The CHA Herbal Thymes

Connecticut Herb Association www.ctherb.org Spring 2023

Welcome CHA Members
Happy SPRING

Winter is about over with, and our thoughts have turned to our favorite pastime, the Garden.
Whether you are an herb gardener, a vegetable gardener or flower gardener even a novice we all just want to get out there and get down and dirty.

I have already pruned back the roses and butterfly bush in February I and added some compost and nutrients to some of my garden beds trying to get a jump start.
Most of my herb bed I don't really do very much, just a little cleaning up. I do have a bucket of leaf mulch rotting away for good compost.

After reading all the catalogs and picking out what I want to plant from seed or from starter plants I'm ready to shop. I do very little from seed mostly vegetables. Starter plants are my go-to. I am anxious to get started.

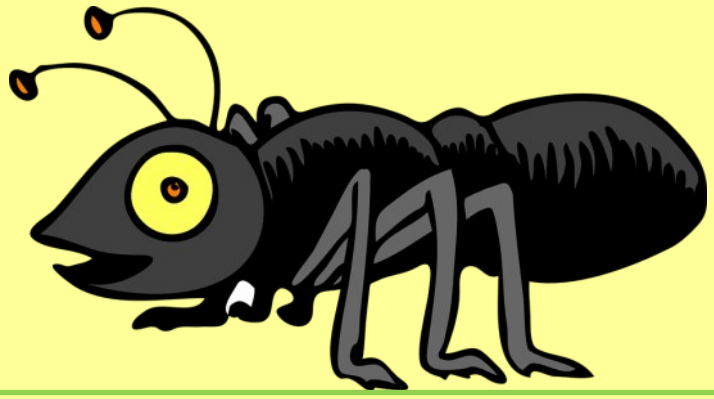
Looking out my window while having my morning coffee, I can see most of my gardens and think, where am I going to put new vegetable or herb plants.
Many plants do very well in their original spots. Whereas other plants need to be moved to another spot.
Vegetable gardens are a little trickier than herb gardens. A few of my vegetable plants will get rotated to a new space.
On and on my thoughts are out of control, time to do that blueprint of my garden beds. Everyone should have a blueprint or diagram of their gardens. .
Consider what worked well, what did poorly and not to forget who got root rot, blossom rot, aphids, cabbage, squash worms, and so many more.
I have always recommended a garden journal to my students to include, planting times, weather conditions, what worked, what did not and pest control.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly "BUGS"

And that my friends bring you to the Spring Issue of the CT Herbal Times.

Happy Gardening, Gayle Nogas

Bugs



The Good The Bad and The Ugly

Gardens are amazing worlds. Just like in our macro-size earth, maintaining a delicate balance is essential to a healthy micro-ecosystem. This is even true of the bugs!

The important thing is – get educated. Know your bugs. Don't assume they are all ***bad.*** There are many beneficial insects that play an important role in the health of your garden. It's also advantageous to understand their purpose so you can find natural ways to deal with them. Chemical remedies can be a last resort.

Generally speaking, if a bug is bad, it has a predator that is good and can work with you to get rid of it. All it takes is a little bit of knowledge and being able to identify which bugs are **good**, which ones are **bad** and which ones are just plain **ugly**. You will be empowered to work in conjunction with nature to maintain a healthy garden.

Remember, if you use pesticide to kill the detrimental bugs, you will also kill the helpful ones. Everything in a garden is interconnected. The toxins in pesticide not only kill the bug but can affect good bacteria and other microorganisms that are the food source for good bugs. It can penetrate soil and water, ultimately affecting the plants themselves.

Understand the benefits of some types of bugs. Aside from helping pollination, one primary advantage of "good bugs" offer is pest control. There are natural enemies in the insect world. The good bugs actually eat the bad ones so your need for chemicals can be greatly reduced simply by having the right combination of bugs.

Be able to identify good bugs so you are not killing the insects that help your garden. Identification is easy with the internet. Visit the site www.gardeninsects.com with a quick pictorial reference to beneficial bugs, links to where you can actually buy them and guidance on how to release them into your garden. *Continue on page 7*

How to Get Rid of the 10 Worst Garden Insects

As if weeds and weird weather aren't bad enough, gardeners also have to face insect pests. Here's a look at 10 common garden pests—and how to get rid of bugs on plants.

