



NATUREWORKS

It's Time to Celebrate Spring!

Greetings!

We are in the last week of March and I must admit, I couldn't be happier to see April peaking around the corner. What a crazy month it's been! It's still colder than I wish it would be, but, here in CT, we take what nice days we can get and when they arrive, we CELEBRATE! Despite the chilly nights, there are clear signs of spring all around us. The birds are singing very loudly. Yesterday I heard a raucous chorus of frogs in a nearby inland wetlands. I have so much in bloom- Hellebores, crocus, Iris reticulata, and witch hazels continue to welcome the early days of this special season. If you go out and work in your garden beds, you will see perennials coming to life, buds swelling on trees and shrubs, and hopeful surprises everywhere.

Here at Natureworks, we are OPEN and filled with lots and lots of beautiful flowering plants. We continue to create planters and Easter basket garden arrangements every day. The big question is- can you put them outside? As long as the nights are in the high 20's, the only things I would leave out overnight are pansies and violas. They can take it down to 24 degrees. Everything else should be brought in at night, even into the garage. We are planting cool season lovers- primroses, bulbs,

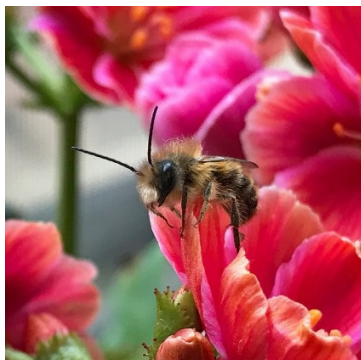
Ranunculus, Iceland poppies, Lewisia, Hellebores, and Dianthus top the list. The weather looks like it's going to moderate as the week progresses. That will make all of us VERY happy, people *and* plants!



One sure sign of spring is that our native mason bees are starting to hatch. In fact, we had them hatch *right inside the shop* from a mason bee house we brought inside and forgot to put back out! Mason bees are tunnel nesting, and they lay their eggs inside hollow tubes that we place inside the houses. Natureworker Mack spent a good part of Saturday rebuilding our insect hotel in the nursery yard- when you stop in for a visit, check it out. Why are we so excited about this? Native

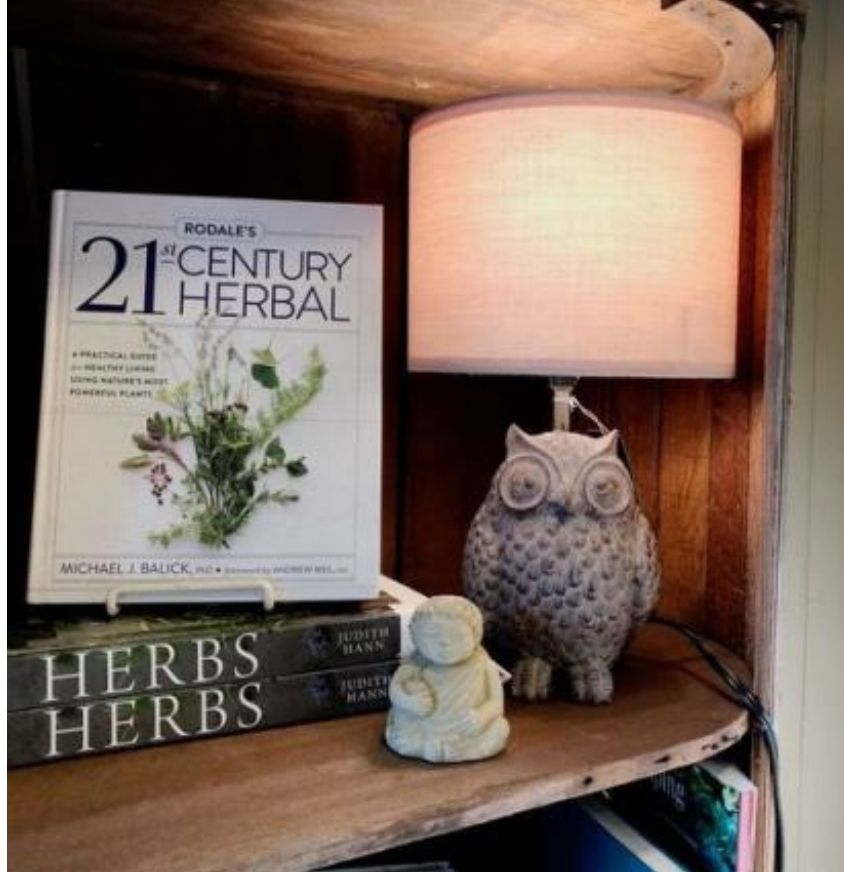


We LOVE our native bees!



bees are so vital for pollination. Mason bees, especially, fly much earlier and in much colder weather than most bees. I have been on the road, giving talks about this, all winter long. In fact, I am almost ready to put our new Native Pollinator page up on our website.

