



February is For Broomsedge, Cedar Waxwings, and Beavers



BROOMSEGE BLUESTEM



Broomsedge bluestem, *Andropogon virginicus*, is a native grass that turns bright orange-tan in late fall and remains upright throughout much of the winter season. Seeds are a source of food for birds and small animals. This plant also supports various Skipper butterfly larva and small butterflies obtain nectar from the flower

Broomsedge

CEDAR WAXWINGS



Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) are gregarious birds easily identified by the black mask, brown crest on the head and yellow band at the tip of their tail. They have a high pitched, sighing whistle. During the winter they feed on fruit from crabapple, viburnums, inkberry, hawthorn, cedar, and other plants.

Cedar Waxwings

BEAVERS



Beavers, *Castor canadensis*, have made a comeback in Connecticut after a pair was relocated to Union in an effort to return beavers to Connecticut. They were extirpated from the region due to hunting. They are the largest rodents in North America. Active all year, they can be found in rivers, ponds, lakes, and wetlands. Evidence of their presence include dams, lodges and felled or gnawed trees.

Beavers

SPRINGTAILS



Springtails are tiny insects belonging to the order Collembola that are wingless, and move by flicking a furcula on their abdomen, appearing to jump like fleas. They are found in moist environments, sometimes in groups of thousands.

They are harmless, but sometimes wind up in houses during wet periods, where they are small enough to enter through screens. During the winter, they can be seen on warm days on top of the snow. In the right-hand picture, hundreds of springtails are in a dog print in the snow.

Springtails

Spotted Lantern Fly Quarantine



CT Agricultural Experiment Station



PA Department of Agriculture

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has issued a Quarantine Order with defined restricted areas for the exotic pest spotted lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*. The quarantine order was renewed January 1, 2022 and will remain in effect until December 31, 2022. The purpose of this quarantine is to attempt to stop the spread of this exotic, damaging pest.

Subscribe to the UMass Landscape Message

UMass Extension's Landscape Message is an educational newsletter intended to inform and guide Massachusetts Green Industry professionals

in the management of our collective landscape. Detailed reports from scouts and Extension specialists on growing conditions, pest activity, and cultural practices for the management of woody ornamentals, trees, and turf are regular features.

UMass Landscape Message

BIRD HIGHLIGHT- SANDERLINGS



Sanderlings are small shorebirds that visit the Connecticut shoreline during winter before migrating to breeding grounds in the tundra. They visit hard-packed sand beaches, tidal mudflats, rocky coastlines, and inland bodies of water where they run in almost synchronized groups in the backwash of receding waves looking for any stranded invertebrates. They probe wet sand for prey-like crustaceans, small mollusks, and horseshoe crab eggs. Above, left, they are searching among recently washed-up Atlantic slipper shells.

SANDERLINGS

Fungus Highlight- Witches' Butter



Witches' Butter (*Tremella mesenterica*) is a jelly fungus, which appears like a small glob of marmalade. All members of the genus *Tremella* are reported to be parasitic on wood decay fungi. The photo above was taken this January on a day that just stayed above freezing. On the witches' butter are springtails.

Witches' Butter

Winter Webinar Series- Northeast Extension Fruit Consortium

Below you will find registration information for some of the 2022 series offerings. Meetings so far run until March 29 and are on designated Tuesdays starting on January 11.

<https://ag.umass.edu/fruit/news-events/northeast-extension-fruit-consortium>

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs!



[A Key Change In Seed Catalogs](#)

[2022 January- Things of Interest So Far This Winter](#)

[A Look Into the Life of a Plant Pathologist](#)

[A Tale of Two Winter Roses](#)

Sign up to receive our blogs by e-mail

Gardening Tips for February

- Provide houseplants with increased humidity; mist often or place plants over a tray of moist pebbles.
- When buying houseplants in winter, be sure to wrap them well for the trip home and, if below freezing, warm up the car. This prevents the foliage from freezing and protects tropicals from drafts.
- Continue to clean leaves of large and smooth leaved houseplants like dracaena, [philodendron](#), ficus, etc.
- Clean clay pots by soaking overnight in a solution of 1-gallon water and 1 cup of vinegar. Scrub to remove deposits. Repeat if necessary.

- Check your stored plants such as fuchsias and geraniums. Usually they need a light watering once a week depending on their storage temperature.
- If you potted bulbs for forcing last fall, check their progress. Soil should be barely moist. If tips have sprouted and have a few inches of growth, bring the pot into a cool, bright room (50 to 60 degrees F). Gradually expose the plant to increasing warmth, indirect sunlight, and increased watering. Feed once a week with half-strength houseplant fertilizer. To help the stems grow straight, turn the pot every day.
- Cut back geraniums, hibiscus, and other houseplants for repotting next month.
- Begin [fertilizing houseplants](#) with a water-soluble fertilizer as they resume active growth.
- Keep pinching over-wintering coleus as they tolerate major cutting back and routine pinching to encourage bushy growth. New plant can be propagated with the cuttings.
- Plants like these arborvitaes may need to be screened or fenced off to keep deer from browsing on them. Hardware wire can be fastened around smaller plants to protect from small animal damage. Voles have chewed the bark off the small shrub on the right.



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

Have Your Soil Tested for Macro- & Micro Nutrients

Send your soil samples in for testing. For details on submitting a sample, go to [UConn Soil Nutrient Laboratory](#).

NEW PRICES FOR TESTING AT THE UCONN SOIL NUTRIENT ANALYSIS LAB



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:

<https://soiltest.uconn.edu/price.php>

UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory

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 Master Gardener Program](#)

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

[UConn Science of GMOs](#)

THINGS TO DO/EVENTS

[Annual Salisbury Winters Sports Association JumpFest](#) – Feb 11- 13

This outdoor event is the oldest ski jumping competition in New England and one of only six ski jump competitions on the East Coast. Athletes including Olympic contenders and some of the best junior ski jumpers in the United States will compete during this three-day festival.

[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

[Bradley Mountain Farm](#)- this farm in Southington has events all year featuring walks with their friendly goats and other fun programs

Science and Nature

Biomimicry- Biomimicry uses designs and structures found in nature to create buildings, materials, machines and even ventilation systems and other technology. For instance, the bumpy tubercle fins of humpback whales used to propel them efficiently through water are used for biomimetic wind turbine blade edges. <https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/biomimicry-a-history>

Weather/ Environment



image: NPS/Patrick Myers

Fulgurites- When lightning strikes sand, it will melt the sand into glass forming tubes called fulgurites, which may be pushed upward, sticking out of the surface of the sand. This phenomenon occurs often at Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve.

<https://wxguys.ssec.wisc.edu/2019/08/26/fulgurite/>



Check out our sunsets and stay safe!

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

WHAT WE DO AT THE UCONN HOME AND GARDEN EDUCATION CENTER

- **Plant, insect, plant disease identification and control options.**
- **Advise clients on plant selection and cultural requirements.**
- **Diagnose plant problems.**
- **Accept samples for diagnosis either by drop-off or mail**
- **Present on gardening topics including IPM, pollinators, lawns, invasive plants and insects, landscaping and gardening with native plants, gardening to support bees, birds and wildlife, soils, compost and other horticultural topics.**
- **Staff a booth each year at the CT Flower & Garden Show- bring your gardening questions and soil samples for free pH testing.**
- **Publish free weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter. Please subscribe!**
- **Publish fact sheets and weekly newspaper articles.**

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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