



## August is for Purple Love Grass, *Hibiscus* and Polyphemus Moth





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## Purple Love Grass - *Eragrostis spectabilis*



In August along many of our highways you may notice beautiful reddish purple flowers of a low-growing grass called purple love grass. The fluffy inflorescences are striking against the sunlight, especially in mass plantings such as are used along roadsides. Native to central and eastern North America, it is found in sandy soils. It spreads slowly via rhizomes.

## Purple Love Grass

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## Hibiscus





Hibiscus are available in a wide variety of plants which are known for their showy ornamental flowers. Some varieties are perennials here in New England, while others are perennials, annuals, shrubs or grown indoors as tropical plants. Plants can be 3-5 feet tall, and flowers come in a wide variety of sizes and colors. Rose-of-Sharon, *H. syriacus*, is a common species of hibiscus that can get quite tall, but responds well to pruning.

## Hardy Hibiscus

## Polyphemus Moth



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Polyphemus moths are members of the subfamily Saturniinae giant silkworm moths. They are native and can be found in woodlands and open areas bordered by forests. Moths can be up to 4 inches in length and caterpillars can be up to 3 inches long. Moths can fly from late May through August, depending upon weather and other factors.

# Polyphemus

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## Gardening can cultivate better mental health

Many longtime gardeners will tell you that the garden is their happy place. New research suggests that many people may indeed reap mental health benefits from working with plants—even if they've never gardened before.

## More Than Just Monarchs

Migratory Monarch Butterflies Are Listed as an Endangered Species.  
According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the iconic North American butterfly is getting closer to extinction.

## Pollen Problems

High spring time heat can damage or kill pollen, fertilization is reduced as are crop yields. This will be a serious challenge to our food system.

## Tuscan Gold Heliopsis

Native to North America, heliopsis is a tough, easy to care for plant for mid to late summer color. 'Tuscan Gold' is a more compact cultivar with an upright growth habit reaching about 2 ½ feet high and has a 20-inch spread. It is hardy from USDA zones 4 – 9 and will bloom well in both full and part sun. Like many composites, bees and butterflies find it attractive. 'Tuscan Gold' tolerates a wide range of soil conditions and once established, it is heat tolerant. Use it as a specimen, in the flower border, for mass plantings and be sure to bring a few blossoms inside to brighten up any room.

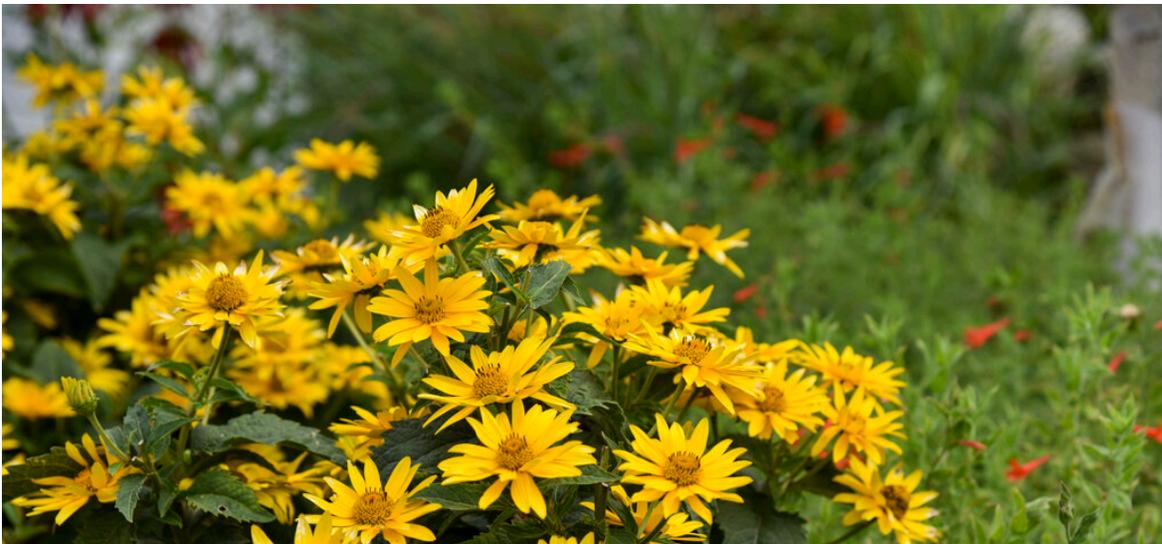




Photo from [www.provenwinners.com](http://www.provenwinners.com)



The summer blooming flowers of New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) attract a variety of beneficial pollinators. This small shrub grows to about 4 feet and is adaptable to many garden conditions.

