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January for Orchids, Lichens, and Pruning Trees and Shrubs



Orchids

If you are a beginner to houseplants and have a spot with bright, indirect light, a Phalaenopsis (moth) orchid may be a fun plant to grow. The exotic, colorful flowers have rounded petals and may bloom for several weeks to several months. Orchids are generally grown in a soilless mix of bark chips and orchid mix, which is available at most garden centers. <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/orchid-care-and-repotting.php>



Phalaenopsis orchid with typical broadly rounded petals

Lichens



Lichens are living organisms that consist of an algae and fungus living in a symbiotic relationship. Algae use photosynthesis to derive nutrients for both organisms, while the fungus helps prevent either from drying out. Lichens can be found on dead and decaying matter, stones and tree trunks and branches. When found on trees, lichens often indicate that the tree is losing some canopy, which in turn allows more sunlight to hit trunks and branches and lichens can now live there. Lichens do not harm the trees, although they can be unsightly.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/beauty/lichens/about.shtml>

Pruning Trees and Shrubs



All trees and shrubs should be not pruned at the same time of year. Some trees, like maples and birch, will have excessive sap loss (bleeding) in spring if pruned in the winter. Spring blooming ornamentals should be pruned after bloom or flower buds will be lost for that spring. Sand cherry and shrub dogwoods grown for foliage should be pruned in spring before new growth begins.

<https://extension.umn.edu/news/prune-or-not-prune-0>

Position Available: Educational Program Assistant 1

The UConn Home & Garden Education Center is looking to fill a **full-time, benefited position**. We're pleased to announce that the search for candidates to fill the available HGEC position is finally underway! Interested candidates may apply

here: <https://jobs.hr.uconn.edu/en-us/job/495872/educational-program-assistant-1-home-and-garden-education-center-department-communications>

Feel free to share with anyone that may be interested. Applications are scheduled to close **Feb. 1**, with interviews to follow immediately thereafter. The candidate will likely be starting in early March - enough time for us to prepare them for an active spring season!

Come join us at the CT Flower & Garden Show

FREE Soil Testing and Gardening Advice at the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show, February 24 – 27, 2022 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The University of Connecticut Soil Testing Laboratory will offer free soil pH testing each day of the show. Bring in ½ cup of soil and we will test it and let you know how much, if any, limestone you need to add for optimal plant growth. Master Gardeners and staff horticulturists from the UConn Home & Garden Education Center will be on hand to answer all of your gardening questions. Free gardening handouts will help you make the most of your lawn and gardens this year!

Winter Webinar Series- Northeast Extension Fruit Consortium

Northeast Extension Fruit Consortium

Winter Webinar Series



UMassAmherst | Extension Agriculture Program | THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT EXTENSION | NH Extension | THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Cooperative Extension Post Management Unit | UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES | THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EDUCATION | CAES | THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

The Northeast Extension Fruit Consortium will be once again presenting its Winter Fruit Meeting Series. 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>

Jumping Worm Conference- January 26 & 27, 2022 - 9 to 11:45 am



<https://wsc.limnology.wisc.edu/node/149>

Join UMass Extension as we welcome scientists who specialize in jumping/snake worm research to discuss the latest understanding of these earthworms. How to identify these worms, what their potential impacts are, and the latest research into how we might manage them to be discussed.

UMass scientists along with Dr. Josef Gorres from UVM and Dr. Annise Dobson from Yale will be among the presenters.

Cost: \$25/pp for one day; \$40/pp for both days

<https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/events/jumping-worm-conference>

Understanding Terms on a Seed Packet



Image: Oregon State

Seed catalogues contain a vast array of possibilities available for planting this upcoming year. For a better understanding of terms used on a seed packet such as heirloom, cultivar, variety, and others, check out the fact sheet from Oregon State University on the link below.

<https://today.oregonstate.edu/news/learn-terms-seed-packets-make-right-selection-1>

Forcing Branches to Flower for Winter Color



Photo by Danielle Quigley

Many of us are eager for spring to arrive and forcing flowering spring blooming woody ornamentals to bloom indoors in late winter helps brighten our homes and offers a preview of what will come later in the landscape outdoors. Newer branches from forsythia, star magnolias, flowering quince, pussy willows, azaleas, *Fothergilla*, crabapples or lilacs, to name a few, can be cut and forced indoors in early March. Flower buds are plumper than leaf buds, so make sure branches have plenty of flower buds before cutting. Some species can be cut in late January or February, but flowering may take much longer than if cut in March.

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2002/3-8-2002/forceflower.html>

<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2018/02/forcing-branches-indoors>

Bat Houses



Image: Lauren D. Quinn

All bat box designs are not the same. Some designs are painted dark colors that cause inside temperatures to rise to levels that are way too hot for the bats on summer afternoons. Other designs get too cold in the winter months. See link below for some designs that work better than others. Bats are also able to find suitable places on their own, so bat houses are like bird houses in that regard.

https://phys.org/news/2021-12-temperature-variation-rocket.html?utm_source=nwletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-nwletter

Can Your Soil Past the Test?