Aphids

These 1/6-inch pear-shaped creatures pierce plant tissues to suck out sap. Affected plants often form puckered leaves, show stunted growth and can die without treatment. Moreover, the honeydew (a sweet, sticky substance secreted by aphids) promotes the growth of sooty mold and attracts ants, which protect the aphids because they want the honeydew.

How to get rid of aphids:

Wash plants with a strong spray of water to dislodge aphids or remove and destroy affected plant parts. Organic solutions include spraying with horticultural oil (petroleum- or vegetable-based oil used to smother insects), insecticidal soap or neem (insecticide made from a tropical tree by the same name). You can also buy lady beetles, which feed on aphids.

Cutworms

Cutworms are fat, one-inch-long moth larvae that hide beneath leaves or within the top layer of soil during the day and feed on plants at night. They typically attack stems, the first part of a plant they encounter, so if a newly planted seedling has been felled like a tree in the forest, that's a sign of cutworms.

How to get rid of cutworms:

Protect young seedlings with collars made from plastic drinking cups or cardboard rolls from toilet paper. You can also cultivate soil shallowly before planting and remove the curled-up cutworms by hand (or let robins do the dirty work). Another solution is to set seedlings out a few weeks later, when they've grown thicker stems to resist cutworms.

Japanese Beetles

Adult insects are metallic blue-green and bronze, 1/2-inch beetles. Larvae are fat, white grubs with brown heads. Beetles skeletonize leaves and chew flowers. Grubs feed on the roots of grass and other plants.

How to get rid of Japanese beetle adults:

Shake them from plants into a jar of soapy water early in the morning when they're less active. Also spray with insecticidal soap or use floating row covers (extremely lightweight fabric placed directly on plants to keep insects from laying eggs).

How to get rid of Japanese beetle grubs:

Apply beneficial nematodes (microscopic worms that occur naturally in the soil) or milky spore (a bacterium). Be patient; both organic options take a couple of years to build up in the soil and do their job.

Scales

You're most likely to notice adult female scale insects, which look like bumps on plant stems, leaves or fruit. Males are small flying insects, while larvae are tiny, soft, crawling insects. Scale insects suck plant sap, weakening plants and causing foliage to turn yellow and drop off. In addition, honeydew is deposited on leaves and fruit. It's unsightly and can foster disease.

How to get rid of scales:

With small infestations, remove and destroy infested plant parts or use a soft brush and soapy water to scrub scales from twigs, then rinse. Larger infestations should be treated with dormant oil or summer oil spray.

Slugs

Slugs are slimy, soft-bodied mollusks, usually about an inch long and either brown or gray in color. They hide out in shady spots during the day and do most of their feeding at night. They'll eat just about any garden plant, leaving unsightly holes in the foliage. While common in moist, humid climates, they're more prevalent if the weather has been rainy.

How to get rid of slugs:

Fill empty tuna fish cans with beer and place in the garden (slugs are attracted to the beer and will fall in and drown). You can also handpick early or late in the day, then sprinkle salt on the slugs or freeze them. Other options include sprinkling sharp sand, wood ashes, crushed seashells, or diatomaceous earth (a naturally occurring, soft, sedimentary rock formed from fossil remains) around the stems of plants to discourage slugs from squirming their way to the plant.

Spider Mites

These tiny pests, which are related to spiders, feed on plant juices. In large numbers, they zap a plant's vitality by causing leaves to turn yellow, brown, or gray and drop off. Other telltale signs: fine silk webs on the undersides of leaves.

How to get rid of spider mites:

Introduce predatory insects that feed on spider mites, such as lady beetles, praying mantises and assassin bugs. Or try this remedy from Garden Writers Association Hall of Famers Doc and Katy Abraham, authors of *The Green Thumb Garden Handbook:* mix 1/2 cup buttermilk and 4 cups of wheat flour with 5 gallons of water. Spray on the tops and bottoms of foliage. Repeat in 10 days to take out any that hatch in the interim.

Squash Bugs

As the name would indicate, squash bugs are most found on squash plants, as well as pumpkins. They're large, look as if they're wearing armor, and resemble stink bugs. They suck juices out of plants and cause wilting.

How to get rid of squash bugs:

Handpick and drop in a jar of soapy water. Clean up infested plants at the end of the growing season and dispose in the trash (this interrupts the squash bug life cycle). Other options: scrape off egg clusters (found on the backside of leaves) or spray neem on egg clusters and juvenile squash bugs.

Because squash bugs mate early in the season, covering with floating row covers until pollination time also works.

