



May is For Bluets, Redbuds and Bobolinks



Bluets



Houstonia caerulea are diminutive native wildflowers that appear along sunny woodland edges in early spring, and they will continue to flower into summer. Plants are only 6 inches tall, and the blue to pale lavender flowers have four petals and a bright yellow center. They can occur in large patches if conditions are right. Spring bees and early butterflies as well as other pollinator insects visit these flowers

Bluets

Eastern Redbud



Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is a dapper, small native tree that is a member of the pea family. Noted for its display of small pink flowers that appear in clusters along leafless twigs in May, the bark is gray when tree is young then brown to black at maturity. Leaves are heart-shaped, and the crown is spreading and tall in the shade and more rounded and compact when grown in the sun. They are difficult to transplant if trees get too large.

Redbud

Bobolinks



Bobolinks are birds of large, open grasslands, pastures and meadows where there are tall grasses and some deciduous plants like clovers and legumes. Females nest on wet ground near the base of broad-leaved plants among

grasses. In gradual but steady decline, these birds have lost much of their habitat as farmlands are converted for other uses. On Horsebarn Hill at UConn, bobolinks have benefitted from pasture mowing being delayed until after the young have left their nests.

[Bobolinks](#)

Vegetable Planting and Transplanting Guide



If you need to know when to start vegetable seedlings and when to transplant safely outdoors, check out this excellent guide from Penn State. The major vegetables and the "best" time to plant is a must for novice gardeners. Second link is from UConn and includes vegetable varieties and other information.

[Vegetable Planting Guide](#)

[UConn Vegetable Garden: Basics and Plant Selection](#)



Insect Highlight - Juvenal's Duskywing



Juvenal's duskywing *Erynnis juvenalis* is frequently found in May on sunny ground or basking on small trees in open woodland areas and hiking trails. They appear as oaks, their caterpillar's host plant, is leafing out. It will lay eggs on small oak saplings as well as on mature trees.

Juvenal's Duskywing



Bird Highlight- Wild Turkeys



Wild turkeys are opportunistic foragers, eating insects, and seeds they find by scratching leaf litter or the surface of the ground, and may be found near

bird feeders pecking the ground for any spilled seed. Males begin mating displays in spring, sometimes stomping, fanning tail feathers, and hissing together in small groups. The males above are in sync, amid a small group of hen turkeys in a Vernon cemetery. They will scratch shiny surfaces if they see their reflection, believing it to be a rival.

Wild Turkeys

Disease Highlight-Blackknot



Black knot is a fungal disease caused by the pathogen *Apiosporina morbosa*. It affects *Prunus* trees including native and ornamental cherry and plum trees. Its common name refers to the bumpy black galls that appear on newer branches and sometimes on trunks. The galls can be removed from infected trees by pruning or fungicide applications can be made, but new infections can be a chronic issue where native wild cherries in the vicinity have this disease.

Black Knot

Bird House Competition



If you have a decent large open area and want to attract bluebirds, there may be some competition for one nesting box. House sparrows and bluebirds nest early and sparrows often are in the boxes before bluebirds. Tree swallows arrive early enough to choose a box, as well. One solution is to put up three bird houses set about 20 yards or so apart. That way, the three species will each have a nesting box every year. They may choose a different one year to year, but they will all get along...



On Horsebarn Hill at UConn, between two pastures, this fence has nesting boxes been placed on fence posts spaced out every twenty yards or so. Sparrows, bluebirds and tree swallows all find a place to build their nests.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group: walk and talk events- sign up for these educational walks, and talks, joining invasive plant experts in learning about invasive plants, and in some cases participating in control methods.

[CIPWG Walk and Talks](#)

UConn Extension Outreach Programs- learn about featured outreach projects featuring events and information on a vast array of topics like wildlife, forestry, natural resources and conservation, the bobcat project and more.

[Outreach Projects](#)

UConn CLEAR-Center for Land Use Education & Research

Check the CLEAR home page often for updates, or better yet, get on the emailing list to be sure to hear about new and upcoming webinars. We are always looking for new webinar ideas and welcome your suggestions. Send CLEAR an email at clear@uconn.edu,

Looking for our list of upcoming webinars? Visit our [Schedule](#) page.

CLEAR Webinar Library

KNOWLEDGE TO GROW ON- Read our latest Ladybug blogs

[Tick Time!](#)

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Gardening Tips for May

- [Lily leaf beetles](#) often show up first in spring on leaves of the host plant lilies. Check both sides of the leaves for adults and 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.
- Scout for [black vine weevil](#) adults feeding on the foliage of *Rhododendron sp.*, *Taxus sp.*, *Euonymus sp.* and *Ilex crenata* and use a foliar insecticide.
- Remove spent blooms on tulips, daffodils, and other spring flowering bulbs but leave foliage intact until it has all died back. The plant will focus its energy on growing new bulbs

rather than producing seeds. Do not cut leaves back or tie leaves up as blooms may not appear next spring.

- Insert stakes, supports or hoops now to prevent plants like peonies, asters and baptisia from flopping over.
- Divide and relocate daffodils if needed but keep the foliage intact until it has all died back.
- Fertilize bulbs as soon as you see the foliage in the spring as they take in more nutrients when actively growing than when dying.
- Continue to cultivate planting beds and carefully remove young weeds.
- Lift, divide and replant late summer and fall-blooming perennials such as asters, mums, and sedum.
- Start caladium indoors to plant outside by Memorial Day
- Now is a good time to lay soaker hoses in flower and shrub gardens.
- Clematis vines like cool roots so apply mulch or plant a low-growing ground cover to shade the ground.
- Use fresh potting mix in your containers as old media has fewer nutrients and may contain harmful bacteria and fungi.
- Disinfect all pots and containers before refilling them for the season.
- [Lace bugs](#) and [aphids](#) will appear soon. Spray with water or use a low toxicity insecticide to control them.
- Fertilize lawns after mowing a couple of times. Keep grass 3 inches tall to help discourage weeds.
- Crabgrass pre-emergent products should be applied before flowering dogwood and/or lilac bloom. Do not aerify, dethatch or rake lawns after applications have been watered in.

[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](#).

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>



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.

[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

[Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center](#) - Migration Madness 2022 - This family-friendly weekend runs May 13-15 and will focus on Connecticut's bird populations during the height of spring migration. [For more information, click here.](#)

Food for thought

Waru Waru is a system of raised-field agriculture that originated in South America using parallel canals located on floodplains or near a water source for field irrigation. Recorded being used near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia nearly 300 B.C., this is an efficient means of watering crops.



Waru Waru

Weather

Haboobs, or powerful dust storms, may not occur in Connecticut, but in Arizona, they do. Mike Olbinski captured videos of several haboobs in Phoenix, Arizona.

Haboob Video

Who knew?

While a cacao tree can live over 200 years, it only produces quality cocoa beans for making chocolate for about 25 years.

Cacao History and Fun Facts

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.

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 problems

Receive samples for diagnosis samples either by drop- off or mail

Do 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

Have a booth every year at the Flower and Garden Show- bring soil samples for pH testing

Publish weekly blogs and a monthly newsletter available for subscription

Publish fact sheets, newspaper, and magazine articles

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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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Upcoming CIPWG Invasive Plant Talks & Walks

<https://cipwg.uconn.edu/news/#>