



Printable PDF

May is for Pink Lady's Slippers, Bluets and Pinxter Azalea



Lady's Slippers

Pink Lady's Slipper *Cypripedium acaule* is a wild native orchid found in Connecticut and much of the eastern United States. To survive and reproduce, pink lady's slipper interacts with a fungus in the soil from the *Rhizoctonia* genus. Pink Lady's Slipper, are listed as "special concern" under the Native Plant Protection Act. Although regulations on picking or transplanting lady slipper plants vary from state to state, transplanted from the wild they have less than a 5% survival rate and should therefore be left alone and admired where they are found.

[Pink Lady Slippers](#)

Bluets



Native bluets *Houstonia caerulea* are small, delicate blue to lavender flowers that occur in small clumps only 6 inches high. They flower as early as April and bloom sporadically throughout summer. In the spring, butterflies that are early to emerge, like swallowtails (tiger swallowtail, above), spring azures, painted ladies, red admirals and others can be found sipping nectar from these tiny flowers. Bluets can occur in large numbers in lawn areas that border woodland edges.

Bluets

Some Spring Butterflies

Pinxter Azalea



Pink azalea or pinxterbloom azalea *Rhododendron periclymenoides* is a native shrub found in wetlands especially in wooded areas. Blooming in spring before leaves are fully opened, they can be easy to find because of their showy pink flower clusters, which are very fragrant. Hummingbirds visit the flowers.



Pinxter flower in a forest understory near a bog

Pinxter Azalea

Growing Backyard Fruits



Before buying fruit trees or any fruits, make sure of the soil requirements, maintenance requirements and possible problems associated with the fruit. Most fruit trees need annual pruning and may need pest control to get usable fruit. Pollination, sun requirements and

fertilization needs should be understood before selecting fruits and different varieties may be better than others for your site.

Backyard Fruit Trees

Fruit Cultivars for Backyard Plantings

Vegetable Planting Guides



Garlic and swiss chard companion planting

If you need help in determining when to plant vegetables or begin starting them from seed, check out the links below.

Vegetable Planting Chart

Spring to Fall Vegetable Planting and Seeding Guide

Birding at UConn on Horsebarn Hill



The pastures on Horsebarn Hill Road on the Storrs campus are home to several threatened birds seldom seen except in large, open grassy areas. Bob-o-links, eastern meadowlarks, savannah sparrows and kestrels all breed there. Check out the pastures when grass is high for bob-O-links in particular. Savannah sparrows and bob-o-links often perch on the barbed wire fence.



UConn Hotspots for Birding

Plant Highlight- Fringed Polygala



This tiny little native wildflower is always a great find. It looks like a combination of Mickey Mouse and a tiny pink airplane. No more than 6 inches tall, this plant is found underneath conifers in forests, or along deciduous woodland edges in May.

Fringed Polygala

Tree Highlight- Eastern Redbud



A dapper native tree, *Cercis canadensis* has a spreading open canopy and gray bark. It is a distinct tree of ornamental value in the spring as the tiny, colorful pink blossoms cover its branches before leaves are out.

Eastern Redbud

Insect highlight- Eyed Click Beetle



This large click beetle, *Alaus oculatus*, may look menacing with the large eyespots on its thorax, but it is not to be feared. The eyed click beetle larva is a predatory wireworm, which feeds on many pest insects.

Eyed Click Beetle

Vole control Using Buried Pots



Voiles are notorious garden pests that chew the roots off of, and bark off of many plants. They attack above and below ground and can be difficult to control. Image is of a garden where voles run rampant, and to protect this clematis, it was planted in a deep pot which had the bottom cut off and was then inserted into the ground. About 6 inches of the pot

remained above ground. No voles have troubled this particular plant since trying this method.

[UConn Trails](#)



There are trails on the edge of the UConn campus that provide an opportunity to observe woodland birds and native plants. The 580-acre Fenton Tract is the largest contiguous parcel of the UConn Forest. It is located east of campus along the Fenton River.