Squash Vine Borers
You're more likely to spot damage to your squash plants than you are to see the squash vine borers themselves. That's because these 1-inch-long white caterpillars feed from *inside* the stems. Plants wilt drastically, as if they're thirsty for water. Eventually, the whole vine dies. In addition to wilting, look for a swollen stem and small piles of sawdust-like material called frass (debris or excrement produced by insects), on the ground. Plus, never grow these vegetables next to each other.
How to get rid of squash vine borers:
Crop rotation is a good practice and planting a few weeks later in the season and using a row crop cover until flowering. Grow long-stemmed varieties rather than compact hybrids. As the long-stemmed varieties grow, they may start to take root at various spots. You can add soil where stems are rooting, so these secondary sections are available to support the plant if the main stem dies. If you see a swollen stem, carefully slit one side, and extract the borer. Then place the stem on the ground and cover with soil to encourage rooting.

Tomato Hornworm
These bright green, heavily striped caterpillars look like something from a sci-fi show, especially with the horn-like tails. They eat the foliage of tomatoes primarily, but also peppers, potatoes and eggplants.
Here's our best advice for growing tomatoes.
How to get rid of tomato hornworms:
Although camouflaged, these caterpillars are large and easy to spot if you're looking for them (they leave dark green to black droppings on foliage). So handpicking and dropping into soapy water is a good solution. You can also spray foliage with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a soil-dwelling
bacterium which acts as an insecticide when ingested. Or introduce predatory insects (lady beetles' prey on eggs and young caterpillars, parasitic braconid wasps lay eggs on larger caterpillars).

Whiteflies
These tiny sucking insects weaken and stunt plant growth and leave behind a sticky honeydew that leads to fungal disease on leaves. Plus, check out these 24 genius gardening hacks you'll be glad you know.
How to get rid of whiteflies:
Blast them off plants with the hose, then coat plants with insecticidal soap, getting both the tops and undersides of leaves. Do this early in the day or later in the evening when temperatures are cooler. In lieu of insecticidal soap, you can substitute lemon-scented liquid dish soap, 1 tablespoon per gallon of water.

Luke Miller is an award-winning garden editor with 25 years' experience in horticultural communications, including editing a national magazine. He has a lifelong passion for gardening in general and trees. In addition to his journalism degree, he has studied horticulture and is a Master Gardener

Carole's Coons:
I consider myself fortunate to be living on land that I have always loved. The raccoons who inhabit this property feel the same way. We have been waging war for over 50 years and I know in my heart that I'm not winning; the best I can say is that on a good night it's probably a draw. I am willing to concede the fact that they were here first, but I truly feel that I deserve points for attempting to coexist and I would never hurt them; I am trying my best to steward this property and nourish it, they just need to quit ruining my stuff and pulling up my plants! I will also give them points for tenacity and ultimate admiration for their nimble use of fingers…these arthritic joints in my hands have difficulty tying my shoelaces!

In the years before curbside garbage collection I had 3 trash barrels behind my house that I emptied at the dump every Saturday, having spent the previous weekdays cleaning up my rubbish which they emptied out every night in search of gold in all 3 barrels. 4 bungee cords and a big rock on each barrel deterred them not in the least; during the night I often woke to the sound of clanging trash can lids. Enter the age of a new garage to hide trash barrels in and curbside townwide trash collection—yay!

But joy was short-lived. They had to turn to alternate methods of destruction and constantly invent numerous small ways to drive me crazy. I have a few gardens in my front yard and they are familiar with the exact location of every single one. Any recent transplanted plant is fair game, to be dug up and laid aside. They don't seem to want to harm the plant, so I guess they just have a burning desire to see what's at the bottom of the hole.
I turned to my neighbor, who has lovely pristine gardens, and she advised me to use Irish Spring soap (deters deer too). Just a piece of soap tied to a wooden plant stake. Well, each morning the string was **untied** and I usually found the piece of soap somewhere in the front yard.
Then, there's the problem of raiding the bird feeder. In my usual nighttime treks to the bathroom I pass the window facing the feeder and would often see a fat raccoon curled around the feeder, gobbling sunflower seeds. The only cure for that was to fill the feeder each morning with just the amount of seeds that the birds would consume during the day. Sometimes I messed up though, and rest assured that the coons were watching. Thank goodness my neighbors haven't commented…I dread them witnessing the crazy old lady in her jammies wielding a broom screaming at a totally unafraid raccoon sitting on the bird feeder just staring back.
One night last spring I made my usual screeching foray out to the bird feeder, broom in hand, to see that mom raccoon had her 4 babies with her. I just went back to bed. ***Carole Miller***

Home Made Critter Repellent
Contributed by Debra Hultgren

My buddy Nancy Smith makes her own deer/rabbit/critter repellent and several of us have made it and used it and find it quite effective.
It keeps my grandson out of the garden for sure.

