



UConn Home & Garden Education Center

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May is for May Apples, Tiarella and Clematis



May Apple- *Podophyllum peltatum*



The Mayapple is a native, herbaceous perennial woodland plant that is among the first plants to emerge in spring. It will form dense colonies in shaded areas with its large umbrella-like leaves hiding the ground. Each plant has one to two large, umbrella-like leaves that are about a foot across. There is a single, nodding white flower hidden under the leaves at the leaf axil where two leaves meet. Blooms appear from April to May. Fruits are a lemon-shaped berry that ripens to a golden yellow during the summer. Plants go dormant in summer, and the leaves gradually disappear. Found in moist soils with dappled shade, use these plants in a woodland garden where they are free to spread.

[May Apples](#)

Tiarella cordata- foamflower



Tiarella cordata, foamflower, are similar to *Heuchera* coral bells. Flower spikes rise above the leaves in spring. Plants are sometimes used as a groundcover in shaded areas. Somewhat deer resistant, flowers attract pollinators, butterflies and moths. There are cultivars that have colorful patterned leaves that provide

interest after flowers have gone. Wherry's foamflower is native, and it can be seen in the woodland wildflower garden at Connecticut College.



Tiarella

Plant Highlight- Clematis



Clematis are sturdy perennial vines that need a support-trellis, fence, etc., and they need their roots kept cool during the summer. Because of this, low growing annuals are often planted around them to shade the roots. To prune properly, you need to know if the plant is a Group I, II or III clematis.

When purchased, save the label as it should have the type or group for that particular plant. Group I flowers in spring, Group II flowers in June and may have a second flush in late summer, and Group III bloom from June through fall.

Clematis

Weed Highlight- Dandelions



Lawns thinned by drought and heat last year and which were not seeded to fill in bare spots by early fall may be showing a fine dandelion crop this spring. While a few are easy to dig out, this year's crop may be overwhelming for people considering that control method. When pulling out, put some grass seed in the hole. Bees and other pollinators visit the flowers. Some people like dandelions, and that is fine. For those who don't, mow off flowers before seed heads develop and decide how you would like to try and manage them. A good start is to mow lawns higher and keep turf dense.

[Dandelion Control Options](#)

Disease Highlight- Cedar-Apple Rust



Gymnosporangium juniperi-virginianae rust produces galls on cedar and certain junipers from April- May following warm, wet weather. These galls produce bright orange gelatinous structures called telial horns, and from these, spores will be released that can infect nearby apple and crabapple trees. Rust on infected apples appears later in the year on both the leaves and fruit and can sometimes cause significant leaf drop.

[Cedar-Apple Rust](#)

Insect Highlight- Native Bees



Whether plants are native or not, native bees will be busy pollinating flowers on perennials, trees and shrubs that flower in May. Center image is a male *Osmia bicornis* mason bee on a crabapple flower. This spring has proved to be a cold one, and certain plants like blueberry, crabapple, fruit trees and *Amelanchier* that rely heavily on native bee pollination in early spring may be affected by less bee activity. Time will tell if fruit development will be reduced or not. Bumblebees are certainly active now, so that is a good thing. Garlic mustard (image on far right), unfortunately, is an invasive plant that is pollinated by many bee species. Pull out these plants before seed becomes viable.

[Gardens for Bees in Connecticut](#)

Insect Pest Highlight- Asparagus Beetles



Two species of asparagus beetles feed on newly emerging spears causing them to become crooked and sometimes brown. The spotted asparagus beetle, shown above, appears later than the common asparagus beetle. Both feed on the fern-like leaves that appear after harvesting spears. Severe loss of leaves will weaken the plant and reduce its ability to photosynthesize, which is needed for the plant to manufacture sufficient nutrient storage for the following year.

Chinese and Carolina Mantid Egg Cases



The native Carolina mantid egg case is different from the more familiar Chinese mantis egg case. The egg case (ootheca) of the Carolina mantid is on the right-flattened and longer than wide. The Chinese mantid egg case on the left is flat on the bottom and is as long as it is wide.

[Carolina and Chinese Mantids](#)

Upcoming Events and Things to Do



**Hartford
Audubon
Society**



[Audubon Annual Spring Bird Census](#)- for Hartford County, starts April 29 and ends May 21. This is a species count that lasts for 3 weeks. Migrating and resident birds are counted by species.

[Yale Marsh Botanical Garden self-guided tours](#)- Marsh Botanical Garden offers support for researchers, faculty and students at Yale, as well as an informative and eye-catching experience for visitors. The naturalistic beds and wildflower plantings provide color and attract birds and butterflies. In spring, bulb displays and early flowering shrubs and trees add to the season.

Dennis Farm Preserve- This preserve offers a two-mile trail—a former farm road—through old agricultural land, most of which is now oak forest. The route passes a beaver pond on adjacent 4-H land and returns by way of grassy Old Kings Highway. The forest on the preserve is dominated by red and black oaks, with shrubs including huckleberry, blueberry, mountain laurel and witch hazel. Keep an eye out for great blue and green-backed herons as well as painted turtles in the ponds.

UConn Arboretum Tour- Join Drs. Gregory Anderson and Mark Brand for a tour of the UConn campus arboretum on May 13, 2023. You must get a ticket to join this tour.

Connecticut College Edgerton and Stengel Wildflower Garden-



In May, walk along this woodland garden trail that features native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Many of the wildflowers bloom before the trees leaf out. There are shooting stars, trout lily, Virginia bluebells, bellwort, yellow lady slipper, striped maple, pinxter Azaleas and lots more to see.

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[Minimize Nitrogen Loss in Soils](#)
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[Spring Flowers for Bees](#)



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May Gardening Tips

- Remove spent blooms on tulips, daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs. The plant will focus its energy on growing new bulbs rather than producing seeds. Do not remove leaves while they are still green or flower production will be less next year.
- Pinch azaleas and rhododendron blossoms as they fade. Fertilize after bloom with a fertilizer made for azaleas or blueberries.
- Divide and relocate daffodils if needed but keep the foliage intact until it has all died back. Do not tie up.
- Continue to cultivate planting beds and carefully remove young weeds.
- Lift, divide and replant late summer and fall-blooming perennials such as asters, mums, and sedum. Wait until fall to divide and transplant spring blooming plants.
- When soil temperatures have reached 60 ° FG., tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, melons, and other tender annual vegetables can be planted. Cage plants when planting that will need support later in the season.
- Now is the time for the last spring planting of cool weather crops.
- Disinfect all pots and containers before refilling them for the season. It is best to use new potting soil, not any left in pots from the past year.
- Aphids and lace bugs will soon be active - check undersides of Japanese andromeda and azaleas leaves for lace bugs.
- Mow lawns frequently if lawn is quickly growing. Do not mow too short. Nitrogen applications of a fast-release nitrogen form can be made at a half rate in May and then in early June, use less for fine-leaved fescues.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs if needed after blooming. Spent flowers on lilacs may be removed but it will not affect next year's blooms if left on the plant.

[More May Gardening Tips](#)

Have Your Soil Tested for Macro & Micronutrients: 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

[Weather Folklore – Facts or Fiction?](#)



‘When dew is on the grass rain will never pass’ How about the bands on the woolly bear? Check out this site from Cornell.

[Perennial Wheat-](#) a non- GMO bred perennial wheat has the potential to be used as both grain and fodder. Hybridization of winter durum wheat with intermediate wheatgrass produces a perennial wheat that will regrow leaves from the base of the plant about three weeks after the grain is harvested, similar to the growth of the perennial grass parent, while grain is produced like the annual wheat parent plant.

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.

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PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
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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