up and divided.
- Visit a local nursery or garden center and select spring flowering bulbs to add to your gardens. Plant the bulbs among perennials, under trees

and shrubs, or in larger groups for a splendid spring show. Choose colors that complement other spring flowering plants as well as nearby plantings. Work a little Bulb Booster or 5-10-10 into the bottom of the planting holes.

- Do not prune Macrophylla hydrangeas as most flowers buds are set on this years' wood. *Hydrangea paniculata* can be pruned hard this fall, as they develop flower buds on next year's wood.



For thinned lawn areas with bare soil exposed, apply seed directly onto soil. Cover with a thin layer of compost to help keep seed moist. Remember to not let seed dry out completely after watering or germination process may halt permanently.

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



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.

[Lyme disease diagnoses increased 357% in rural areas over past 15 years](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-32681-y)

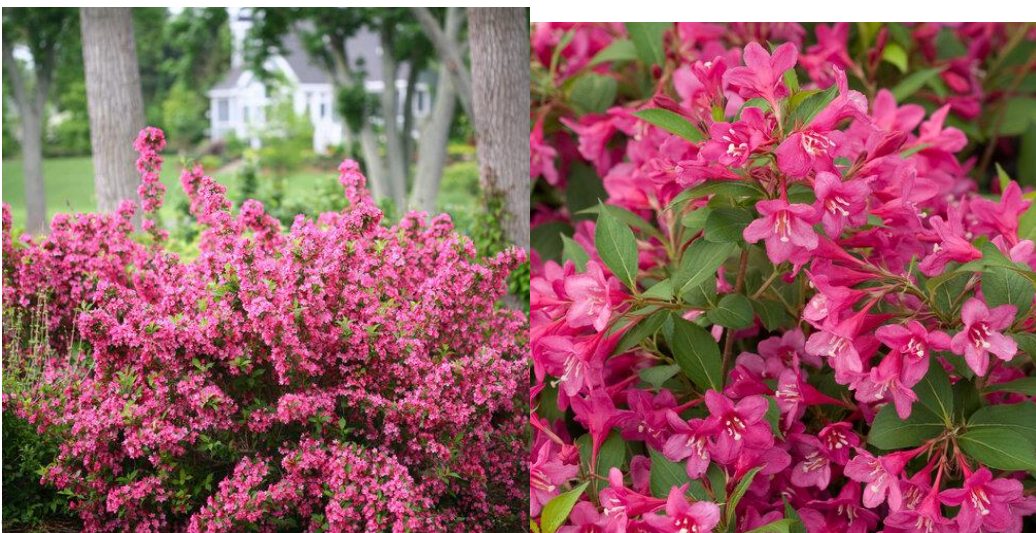
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-32681-y>

[Rainwater unsafe to drink due to chemicals: study](https://nationalindoorplantweek.com/index.php)

<https://nationalindoorplantweek.com/index.php> 3rd week in Sept is National Indoor Plant Week

Photos from Proven Winners (www.provenwinners.com)

Sonic Bloom® Pink *Reblooming Weigela**Weigela florida*



While not a native plant to New England, weigela 'Sonic Bloom Pink' is especially attractive to hummingbirds. Mature height and width is 4 to 5 feet. Plants are resistant to deer. Grow on sites with at least 6 to 8 hours of sunlight each day and in well drained soils. Flowers are produced both on new and old growth so a flush of blossoms in May is followed by sporadic

aves of flowers until frost. Prune, if necessary, after first blooms and fertilize once each year in spring.

Serendipity' Ornamental Onion *Allium hybrid*



Alliums are versatile plants. Grow them as spring flowering bulbs, edibles in the vegetable or herb garden, or as flowering ornamentals. 'Serendipity' ornamental allium is a strong bloomer with rosy purple blossoms that last most of the summer. Plants only reach 15 to 20 inches high with a 10 to 15-inch spread. Butterflies and bees love them, but deer and rabbits leave them alone. The blue, flattened foliage gives off an onion smell when crushed. Plants bloom more profusely in full sun but tolerate part shade as well as drought conditions, once established.

Vegetable pest alerts and how to harvest and store vegetables

[Vegetable Pest Alerts](#)

[Harvesting and Storing Home Grown Vegetables](#)

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

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 below

<https://soiltest.uconn.edu/price.php>

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

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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

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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](#)

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Things to do/events



[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.

[5 Sunflower Farms to Visit in New England](#)- One of these farms is here in Connecticut at Lyman Orchards, in Middlefield



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

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

[Visit the New Butterfly House at Burnett's Country Garden](#)- in Salem, Connecticut, this garden center has a new butterfly house and a walkway to it that has butterfly larval host plants and nectar plants which they sell. The entry fee is \$5.00. If you

have never seen the spectacular caterpillar of the spicebush swallowtail (shown below) you can see them here.



Science Fun Facts

Learn about bats, hairy plants, how new species are named and other interesting science and nature facts.

Agriculture and the Statue of Liberty

The elevator at the statue of liberty is powered by soy- based hydraulic fluid.

Food for Thought

Pineapples can be rooted by cutting off the top and following instructions on this link.

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Advise clients on plant selection and cultural requirements-diagnose problems

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