Two raw eggs, 2 Tablespoons yogurt, 2 Cloves Garlic, minced, 2 Tablespoons Cayenne Pepper, 1 cup of water

Blend all ingredients in a blender and pour into a one gallon bottle of water, cover and shake. It needs to steep for a couple of weeks. Shake occasionally. Strain after two weeks and pour into spray bottles. You will need to reapply after heavy rain and probably at least once per week.

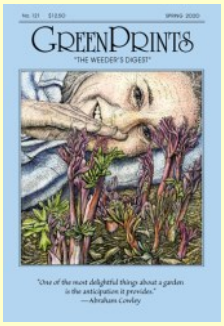
My neighbor has been using Nancy's recipe for several years and swears by it.

Wake Up To Spring Tea

Recipe from Emily Han
Take a look at what's in the blend
***Nettle:** Stinging nettle has a long history of use as a spring tonic. Nourishing, mineral-rich nettle leaves can restore energy,
support the liver and kidneys, and decrease seasonal allergies. Cooking, pulverizing, or drying nettles removes the sting
***Burdock Root:** Known as a "blood purifier," burdock root can stabilize blood sugar and support metabolism and liver and kidney function. Its gently sweet flavor also balances the bitterness of the calendula and saltiness of the nettles.
***Calendula:** Calendula helps to clear up lymphatic congestion and aid digestion. The golden petals also bring a sunshine element to the tea blend.
***Lemon:** Lemon peel can support the liver and gives the tea a bright, awakening flavor.
***Rose:** Rose hips give this tea a mildly tart, fruity flavor. They are also high in vitamin C. Rose petals provide a pretty color and floral essence.
Makes 4 cups of tea
Ingredients: 2 Tbs dried nettle leaf, 1 Tbs dried burdock root, 1 Tbs dried calendula flower
1/2 Tbs dried lemon peel, 1/2 Tbs dried seedless rose hips, 1/2 Tbs dried rose petals
Instructions: Combine all ingredients and store in an airtight container.
To make the tea: For 1 cup of tea, pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 rounded tablespoon of the tea blend. Cover and steep for at least 20 minutes (ideally 4 hours or overnight). Strain and sweeten with honey, if desired. You could also infuse all 4 cups at once (a quart mason jar works well) and sip it throughout the day.
Recipe Notes
To substitute fresh herbs, use 3 to 4 times the amount of dried herbs called for.
Thanks Emily for the tea recipe

www.emilyhan.com Instagram @emily.y.han

"The Book Collector"
Pamela Brooke, Madison CT



All the books and magazines I've put my hands on, I never came across *"Green Prints" Gardening stories from the heart*. A friend passed the Autumn and Winter issues along to me. I do have to admit the stories are fun and interesting. Just for example *"The Boysenberry Saga, The Gardeners December, Mother Hen, Setting Down Roots.* An annual subscription is $27.00.

Here is a short story from *Green Prints* Magazine

Even with our first garden, way back in Wisconsin, my wife and I did not want to use chemicals. Our landlord had kindly tilled up a section of ground for us to use—but we knew there were lots of rabbits in our area. We didn't have the money for fencing and didn't want to kill the bunnies or spray a toxic repellent, so what should we do?
A friend told us that marigolds are a good companion plant for vegetable crops—*and* that rabbits don't like them either. We formulated our plan: We would buy enough marigolds to encircle our garden. The natural fence would keep rabbits out, be a friend to our vegetables, and look pretty, as well!
We planted lots of vegetable seedlings and surrounded the plot with marigold starts. True, the marigolds didn't look that big after we'd planted them. Most were only two inches tall and had only a single flower. But they were bound to do the job. We went inside for the night, feeling quite pleased with ourselves.
The next morning? Tragedy. Actually, the tiny pepper starts were fine. The little tomatoes were fine. The broccoli plants? We lost a couple, but the rest were fine.
The marigolds? Every last one had been nipped clean right at ground level and stripped of all its leaves. Only the quickly wilting flowers were left.
It's true. Rabbits do not like marigolds.
And they had just seen to their removal.
By Rob Faux, published originally in 2019, in GreenPrints Issue #116. Illustrated by Marilynne Roach

Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul.

