

# NATUREWORKS



**Spring is in the air!**

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Greetings!

The word from the local weather forecasters is that this week, the temperatures will reach 70 degrees! Wow! That puts me and all my staff into high gear. This week, we have already received 18 pallets of Coast of Maine compost and soils. The shop is almost set up for our grand reopening for the 2016 growing season on the first day of spring which is... wait for it...11 days away!



**Guess what I spotted in bloom on Sunday?**

I saw my first Chionodoxa (glory of the snow) in bloom on Sunday in a sunny spot in my garden. The snow crocuses are now in their full glory, as are the snowdrops and the witch hazels. I see buds swelling on the trees and I even had a report of PEEPERs singing. Truly! It's light out after I make dinner and I am waking up a lot earlier these days because of the sun streaming through my window.



The greenhouse has been cleared out and is about to be set up for cold hardy plants like the van full of pansies that Diane and Kassie are unloading in the photo above. When we open, we will have Hellebores, Easter baskets filled with blooming plants, and our famous hand painted Austrian eggs.

All of our growers are contacting us, telling us that their spring crops are ready and we need to take shipment NOW. Our nursery yard is ready and organized- benches cleared off, cold frame at the ready.



I hang our wonderful hand painted eggs from my chandelier in my dining room. Then I enclose new ones in gift boxes for my Easter guests. It is a great tradition that everyone looks forward to each year. My home is slowly filling up with fuzzy chicks, eggs I have been given as a gift in egg cups, and bunches of pussywillow and forsythia branches.



**Make it a tradition to give your guests a hand painted Austrian egg every spring- start a tradition!**

Easter is really early this year, Sunday March 27th. With such an early holiday, make sure you plan to come in to Natureworks to visit as SOON as we open to stock up on very special plants and gifts to celebrate the season.



**Smile, very soon we will be planting pansies again...**

This Saturday we are heading up to the **NOFA CT Winter Conference**. This is an incredible conference, with so many workshop choices it will boggle your mind. We will have a vendor booth with all of our seeds and organic seed starting supplies. Next weekend I will be speaking at the **Master Gardener's conference**. This year it will be at Connecticut College in New London. I am psyched as I plan to visit their arboretum when I am there. I am so thrilled that Larry Weiner will be presenting this year. He is THE expert on meadow



gardening. I am working VERY hard on my talk: Growing a Wild Garden: Romantic, Sustainable, Sensible Design. I have literally spent the entire winter studying some groundbreaking books such as The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden by Roy Diblik (who is speaking at the UConn Sustainable Gardening Conference next week), Gardening in a Post Wild World, Planting: A New Perspective, and Humelo. This talk that I am giving will pull all my thoughts together and introduce a very new way of looking at landscape design and maintenance.

Enjoy the beautiful, warm days this week and if the weather gets cold and windy again, keep the faith. March is a crazy month, a tease. Spring is certainly on the way, all the signs are here. I once again worked in my yard on Sunday, open pruning my weeping threadleaf Japanese maple, cutting back perennials that I had left up over the winter, and organizing my back garage. My cat Bella joined me in the courtyard, rolling around on the warm stones, thrilled to be playing with me in the garden again. Bulbs popped up and bloomed all day long- I would turn my back and then there they were when turned back around. I had a permanent smile on my face all day.



Spring is in the air and I will see you very soon at some of the upcoming conferences and in the shop...

Keep calm and anticipate  
spring



Nancy

## Natureworks is looking for help!

Natureworks is hiring for the spring season. We have a really exciting opportunity for the right person to join our gardening crew. This is a permanent position and a rare chance for an enthusiastic garden lover to work in the beautiful, organic Natureworks gardens that we design, install, and maintain on a regular basis. We rarely have this job available; this opening is due to one of my long time gardeners retiring.

If you are interested, please [click here](#) and read the employment opportunities page and follow the instructions *exactly*.

## Will you travel to England with me this summer?



This July, I am organizing a trip to England to visit gardens. I have wanted to go to England for as long as I can remember. I have studied the work of Christopher Lloyd, Vita Sackville-West, Gertrude Jekyll, Adrian Bloom. I have dreamed of this trip forever. Finally, to celebrate mine and my sister's "milestone" birthdays, this trip is happening. [Click here](#) if you would like to learn more about it.

## Starting Seeds in March



As many of you know, I plan my gardening activities around the phases of the moon. Mid-March till mid-April is the time to start your warm season crops that need to be started indoors 6-8 weeks ahead of time. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, tomatillos, and ground cherries are all examples of this category. March 12th, March 16-17th, April 8-9th, and April 12-13th are all good days to sow the seeds of these plants according to my Gardening with the Moon calendar.