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## Disease Highlight - Beech Leaf Disease





Beech Leaf Disease is a newly detected disease that is associated with the foliar nematode *Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*. Because this disease has only been discovered in the past few years, we still don't have a full understanding of the disease, how it spreads, and management options.

## [Beech Leaf Disease](#)

## Pest Highlight - Tortoise Beetles



Tortoise beetles are aptly named, some species like the clavate tortoise beetle shown top right, resemble small turtles. Larvae are green with glass - like fringe on their bottom edge, and carry their fecal material about on a furcula that they flip over their back. If you have sweet potato vine or morning glory with lots of small holes in the leaves, look on the leaf undersides for these beetles and larvae. Not all species of tortoise beetles feed on these specific plants.

## [Tortoise Beetles](#)

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### Animal Highlight - Snails



Land snails play an important role in shredding and transforming organic substances like the algae and mold on the siding of a building in the image above, right. Most snails and slugs are hermaphroditic, thus having both male and female reproductive organs, but still need a mate to produce eggs. Snails and slugs have a radula, a flexible band of thousands of microscopic teeth, which they use in scraping plant material. Patterns made by this feeding method are very “artistic”.

## [Snail Radula](#)

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### Bird Highlight - Snowy Egret



Snowy egrets are elegant shoreline wading birds that have white plumage black legs and bills, and yellow feet. Wading in shallow water, they will capture food in a slow, deliberate manner, or run and grab. Nests are built in upper or outer branches of trees or other woody plants.

## [Snowy Egret](#)

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**KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON - Read our latest Ladybug blogs**

## [The Top Tip For Growing Gorgeous Dahlias](#)

### [Considering Conifers](#)

### [Wonders of Nature in July](#)

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## Gardening Tips for August

1. August is the month to order [peony](#) roots for September planting. Peonies should be in the ground about a month before the average first frost date.
2. Check the water needs of hanging baskets once or twice daily. Wind and sun dry them out quicker than other containers.
3. Fertilize [container plantings and hanging baskets](#) if they look yellow with a ½ strength dose of a balanced liquid fertilizer.
4. Continue to deadhead annuals and perennials to encourage continuous bloom.
5. Pick summer squash and zucchini every day or two to keep the plants producing.
6. Remove old plants that have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms. Replant sites with chard, quick maturing [beans](#) or [cucumbers](#) , leafy greens etc.
7. Even though [tomatoes](#) continue to ripen after picking, fruits develop greatest flavor when allowed to ripen on plants. The exception is cherry tomatoes since many varieties are prone to splitting. Pick any almost ripe ones before a heavy rain.
8. Renovate strawberry beds by mowing to a height of 1 ½ inches, thinning plants and side-dressing with a balanced [fertilizer](#).
9. Pick up, bag, and trash (do not compost) any dropped apples that show signs of [apple maggot](#).
10. [Reseeding the lawn](#) in late August gives the new grass two growing periods (fall and spring) before the heat of summer. Be sure to keep the seed moist until germination.



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.



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## 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](https://soiltest.uconn.edu).



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>

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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.

[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

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

Native Plant Sale

The Arboretum is hosting a Native Plant Sale in partnership with the Wild Ones Mountain Laurel (Connecticut) Chapter. Choose from a wide selection of native perennials, grasses and shrubs. Pre-orders must be placed by the end of day on August 5. Orders will be confirmed with availability and payment instructions will be emailed by late-August. Pre-ordered plants should be picked up on Saturday, September 17 at Connecticut College Arboretum, 33 Gallows Lane, New London, CT from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For plant offerings and link to order, please visit:

[2022 Fall Native Plant Sale](#).



# Composting 101

Come and learn a Master Composter's Secret Recipe for easy, low maintenance composting.

Food and yard wastes can easily be turned into a nourishing and valuable soil amendment. Discover the drivers of the decomposition process, find out how to troubleshoot and avoid problems, and become aware of the many benefits of compost. 'Black gold', revered by gardeners for how it enriches the soil, also reduces wastes sent to landfills or incinerators as well as reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other powerful greenhouse gases.

All that—and it's easy and free!

Presented by Alastair Ong, Esq., a certified UConn Master Composter, who started composting in his small NYC apartment 25 years ago.

**Monday, August 22**  
**6:30 pm**





For more information, call 860-828-7126 or visit [berlinpeck.org/events](http://berlinpeck.org/events)



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When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant

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NGA member "Paul2032"

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