Luther Burbank (March 7, 1849 – April 11, 1926) American botanist, horticulturist and pioneer in agricultural science. He developed more than 800 strains and varieties of plants over his 55-year career.

Coping with Garden Insects, *By Debra Hultgren*

I find that over the years I have changed my paradigm regarding so called garden pests. That mental shift alone has not reduced the number of plant eating creatures in the garden but has impacted my approach to balancing my desire to have an attractive, productive garden with the desire to have ecological balance.

Understanding who the creatures are and where they fit into the environment gives me and maybe you an idea how to live harmoniously with "bugs." All creatures have a life cycle and for many insects it is short. Sometimes understanding who winters over in the soil and who reproduces and moves on can guide your approach to management. For example, all my mint family plants are plagued every spring and early summer with the

Four Lined Plant Bug, which winters over in the soil. The time to deal with this is when it is in its larval stage on the underside and stems of the plants. By the time you see the beetle, a fast-moving critter, it is too late and the cosmetic damage has begun.

When I remember early (larval stage) and spray the plants regularly with an insecticidal soap, I have half a chance of staying ahead of the aggressively feeding adults. Otherwise, they continue to disfigure the plants until sometime in June. At that point I cut the plants back and the regrowth makes the plants look better. Every bug has a life cycle and a time to slow it down. Observation and a little Google action can help you cope.

Many insects start as eggs on the underside of leaves like squash plants bothered by the Mexican Squash Beetle. Hanging out with your plants daily is not just good for your soul but great for flipping over leaves to see if any eggs are on the underside. That is your chance to hand squash a section of eggs or if you are squeamish, using an insecticidal and safe soap spray or a Neem Oil Spray. That applies to that critter and there are many visual

references available to confirm what you are looking at including phone Apps.

One more mention is the Japanese Beetle, who also winter over in the soil as larva (grubs). This is a food for other insects and skunks, moles, and raccoons. So don't freak out about the mole tunnels in your yard early in the season. Let the moles do their thing and you will have happy moles and less hatched beetles later in the season. Once they are out and about on your plants, I find hand picking to be the best strategy and I keep a canning jar filled with soapy water in areas where I have roses and other plants preferred by the beetle. I suspect there is a safe, environmentally sound method for almost all "pests" and there are many books, YouTube videos and other web-based links to knowing your ecology in your particular garden. However, nothing beats observation, and every garden should have a seat or a pad to sit on so you can just watch.

It is critical that we also master recognition of which larvae, flies, beetles, wasps and other critters are in fact beneficial because we don't want to kill them as they might just take care of the problem bugs for you.

Also, don't forget companion planting. Every good vegetable deserves a strong, aromatic herb by its side.

Peace, Deb

From the kitchen of Michelle Maclure

Goat Cheese Spread with Lemon and Honey

1 8 oz fresh goat cheese, 4 tbs 8 oz fresh goat cheese, 4 Tbs honey, 3 Tbs Greek yogurt, 2 Tbs olive oil, 1 small clove garlic, 2 Tbs lemon zest. Process in food processer or blender until creamy. Put in serving bowl and sprinkle with lemon zest and drizzle with honey.

Optional: sprinkle with herbs like, thyme, lavender, or other herbs of your choice

Honey Bee Facts:

Because of the natural presence of clostridium bacterial spores, honey should not be fed to children under the age of one year.

Bees are the only insects that produce and store food in a form that can be used by humans. From spring, when the first blossoms appear, until late fall. when most flowers disappear, bees fly from flower to flower, gulping nectar from 50-100 flowers per trip.

It is estimated that to produce 1 pound of honey for human consumption, a hive needs to produce 8 pounds of honey for its own survival. When harvesting honey, beekeepers always leave behind enough to sustain the hive.

Honey is absorbed immediately upon eating and for this reason is considered an excellent quick source of energy and a digestive aid.

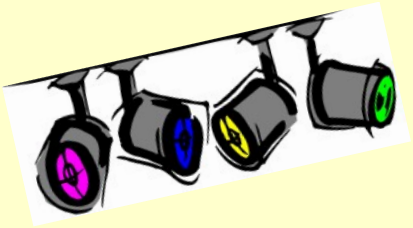
Because of its concentration of sugar and low percentage of water, pure honey is an excellent preservative. Undiluted honey should be stored at room temperature and will never spoil or ferment.

