



UConn Home & Garden Education Center

April is for Star Magnolias, Red Trillium and Cold Weather Damage



Star Magnolia- *Magnolia stellata*



Star magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*) is one of the smallest magnolias, producing a showy cloud of white flowers in early spring. Originally from the highlands of the Japanese island of Honshu, it is sometimes considered a variety of *M. Kobus*, but of garden origin. *M. stellata* was introduced to the United States in the 1860's. It is variously listed as hardy from either zone 4 or 5 to 9. This slow growing deciduous plant can be grown as a large shrub or pruned up as a small multithemed tree. It eventually reaches a height of 15-20 feet with a rounded crown spreading to 10-15 feet when mature.

Click on link below for more information:

[Star Magnolia](#)

Red Trillium-



Trilliums are native North American wildflowers in the lily family of which there are 50 flowering species. The eastern half of our country once consisted of a vast, mostly unbroken deciduous woodland with a complex association of plants and animals that prospered in these shady places. Trilliums - with their plant parts conveniently divided into units of three - made themselves at home and prospered.

Click on link below for more information:

[Red Trillium](#)

Mild Winter and Possible Plant Damage



Left: Bark splitting on a young sugar maple Right: Juniper not completely hardened off lost branches

The mild weather up until the middle of December meant many plants, including trees and shrubs, may have been marginally hardened off. Cold injury may have occurred when the temperatures plummeted suddenly. Damage to buds and small branches may not be obvious until growth resumes this spring.

Evergreen plants that are marginally hardy in a location are at increased risk for winter burn. Some shrubs such as roses that also did not harden off by December may have suffered damage to canes. Prune dead or severely damaged canes on roses as you normally would, pruning off any that show signs of winter damage.

[Cold Injury During a Very Mild Winter?](#) [Winter Damage](#)

Connecticut Maple Syrup Producers



The sap is running and cooking in our Connecticut sugar houses. The Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut has an excellent website that features the history of syrup production, locations of sugar houses and recipes featuring their products. Many allow visitors to see how syrup is made.



[CT Maple Syrup Producers](#) [CT Sugar House Map](#)

Cold Hardy Crops



It's an old American tradition to plant peas on St. Patrick's Day, which is said to bring luck come harvest-time. Carrots, spinach, peas, lettuce, cabbage, kale and turnips can be sown in the ground by mid- March as soil temperature rise above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. To learn more about cold hardy crops and vegetable gardening, click on the link below:

[Growing Cold Hardy Crops](#)

[Vegetable Garden basics and Plant Selections](#)

Plant Highlights- 'Designer Jeans' Hosta and 'Dark Side of the Moon' Astilbe



These two perennials go well together in a shade garden.

'Designer Jeans'- left- has dark maroon stems that showcase the gold

leaves. The 'Dark Side of the Moon astilbe' features rich dark chocolate leaves and rosy purple flowers. Leaves as yellow and then develop a dark margin before turning completely dark.

April Gardening Tips

1. Start pruning roses just before growth starts to maintain shape and size. Remove any dead or damaged canes.
2. Peppers can be started now indoors.
3. Many kinds of annual flowers can be started now indoors including petunia, snapdragons, verbena and impatiens. Most are started 5-6 weeks before last frost is expected- which is around Memorial Day in Connecticut. Sunflowers should be sown directly in the ground when danger of frost has past as they do not transplant well.
4. Lawns should not be fertilized at this time if a fall application was applied. Wait until some growth is noticed or until the lawn has been mowed for the first time. It is generally too early to apply a crabgrass preventative product before forsythia reaches full bloom.
5. Certain insects that entered homes to overwinter should be more active now. Asian multicolored lady beetles, brown marmorated stink bugs, box elder bugs, western conifer seed bugs can be vacuumed or collected and released outside or disposed of. The invasive BM stink bugs should be killed when found.
6. Prune crabapples, oaks and other trees and shrubs that are susceptible to disease problems when pruned during warmer weather. Make sure to remove branches that rub against each other- choose the better branch to keep. Prune just above the base of a branch the swollen collar. Do not apply wound dressing. Cuts will heal on their own. Do not prune maples or birch trees now as they will bleed due to heavy sap flow.
7. Caladium bulbs are slow to start new growth and can be potted now indoors.
8. Cut back ornamental grasses before new growth begins. Bunch- type grasses may need to be divided if the clumps have thinned out in the middle.
9. Apply deer repellents to tulips now as they will nibble them as they start to grow. Continue to apply repellents as buds appear or they will be consumed.

10. When peonies have just started to appear, place a flat piece of chicken wire over the new growth. As the peony grows, gently adjust the grid higher. Do this to up to a third of the plant height to keep it from flopping over when in flower. Red arrow below shows where grid is located.



[April Gardening Tips](#)

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

[Winter is a Good Time for Tool Maintenance](#)

[Cold Days, Warm Places – Check Out Your Nearest Greenhouse](#)

[Wild Mushrooms- Marvels and Surprises](#)

[Sign up to receive our blogs by e-mail](#)

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 Nutrient Analysis Laboratory.



[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

Before We Go...

click on links

Snow rollers- Every now and then, when conditions are just right, snow rollers are formed by wind blowing moistened snow. Jelly-roll like structures result.



Image: Bill Schultz MD

Colorful Carrots- Purple and yellow carrots were the first cultivated carrots. According to horticulture professor and geneticist Dr. Phil Simon, the pigments are what make them nutritious, with orange carrots having the most nutrition. Carrots are the richest crop source of vitamin A in the American diet.



Image: PHIL SIMON, UW-MADISON, USDA-ARS

[UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory](#)

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

[UConn Master Gardener Program](#)

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

EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

Dancing Daffodils: Pick-Your-Own Daffodils

April 1 - 30

Halfinger Farms

<https://www.halfingerfarms.com/>

Ellington Farmers Summer Market

April 1 - October 28

<https://www.ellingtonfarmersmarket.org/>

Essex Goes Daffy with "Daffodil Days!"

March 25 - April 23

<https://essexct.com/>

Fruit Tree Grafting

April 8

Cricket Hill Garden

<https://www.treepeony.com/collections/events-and-workshops/products/a-fruit-tree-grafting-workshop-saturday-april-8th-2023>

Ann Masi Memorial Garden Lecture: Planning for Climate Change

April 12

<https://woodmemoriallibrary.org/>

Spring Flower Workshop - Dahlia Three Ways: Tuber, Seed & Cutting

April 20

Webb Deane Stevens Museum

<https://wdsmuseum.org/event/spring-flower-workshop/>

Gardener Master Class

April 20 - May 18

A five-part course beginning April 20th, 2023, through May 18th, 2023

<https://hollisterhousegarden.org/>

Art Workshop: Pressed Flower Notecards, Presented by Ellie Rodin

April 21

<https://hollisterhousegarden.org/event/pressed-flowers-notecards/>

Hollister House Garden Opening Day

April 21

<https://hollisterhousegarden.org/event/opening-day/>

Early Planting Garden Workshop

April 29

<https://littledipperfarm.org/events/>



Don't have room for a real elephant? Try a topiary one.

For Gardening Questions Visit our Website:

[UConn Home and Garden Education Center](#)

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

WHAT WE DO AT THE UCONN HOME AND GARDEN EDUCATION CENTER

Plant, insect and plant disease identification and control options

Advise clients on plant selection and cultural requirements

Receive samples for diagnosis either by drop-off or mail

Give 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

Staff a booth every year at the CT Flower and Garden Show- bring soil samples for pH testing & your gardening questions

Publish weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter available for subscription

Publish fact sheets, newspaper, and magazine articles