



UConn Plant Science & Landscape Architecture
Knowledge to Grow On!



"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

- James Dent

Fruit Thinning



Thinning fruit on the tree branch. Photo by Lisa Catalano.

Most home gardeners who grow fruit trees know the importance of pruning for better air circulation, pest and disease control and for better quality of fruit. Thinning fruit early in the growing season is equally important for the same reason. In addition, it reduces a biannual fruit set. If fruits are left alone on the branches, the trees will use its carbs to produce all the fruit in one year exhausting its stores to produce fruit the next.

[Learn More About Fruit Thinning](#)

Smart Harvesting



Cut flowers and freshly harvested produce. Photo by H. Zidack

July is often the month when we start harvesting vegetables and cut flowers from our gardens! Use these tips to make sure you're getting the most out of your home production.

Tips for Harvesting Vegetables

- Harvesting early in the morning will help increase shelf life and may even improve taste.
- Never tug on your plants - use pruners or scissors to remove stubborn vegetables.
- Harvesting tomatoes before heavy rains can reduce chances of splitting.
- Know your vegetables and harvest at the right stage of development! Picking too early or leaving things too long can lead to reduced quality.
- When harvesting garlic, use a trowel or other garden tool to help you pop the bulbs out of the ground. This allows you to avoid damaging the stem while you're pulling.

[Learn More](#)

Tips for Harvesting Cut Flowers

- Cut early in the morning when plants are well hydrated.
- Carry a bucket of fresh, clean, water to collect freshly cut flower stems.
- Know your plants - different species of flowers may need to be cut at different stages of development.
- Sanitize buckets and tools (knives, shears or pruners) between uses.
- Make sure cutting tools are sharp so as not to crush vascular tissues when harvesting.
- Never store flowers in refrigerators that have food in them. Ethylene released by vegetables can speed up the bloom's decline.

[Learn More](#)

Night Feeding Garden Pests

One of the most frustrating things for gardeners is walking through our beds and seeing damage that "wasn't there yesterday!" Many culprits feed at night or in the early evening when we're having dinner and settling down for the day. Learn more about them to help you catch the culprits red handed this summer!

[Asiatic Garden Beetles](#)



These non-native rusty brown scarab beetles feed on plant foliage and flowers at night. Scout with a flashlight to look for them. They can destroy basil plants overnight and may be hiding in mulch or just under the soil surface at the base of plants they are feeding on.

Earwigs



Earwigs feed on plants and flowers at night and hide during the day where it is dark especially in mulch or under plant containers where they are feeding. Foliage can be sprayed with an appropriate product, so they ingest it when feeding. Do not apply products to flowers.

Slugs



Slugs can leave shot hole like damage from chewing, and you will often also see trails left from where they have been. They are very active during wet/rainy weather.

Deer/Fawns



If deer repellents were used earlier in the year repeat applications now as fawns will be browsing and they may not have been exposed to both desirable plants and effective repellents yet. Teach them when they are young to avoid plants their mothers preferred.

Rabbits



Rabbits can feed day or night, but normally are more active toward evening and nighttime. Favored plants can vary. Cage plants at night that they are eating, or simply throw bird netting over them at night.

Native Highlight: The Coral Hairstreak Butterfly & The Native Wood Lily



The coral hairstreak butterfly flight period coincides with the start of flowering of our native wood lily *Lilium philadelphium*. These small butterflies are often seen getting nectar on the flowers. Male butterflies also patrol their territory using the flowers as their base of operations. Wood lilies can be found in bloom around July 4th in Connecticut.

[Learn More: *Lilium philadelphium*](#)

[Learn More: Coral Hairstreak Butterfly](#)

Vegetable Gardening Resources

During the growing season, UConn Extension publishes a regular pest alert. Additionally, the New England Vegetable Management Guide offers a lot of information about specific vegetable crops.

While the target audience for these publications is usually commercial growers, home gardeners can learn a lot from these materials including identification and management of common pests in your veggie gardens!

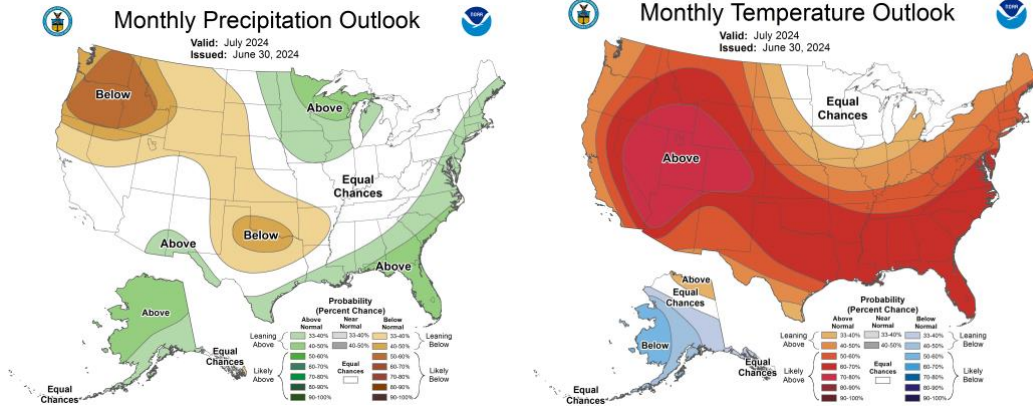
If you ever need confirmation on an ID or have additional questions about what you read in these reports, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at the Home & Garden Education Center! We're happy to help your gardens thrive.