Send your soil sample in for testing whenever the ground is not frozen. For details on submitting a sample, go to [UConn Soil and Nutrient Laboratory](#).



Photo by D. Tyser, UConn

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 below

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



Pests of the Month- Bagworms and Boxwood Leaf Miners



Bagworm *Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*, a moth whose caterpillar feeds on foliage mainly of arborvitae, juniper, pine and other evergreens but has been found on deciduous trees as well. This pest overwinters as egg masses inside bags made from silk and plant foliage. Bags dangle down and have needle or leaf pieces of the host plant attached on the outside. Clipping off the bags and crushing them will kill caterpillars during the summer, pupae later on or destroy the eggs during the winter.

<http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/bagworm.php>



Boxwood leaf miners, a pest of common boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*), overwinter as larvae inside newer leaves. Blotched leaves can be split to open and the tiny yellow maggots can be seen moving around.

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/boxwood-leafminer-shrubs>

January Gardening Tips

1. January is a good time to browse through garden catalogs and get orders submitted for spring gardening. In 2020 and 2021 many seeds were sold out early.
2. Make sure any stored bulbs, corms, or tubers are not rotting or too dry. Discard rotted ones and lightly mist shriveled ones.
3. Prune most stone fruit trees
4. Check all house plants closely for insect infestations. Quarantine gift plants until you determine that they are not harboring any pests. Inspect under leaves for infestations of whitefly and spider mites; check between leaves and stems for white, cottony mealybugs, and look under leaves and on stems for scale insects. Apply [insecticidal soap](#) or another [low toxicity insecticide](#), crush insects or brush off as appropriate.
5. When planning your vegetable garden, remember to rotate crops.
6. Inspect trees and shrubs for bark damage. If found, likely voles, rabbits or deer may be the culprits. Spray with an appropriate deterrent or place material such as wire mesh or bird netting to exclude browsing animals until spring
7. If weather is dry and soil is not frozen, water evergreens like rhododendrons.
8. Keep foot traffic to a minimum on dormant lawns to prevent damage to crowns
9. Keep birdbaths full- remove ice and refill as needed.
10. Clean crusty pots by soaking them in vinegar for a few hours. Heavily crusted pots might require additional scrubbing with steel wool. Rinse thoroughly and then to sterilize, dip in a 1:10 bleach to water solution for a few minutes. Rinse and dry.

For more January gardening tips, see information on our fact sheets:

<http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/FactSheets/january-gardening-tips.php>



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

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A New Holiday Hobby](#)

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[Tale of Two Christmas Roses](#)

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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

[Connecticut Trail Finder](#)- Connecticut Trail Finder is a new resource for those looking to explore the Nutmeg State's 2,000 miles of trails.

[Connecticut River Museum](#)- Visit annual exhibits like the Christmas holiday train layout and permanent exhibits like the first American submarine dubbed "the turtle".

[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.

[Stamford Museum & Nature Center](#)- Walk over 80 acres of nature trails, drop in to the Heckscher Farm and say hello to the animals, including two river otters, and see the exhibition in the Stamford Museum Galleries.

[James L. Goodwin State Forest](#)- Trail maps are available on-line. Contact them for any upcoming guided tours and other events

[Museum of Natural and Other Curiosities](#)-Located in the Old State House in Connecticut, paintings by Joseph Stewart and a collection of natural and artificial curiosities including rare butterflies and stalactites.

[Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry \(Storrs\)](#)



This is a unique resource for understanding the past, present, and future of puppets and material performance. As part of the University of Connecticut's School of Fine Arts, it complements UConn's Puppet Arts Program in building and disseminating knowledge about our field.

National Park Service

On five days in 2022, all National Park Service sites that charge an entrance fee will offer FREE admission to everyone. Where would you like to go?

Mark your calendar for these entrance fee-free dates:

🗓️ 1/17 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

👤 4/16 - First day of National Park Week

🌲 8/4 - Anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act

🌄 9/24 - National Public Lands Day

👤 11/11 - Veterans Day

Learn more at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/fee-free-days-2022.htm>

Food for thought

Vertical Farming



Vertical farming indoors provides produce grown locally all year, while growing plants in a protected environment that reduces water use and runoff.

Vertical Farming for the future

Weather Fun facts- “Blood Rains”



In July 2001 the rainfall in Kerala, India, was blood red! Research concluded that the rains had most likely been colored by an unusually large amount of spores from the terrestrial lichen species *Trentophilia*. "Blood rain" can also occur when red sand particles from certain desert sandstorms are carried away and fall in rain drops on lands that may be quite far away.

What makes “Blood” Rains

Visit our website: <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/>

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.

UConn | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
EXTENSION

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