[UConn Forest Trail Map](#)

Upcoming Webinars

[CLEAR 2021 Webinar Series UCONN](#)

Center for Land Use Education & Research (CLEAR) Webinar series covers many free land use education webinars from April-June 2021

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

[Spring Things, Good and Bad](#)

[April Showers \(or snows!\) and Other Things](#)

[Growing Figs in New England](#)

[Germination Manipulation](#)

[Redefining the Perennial Garden](#)



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Gardening Tips for May

Lily leaf beetles often show up first in spring on leaves of the crown imperial (Fritillaria). Check both sides of the leaves and down inside the center whorl of leaves. Also check the undersides of leaves for tiny orange eggs. The larvae have orange, brown, or greenish yellow bodies that are sometimes hidden under their excrement. Hand-picking the adults and the egg masses is the easiest control method.

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.

Use fresh potting soil in your containers as old soil has fewer nutrients and may contain harmful bacteria and fungi.

As night temperatures moderate into the 60's, move houseplants outdoors (avoid full sun and windy locations).

Plant tomatoes, peppers, corn, cucurbits, and melons after all danger of frost is gone and the soil is warm. This is usually the last week in May.

Mow your lawn any time the grass is 1½ times the normal height, for example, if you mow at a 3-inch height, don't let the grass get longer than 4 to 5".

Clear grass and weeds from root zone areas around tree trunks and remove any suckers growing from the base of the trees. Spread compost and top with 3 to 4" of bark mulch. Keep mulch an inch or two away from the trunks.

Aerate and moisten the compost pile to speed decomposition.

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



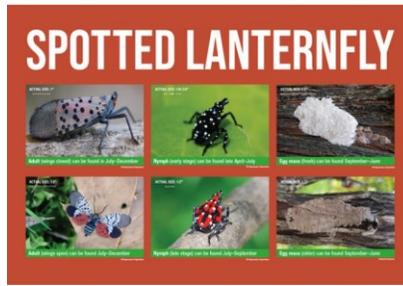
Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

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

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

Spotted Lanternfly



The spotted lanternfly is an invasive sap-feeding planthopper that was discovered in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 2014. It is native to China, India, and Vietnam. It attacks many hosts and has the potential to severely impact Connecticut's farm crops, particularly apples, grapes, and hops, as well as a number of tree species like maple. In the fall, adults can often be found congregating on tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*), willows and other trees. They will lay egg masses on trees and almost any nearby surface. The public is urged to report potential sightings of this invasive pest to ReportSLF@ct.gov. Submission of a photograph with any report is encouraged.

Click on the Following Links to Visit Any of Our Sites:

[UConn Extension](#)

[UConn Food Safety](#)

[UConn Home & Garden Education Center](#)

[UConn Plant Diagnostic Laboratory](#)

[UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#)

[UConn Science of GMOs](#)

UConn Master Gardener Program

UConn Garden Master Classes - All open to the public

Things to do/events

Yale Marsh Botanical Garden- Visitors who are not from Yale are welcome to visit for self-guided walking tours of this extensive collection of plants including naturalistic beds and wildflower plantings

Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge- ten units across 70 miles of the Ct. coastline provide opportunities for viewing birds, wildlife and several historic buildings including the Falkner Island lighthouse

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

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



Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG)

Invasive Mobile Apps: Download these Invasive/Early Detection/ Reporting Apps on your mobile device!

[Invasive Mobile Apps](#)

Food for thought

There are lots of innovations in science for improving agriculture. the USDA has information and fun facts



[Innovations at Work in Agriculture](#)

Who knew?

Water has a triple point where it exists as a gas(water vapor), liquid (water) and solid state (ice) all at the same time

[Triple Point of Water](#)

Weather and the environment-

December 2020 was the warmest one on record, and 2020 was the second hottest year on record

[2020 Was Hot!](#)

UConn Extension Home & Garden Education Center

The UConn Home & Garden Education Center (**HGEC**) is a horticultural informational resource for the citizens of Connecticut and beyond. The staff at the Center reach nearly 400,000 citizens in outreach efforts each year. We're ready to assist you.

You are receiving this email because you have provided us with your email address either when having your soil analyzed or testing the horticultural prowess and investigative abilities of our incredibly well-versed staff at the UConn Home & Garden Education Center!

If you do not wish to receive our monthly email updates on gardening tips, pest problems, events and other information, please email us at ladybug@uconn.edu and ask to be removed from this list.

We Need Your Support!

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UConn Extension Home & Garden Education Center: We are on a collaborative journey.

How. We co-create knowledge with farmers, families, communities, and businesses. We educate. We convene groups to help solve problems.

What. Food, Health, and Sustainability.

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