Check out the newborn on the left, what a cutie!



An owl lamp, a meditating cherub, and a modern and up to date book on herbs. Just a tiny corner of one shelf in our shop to enlighten you...

A very important category of plants that pollinators and beneficial insects love are herbs. This week I have spoken twice on Blended Gardens, explaining why flowers and edibles belong together. I focused on dill, fennel, lovage, mountain mint, bee balm, borage, coriander, and other common herbs as sources of pollen and nectar for many native bees and wasps. This year we will be focusing a lot on herbs at Natureworks. My friend, seed expert, and serious herbalist Sandy Merrill has agreed to join me in this effort. Stay tuned!



We just keep planting up the cutest gifts! What we have changes every day, actually every hour. Hop on in!

One of the best things going on at Natureworks this week is that we have the coolest gifts for kids that do NOT involve sugar! Why not fill an Easter basket with books about nature, a "paint-



Check out our new umbrellas! I am sure you know someone who needs a chicken or cow umbrella in their life, don't you?

your-own-raincoat" kit, children's gardening tools, seed packets, a magnifying glass, watering can, and other fun items that will entice your children or grandchildren to join you outside in the garden?



You can pre-sprout your pea seeds to get a jump on the planting season. Soil must be 45 degrees or warmer before planting them outside.

THIS week is prime time to start your tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, tomatillos, and other warm season vegetables indoors. We have all of the organic seed starting supplies you need including our Germination Station that comes complete with a heat mat, seed starting tray, and greenhouse dome. And, of course, we've got the SEEDS! Stock up now on peas- sugar snaps, shell peas, snow peas, and even flowering sweet peas. Since we couldn't plant them on St. Patrick's Day due to the giant snowstorms, we are waiting for the soil to warm up. I have a bed ready and will be using my soil thermometer to make sure the soil is 45 degrees or above before I plant them. Placing black plastic over your bed will help move this process along. You can also pre-sprout your seeds in moist paper towels which will give them a head start once the soil comes up to temperature.



We've got the best organic seed starting supplies!

And then there are the breadseed poppies! Mother Nature continues to



give us a window for poppy seed sprinkling as long as the ground is cold. And we still have many varieties of poppy seeds! Check out our first [Facebook Live](#) video that we did last week on this topic. Everyone was so excited to see a video from us. YES, you simply sprinkle

THIN your poppies and you will get giant flowers like Diane them on top of cold soil. Don't cover them. Sow them as thinly as you can. Don't weed ANYTHING you don't recognize and once the blue-green, ruffled leaves appear, thin them to get the biggest flowers. The video even showed you how to harvest and save the seed for next year.



Lenten Roses (Hellebores) are the ideal Easter gift. They are a hardy perennial that blooms...wait for it... NOW! They will come back and flower every March.

Tune in this Thursday at 5 for our next episode of Facebook Live. This week we will be talking about cool-season crops- vegetables, flowers, and herbs- that you can plant directly in the garden in April. We are starting to get word that our organic veggie seedlings are ready. We are waiting one more week to start offering lettuce, broccoli, and many more. Get your row covers ready, clean out your cold frames, outdoor veggie planting time is almost here for the cool season crops!

So it's time to get your spring on and hop into Natureworks for some inspiration. Unique gifts, flowering plants, pretty planters, Easter garden baskets, seeds galore, and lots of fun surprises await you.

We are closed on Easter Sunday for family time before the spring rush really kicks in, so plan to shop early. I hope to see you this week!

Nancy

Green Mulch



This year, I am on a mission to convince my customers to use less shredded bark mulch and instead, plant more plants- specifically perennials, herbs, and low growing ornamental grasses and ferns that will cover the ground between your taller plants. We call that Green Mulch.