Info. *Taste of Honey* by Marie Simmons

Blessed Creek

Jeanie Wild, Esthetician & Herbalist

Don't Bug Me herbal-based insect repellent is in a base of Witch Hazel extract infused with aloe, peppermint, rosemary, tea tree, lavender, citronella, orange eucalyptus, cedarwood, and geranium essential oils with Vitamin E. Feedback says it's effective in repelling mosquitoes, gnats, ticks and May flies. This fabulous combination is packaged in an attractive 4 oz coated aluminum spray bottle. Vegan, Non-GMO, Gluten Free, Cruelty Free



Spotlight on an Herbalist

Interview with Carole Miller of Topmost Farm: *By Jeanie Wild*

It's always exciting to interview fellow members of the CT Herb association. For this issue of the CHA Newsletter, I interviewed Carole Miller from **Topmost Farm in Coventry, CT.** If you don't already know Carole, and most of us do, she is an herbalist, gardener, volunteer, and all-round joy to have a conversation with.
Topmost Herb Farm was born in the late 1980s. She operated a 20-acre farm with her son and used 3 fields raising medicinal herbs for small medicine makers for 2 years. Times changed, as they do, and the local market wasn't appropriate for her size production. There was a change of plans, and for many years since, she has been passionate about and grows a most extensive variety of heirloom tomatoes in her commercial greenhouse.

Back in the beginning, however Carole got ***bit by the herbal bug*** when she read an article in the Hartford Courant on May 20th, 1997. It was an interview and photo of Ct Herb member Katherine Mashiak. She called Kathy, went to her first CHA meeting and has been a member ever since. "Herbalism struck a chord with my own health, and it made me want to learn more," said Carole. And so, she did. When I asked her, what advice can she offer to beginning herbalist who want to grow, she said it's important to have a deep passion and it grows from there.

Carole's home a period saltbox house was originally built in 1749, was purchased from the state of Connecticut, dismantled, and rebuilt here on her farm. Her greenhouse collapsed under the weight of snow in 2011. With an amazing outpouring of help from the community, committee members and vendors of the Coventry Regional Farmers' Market and numerous strangers it rose anew to meet the growing season the following spring.

You can find information on TopmostHerbFarm.com where you can download a list of tomato varieties to reserve and purchase. You can reserve plants by email only: Carole@Topmostherbfarm.com
You can visit Carole's farm at 244 North Road, Coventry, CT

Open 9-5 Friday through Sunday, May through June opening May 26th

Continued from page 1
Keep in mind it is helpful to know all stages of the insect's life because they look quite different from larvae to adult.

Plant things that attract good bugs. Researching what insects feed on is a key strategy to attracting those desirable bugs. They need food (nectar and pollen, and of course those bad bugs), and a home or suitable living conditions.

Identify bad bugs and attract natural predators. Often, we see the damage before we see the culprit. Holes, tracks, strange looking material on leaves are all clues that you've got a problem pest. Consult with your garden center or a website about what the signs mean. When you've seen a bug, you think is guilty, use tools to aid in identifying a problem bug and its natural predators. Another strategy is to strategically grow "sacrificial plants" to draw the bad bugs away from the plants you care about to a plant they want to eat instead.

Examples of The "Good" (Beneficial) Bugs
Ladybugs – These cute polka-dot bugs are also voracious eaters and one of the best bugs for your garden. They eat aphids, spider mites and various soft-bodied insects. Some plants that attract them are Queen Anne's lace, coriander and marigold.
Predatory Bugs – These are some ugly hard-shelled, that one would usually want to squash. They eat a variety of caterpillars and pest insects. Draw them by planting dill, goldenrod or coneflower.
Ground Beetles – I'm inclined to step on these, too, but they are great for the garden. They are the creepy, large bugs that hide under rocks and scramble fast when you discover them. They will eat slugs, snails, root maggots and Colorado potato beetle larvae. You can invite these critters with rocks, leaves, mulch and low -growing plants for shelter.
Hover Fly – These small insects look and act like darting bees but they aren't and they help by feeding on aphids, mealy bugs and other pests. Hover Flies like parsley.
Lacewing – With their beautiful, lacy wings, these flying insects hang out on windows and screens in the summer and seem more annoying than anything, but they are helpful, too. They eat aphids, whiteflies, spider mites and other small insects. Cosmos attracts lacewing.