[Vegetable Pest Alert – 6/28/2024](#)

[Read Previous Pest Messages](#)

[New England Vegetable Management Guide 2023-2024](#)

July 2024 Weather Outlook



A seasoned gardener always keeps their eye to the sky at any time of year! NOAA's National Weather Service released their discussion about how weather patterns in July will continue to lead us into the growing season!

[Outlook for July 2024](#)

Knowledge to Grow On



Read our Ladybug blogs written weekly:

[I Used to Like Jack in the Pulpits!](#)

[Intriguing Oddities: Coleus](#)

[Saturnidae Moths and Caterpillars](#)

[Calculated Cuts – How to keep your Annuals & Perennials Blooming All Season!](#)

Upcoming Events and Things to Do

- The 4th of July kicks off fireworks season! [Find Displays near you!](#)
 - Blueberries & Raspberries are in season. [Find a Pick your own farm near you!](#)
 - Blueberry Festivals! July 13 - [Ellington, CT](#) , July 20 - [Lyman Orchards](#)
 - [Wequetequock Festival](#), hosted by the Eastern CT Conservation District July 14th -Stonington CT
 - Summer is a great time for music festivals and various summer concert series. [See what's happening this summer](#) or check with your town for events!
 - Try a cruise tour like the [Cross Sound Ferry Lighthouse Cruise](#), [Thimble Island Cruises](#) or the [Essex Steam Train & River Boat](#)
 - July is when we often see many local events including local fireman carnivals, farmers markets, and town celebrations.
 - Check out events offered along the [CT Wine Trail](#)
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Educational Opportunities and Workshops

- [Explore the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center Gardens](#), July 13th, Old Lyme, CT
- [Summer Tree ID](#) Workshop - July 13th, Hampton, CT

- [Night of 1000 Fireflies](#), July 13th, New Canaan CT
- [CT Rocks](#) Geology Workshop - July 27th, Hampton, CT



July Gardening Tips

- Many plants will shut down temporarily during times of high heat and drought. This can reduce flower/fruit/vegetable production. Check the soil for moisture to avoid overwatering.
- Do not mow during times of drought, this can damage your turf. Only mow when lawns are actively growing.

- Closely monitor for Squash Vine Borer and Squash bugs on your cucurbits!
- Check hummingbird feeders for mold, ants and other problems every week. Cane sugar solutions may need more frequent attention. There are some products resistant to mold and nutrient breakdown - please check the label for frequency on these products.



- Many gardeners will be harvesting fall planted garlic in the month of July. Allow bulbs to cure for a minimum of 2 weeks.
- Cut back mums, tall asters, Montauk daisies and helianthus by about one-quarter for bushy, more floriferous plants.
- Pinching back herbs to stop flowering will keep the best flavor in the leaves and encourage branching. Herbs can be air dried, dried quickly in the microwave, or frozen.
- Check family members and pets for ticks after being outside, especially when in tall grass or wooded areas. If necessary send ticks to the [Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory](#) for testing.
- Sunflower seeds can be sown before mid-June - mid August, depending upon days to maturity on the seed label which can vary from 60 to 110 days. If planted too late, plants will not have time to bloom before October
- Calibrachoa are stunning annuals that are excellent in hanging pots. They are heavy feeders and need moist soil, Watering can be done daily, but make sure not to saturate soils as these plants will succumb readily to root rot, especially in hot weather.



[More July Gardening Tips](#)

Notice something going on in your garden? The UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory diagnoses plant problems including diseases, insect pests and abiotic causes. Submitting a sample is easy! For details, visit the [UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory](#)

Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micronutrients: Send your soil sample in for testing now to avoid the spring rush. For details on sending a sample, go to the [UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

Something Fun:

We refer to the hot, humid days of July and August as the "Dog Days of Summer."

Did you know that this is in reference to the star Sirius, appearing just before sunrise here in the Northern Hemisphere? Sirius is one of the brightest stars in the sky and is in the constellation Canis Major. The appearance of this star so close to morning was believed to influence with the hot and steamy weather we are accustomed to with the summer season.



Photo by H.Zidack

*This Month's Newsletter Contributors:
Pamm Cooper, Dr. Nick Goltz, Dawn Pettinelli, Marie Woodward, Heather Zidack*

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.

The UConn Home & Garden Education Center

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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
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ARCHITECTURE



1-877-486-6271



ladybug@uconn.edu



<https://homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu/>



U-4115, 1380 Storrs Road
Storrs, CT 06269-4115



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 free by subscription

Publish fact sheets, newspaper, and magazine articles

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