Study the photo above of a small section of my sunny courtyard. The purple spikes that surround and interweave with that miniature iris are the flowers of Ajuga 'Caitlin's Giant'. This photo was taken in May. I haven't mulched this spot in my garden in a long time. I let the leaves of the weeping Japanese maple fall and decompose all winter. In the spring, snowdrops and crocus work their way up through the leaves quite easily (you can see their green foliage in this photo). They are then followed by the large, rounded, deep purple leaves of this wonderful ground cover Ajuga. Best of all, when the Ajuga flowers, the pollinators are in heaven. I sit on the big rock and listen to them buzzing.

In the foreground is a diminutive creeping phlox called Phlox subulata 'Betty'. Next to it is a self-sown Nepeta (catmint) beginning to flower. This is a very easy to care for spot. My goal for this courtyard is simplicity. When I finally do get home in the evening and step outside to unwind, the last thing I want to do is weed. Mulching? It is too much work for me to tackle. When I first bought my property (slightly less than 2 acres) and was creating my gardens, I spread more than 12 yards of mulch each year. Last year I spread 7 bags! This is how I roll, with masses of ground cover plants hugging the base of all of my upright perennials and shrubs. It's good for the pollinators, it makes my yard a much more diverse habitat, and it saves me a ton of work and money.

Let us show you how to begin doing this with the gardens you are caring for in 2018. And watch for our new Ground Cover page, soon to be introduced on our website in April. AND, we will have handouts, displays, and sample plantings throughout the nursery. What fun it is to learn something new!

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Great Gardening Events Happening this Spring



We have TONS of breadseed poppy seeds on our racks. The soil is cold, just sprinkle them on your bare spots or right over your decomposing mulch. It really is that simple!

Saturday April 7th Pruning Classes

held at Zion Episcopal Church. See [class brochure](#) for information

- Overcoming your Fear of Pruning - Basic Principles and Practices ([Click Here](#) for online registration.)
- Pruning Hydrangeas with Lorraine Ballato ([Click Here](#) for online registration.)

Sunday, April 8th

1-2 pm Lettuce and Alyssum Bowls

Come learn about the different varieties of lettuce we carry and then choose and plant your own container to cut and cut again for home-grown organic salad.

Registration required: \$25 includes 3 lettuce plants, alyssum flowers, bowl, soil and expert instruction.

[SIGN UP ONLINE](#), stop in or call 203-484-2748

Thursday, April 12th

We are open until 7pm
Thursday evenings beginning
April 12th.

Saturday, April 14th

**10-11 am Wake up the
Garden for Spring FREE
GARDEN WALK**

Join Nancy for the very first
garden walk of the season and learn how to cut back perennials, feed the
soil with our "Magic Formula", and prune summer blooming shrubs.



1-2 pm Get a Head Start on Dahlias



Want a head start on growing dahlias this
year? Join Nancy (who absolutely ADORES
dahlias) for this workshop! We will provide
you with dahlia tubers, organic potting
medium, 2 containers and all the knowledge
you need to be a fellow-dahlia lover. Dahlias
are the stars of any cut flower bouquet and
they are so easy to start!

Registration required: \$25

[SIGN UP ONLINE](#), stop in or call 203-484-
2748

To visit our website Events page, [Click Here](#).
[Click Here](#) to view/print our April Events Flyer.

FREE FILM SCREENINGS

(open to the public, registration requested)

Hometown Habitat - Stories of Bringing Nature Home

directed by Catherine Zimmerman featuring Doug Tallamy.

You may recognize these great garden authors and teachers names
mentioned during Natureworks classes, workshops and emails. One of the
goals of this film is to bring to our attention how the decisions that each of us
make, every day, impact the world around us.

We have seen this inspiring film featuring people all over the country who are
making a huge environmental impact in their own yards, gardens and public
spaces. We are thrilled CMGA is showing this film–Natureworks highly
recommends it!

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to view the flyer containing locations and registration
information.



Click a Quick Link for more Information

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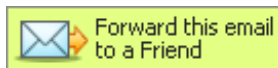
Retail Shop Hours*

Monday - Saturday 8:30 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

CLOSED EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 2018

** beginning Thursday, April 12 we will be open Thursday nights until 7pm*



Natureworks Horticultural Services ([map](#))
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