Examples of The "Bad" (Harmful) Bugs
Aphids – This is one of the most destructive insects in gardens. A small, translucent green insect (but can be other colors) that sucks plant sap from stems and leaves, resulting in yellowing, mottled leaves, browning, wilting. They also excrete honeydew on leaves, promoting fungus.
Spider Mites – These tiny, innocent bugs look harmless but are destructive, eating plant sap causing yellow spots and yellow leaves. They are often orange, but can also be yellow or green.
Colorado Potato Beetle –An almost artful orange and black beetle that can strip foliage completely. They like potato, tomato and eggplants.
Caterpillars – In order to become a beautiful butterfly, these creatures consume enormous amounts of leaves and tunnel into fruit. Their droppings sully crops. Some insects and birds are their natural predators.

Now you are armed with the information you need to battle the bad bugs and befriend the good ones for the ultimate benefit and balance of your garden and our world!

Earthworm benefits to ecosystems

Earthworms are sometimes known as 'ecosystem engineers' because they significantly modify the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil profile. These modifications can influence the habitat and activities of other organisms within the soil ecosystem.

Earthworms influence and benefit the soil ecosystem in several ways:
***Recycling organic material:** Earthworms, along with bacteria and fungi, decompose organic material. Most people know about earthworms and compost, but earthworms do the same in pasture soils.
***Increasing nutrient availability:** by incorporating organic materials into the soil and by unlocking the nutrients held within dead organisms and plant matter. Earthworms also take nutrients down through the soil profile, bringing them into closer contact with plant roots.
***Improving soil structure:** Earthworm burrows alter the physical structure of the soil improving soil aeration (important for both plants and other organisms living in the soil) and enhances plant root penetration.
When earthworms are introduced to soils their burrowing can lead to increases in water infiltration bringing water and soluble nutrients down to plant roots.

Earthworm benefits to humans
Earthworms provide these ecosystem services to humans:
***Increasing pastoral productivity:** Once earthworms become established, they remove the surface thatch material that can block water from entering the soil, as the thatch can cause it (and soluble nutrients) to run off.
***Facilitating and accelerating mine restoration:** By increasing soil fertility, recycling waste products and providing food resources for predators, earthworms help to restore functioning ecosystems both above and below the ground.
Trish Fraser, a soil scientist, and earthworm expert says, "The next time you see an earthworm struggling on the footpath, perhaps you will be kind to our little underground ally. Indeed, perhaps you will also think about the rest of the large army of earthworms working hard for us below the ground. Maybe then the important role that this underground army plays in our lives will be forgotten no more."

Hope this helps, by ***Lynn Murdock***
herbalady30@gmail.com

Ants:
1.Cinnamon sprinkled around ant hills
2.White Vinegar 50% & 50% water
3.Essential oils of: Tea tree, lemon eucalyptus in spray bottle or saturate a cotton ball or 5-10 drops E.O. to 2 c. water in spray bottle
4. 1/2 tsp. Boric acid or borax, 8 tsp. sugar & 1 c warm water. Stir & saturate a cotton ball or add maple syrup & spread on flat surface like cardboard.

Flea Beetles:
Rhubarb leaves, chop leaves & put in boiling water for several minutes. Cool, strain so no solids left to clog sprayer. Spray flea beetle susceptible crops 2 or 3 times allowing it to dry out in between.

Cabbage Moths:
Lay peppermint sprigs on top of cabbage family plants. Cedar twigs may do the same.

Slugs:
Diatomaceous earth sprinkled on plants or on slugs. Don't breathe this in, harmful to lungs

Stink Bugs:
2 c. hot water, 1 c. distilled vinegar, 1/2 c. dawn dish detergent. Place all in a spray bottle

Squash Vine Borers:
I tie strips of pantyhose or ace bandage around the base of the very small seedling as it emerges which prevents the borer from getting in the stem.

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Tips to prevent bug bites

Suggestions for dealing with bug bites
Use a bug spray or repellant.
Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, especially when you're outdoors.
Make sure your clothing covers your arms, legs, ankles, and feet.
To avoid mosquito bites, try to stay indoors at dusk and dawn.
Use citronella candles when you're outdoors for additional protection.

CHA Upcoming Events

June 2023 Garden Party
Details TBA

At this time there are no other events planed. Be sure to check web site Facebook and emails for any up coming events planned.