We are having a lively Seed Sowing Workshop on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, right here at Natureworks. Whether you are new to seed starting or have started seeds indoors in the past, you can register for this workshop beginning today by calling 203-484-2748. You can find more details in the Events area below.

It is important that you use a high quality seed starting soil. We LOVE Organic Mechanics. It has everything that we consider important in a potting soil. We sow the seeds into cell packs or cow pots. We then keep them in waterproof trays with plastic

lids to keep the humidity high and the temperature even when they are germinating.

Once the seeds have germinated, they are moved to a very sunny window. Many of my customers and employees grow their veggie seedlings under artificial lights to assure success. I have a south facing window in my office where I am going to start some very special heirloom tomato seeds that were given to me by a friend. I will have to turn them every day so they don't bend towards the light. I will have to pay attention to the temperature (if it is too hot they will stretch and get weak). I will have to be sure there is good air circulation and I will have to keep my cat Bella from bothering them. But I am determined!



**The owner of Organic Mechanics visited Natureworks- we were so honored!**



Have you ever heard the adage "Plant your peas on St. Patrick's Day"? It is VERY seldom that you can actually do that in CT because the soil is either covered with snow and ice or too wet and cold. This year it might actually be possible.

WHY on earth would you even want to plant a veggie crop in the middle of



**I plant these heirloom yellow peas in my garden every year. Their flowers are purple and the peas are yummy.**

March directly in the ground? Well, peas grow all of their leaves and vegetative vines when the weather is cool. As soon as it gets hot, they start to flower. If you can get them growing early, you will get MUCH taller vines and tons more peas.

Now, if you really want to do this, you should cover your soil with black plastic during the heat wave we are going to have this week.

That will warm it up and dry it out so that the pea seeds will not rot, but instead germinate. If the weather turns cold again and your soil is cold and wet, WAIT. Last year I planted my peas in the ground on April 19th and still got a bountiful harvest.



**In April of last year I planted sugar snap peas, carrots, beets, lettuce, spinach, and radishes. Here's a small portion of my harvest.**

The best tool you can use when sowing seeds is a soil thermometer. The next best tool is common sense. Use your judgement, trust your inner gardening wisdom and you too will have a wonderful harvest from your early spring planted crops.

I am offering ONE more workshop on growing vegetables. It is on April 2nd from 1-3 pm at the Zion Episcopal Church in North Branford. It is an intensive, 2 hour workshop: **Grow the Most Food Possible in your own Backyard from April until November.** You can register on line by visiting our web page, [click here](#). To link to our class brochure, [click here](#).

## Upcoming Events

Saturday/Sunday, March 12 & 13, 2016

CT NOFA Winter Conference Danbury, CT 06810

Western Ct. State Univ. MIDTOWN CAMPUS, 181 White Street

<http://ctnofa.org/winterconference/index.html>

Natureworks will have a vendor booth.

Tuesday, March 15, 2016, 1:00

p.m. lecture

West Haven/Bradley Point Garden Club

Container Gardening...Planting in Grow Bags and other containers.

Please check with the garden club to

see if there is a fee and if the general public is invited.



Saturday, March 19, 2016



Ct. Master Gardeners Association (CMGA) Symposium - New London, CT  
<http://www.ctmga.org/>

Check out their website for registration details. Natureworks will have a vendor booth and Nancy is lecturing about Growing a Wild Garden: Romantic, Sustainable, Sensible Design.

**Sunday, March 20, 2016 10 am - 4 pm**  
**NATUREWORKS reopens on the first day of Spring.**

Saturday, March 26 10 am - 11 am

Seed Sowing Workshop at Natureworks

Have you always wanted to start your vegetable plants from seed but were too scared to try? Have you wanted to try a snazzy new variety without the investment of a 6-pack of seedlings? Have you ever just wanted to see something grow from start to finish? Then you should attend this hands-on seed starting workshop! We will provide the soil, seeds (fun varieties in tow), seedling tray and cover, not to mention, we will provide you with the confidence to try something new! Wear gardening clothes and let us worry about the mess. Each participant will plant a full tray of seeds and leave with a whole lot of seed starting expertise. Please call to pre-register.

**Fee:** \$25 includes seed flat with greenhouse cover, seedling tray, organic potting soil, and seeds.

**Registration:**

Limited to 8 participants per class, sign up early.

[Click here](#) for Natureworks Class Registration Information.

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Organic Lawn Care

Vegetables-Incredible Edibles

## Hours

Natureworks retail shop is closed for the Winter and will re-open on March 20, 2016 from 10 am to 4 pm.

## Class Location

Natureworks classes are held in North Branford at the Zion Episcopal Church. 326 Notch Hill Rd., North Branford, CT. 06471. [Click for a map.](#)

Natureworks Horticultural Services  
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