CHA is Going Electronic

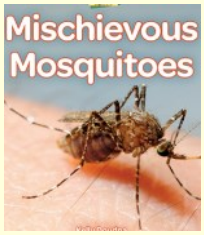
This newsletter is being distributed by E-Mail. Printing cost and Postage rates keep rising and we work with a limited budget. Also, electronically you get see the enhanced version and more vivid graphics. If you still prefer a mailed copy please let me know I will be happy to mail one to you.

Composting and Pets — Pet Care Corner

Beware if you host compost. Compost piles are popular among home gardeners. They are also very popular with curious canines. Decomposing organic material is attractive to dogs, and they won't hesitate to eat it. As these materials break down, fungal mycotoxins can form. These toxins can cause tremors and seizures in addition to vomiting and diarrhea. Dogs should never be allowed access to composting organic materials, so try fencing this area in or keeping it high up off the ground.
www.aspca.org/pet-care

Are You a Mosquito Magnet.

Spring is just weeks away. The unmistakable sweet pungent earthy perfumed scent of petrichor is in the air. This earthy scent is created when chemicals produced by soil dwelling bacteria known as actinomycetes are released awakening our senses. Giving a feeling of happiness and wellbeing. The growing season is upon us. For those that garden the rain is a blessing from nature. It is not associated with gloom. It takes rain after all to make flowers grow food and exhibit beautiful rainbows. We happily go outdoors with shovels in hand, seeds in our pockets and our 6-packs of plants by our sides.



Our backs basking in the sun. Then BOOM. Here come those blood thirsty mosquitos. Biting insects seem to be attracted to the same scents that we like. Why is it that some people attract those bloodthirsty mosquitos more than others? Mosquitos see people as an easy tasty target, and they are voracious. As we perspire, we emit odors that hungry mosquitos seem to be attracted to. These pests are attracted to movement. They detect carbon dioxide on our breathe as we exhale. They are drawn to the lactic acid our bodies produce and they seem to like dark colors according to researchers. They love the smell of stinky feet which is why the mosquitos like to attack the ankles. So, what can we to help prevent these carnivorous marauders from making us there favorite dinner spot?
Choose personal care products that are fragrance free during mosquito/bug season. Soaps, deodorants, hair products, skin creams especially those containing alpha hydroxy acids should be avoided prior to outdoor activities. Be aware of what you eat. Our bodies naturally produce lactic acid which mosquitos are attracted to so consider cutting back on dairy products like cheeses, milk and certain yogurts. Mosquitos love the smell of ethanol. So, save that glass of beer or wine until after you have finished with those outdoor chores. Wear light colored clothing. Mosquitos don't like the smell of peppermint or citronella. Plant some lavender, catnip, basil, citronella, or geraniums in pots or around your vegetable garden. Inoculate your clothing with a safe bug spray with eucalyptus in it. There are several over the counter sprays and essential oils on the market as well as making your own. Where a light-colored bandana over your hair. While we can't eradicate the mosquito population, we can make your outdoor experience much more bite free.
Happy gardening. *Catherine Sherwood*

Connecticut Herb Association
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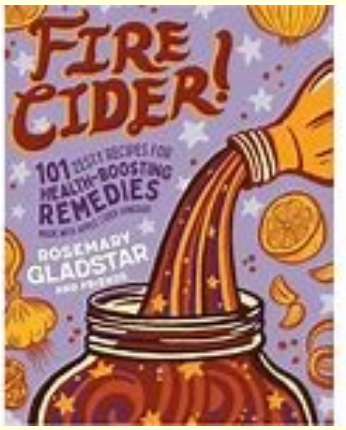

For the Love of Herbs

April is Membership / Renewal Time

Don't miss out on all the great events we have planned for the year.
Renew and get a friend to join, the more the merrier! Lets see if we can double membership in 2023.
$15.00 student, $25.00 for individual, $35.00 for family.

We always appreciate a little extra to add to our scholarship fund. CHA members have the advantage of utilizing the Theas K Pastore Scholarship Fund to help offset the cost of taking herbal related classes, workshops, herb symposium, or herbal conference. To apply for Scholarship contact any of the board members for an application.

Please up-date your membership of any changes
email, address, phone numbers and bio's so the member directory and mailing list can be updated.

checks payable to **CT Herb Association**
Send to Gayle Nogas / CHA
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CHA Medical Herbalism Study Group
If you are interested in joining the group contact Terri Cusson 860-870-1681, terricusson@gmail.com