



Natureworks Opens on Saturday!



Greetings!

I have exciting news. Instead of opening for the season (as is our tradition) on the first day of spring, **we are opening a day early this year, this Saturday, March 19th.** This amazing warm weather has brought us all outdoors so much earlier and it's TIME!



We can create an Easter garden basket just for you. They make wonderful, thoughtful gifts and can be filled with perennials, annuals, bulbs, and embellished with eggs, chicks, and our own fresh cut pussywillows.



The trucks have been arriving for weeks now. We have all of our organic fertilizers and compost. Why not feed your garden early this year with our Magic Formula? [Click here](#) to link to our Feeding the Garden handout which describes how we do it. We have perennials too- Hellebores galore as

well as lots more cool weather, hardened off perennials that have already been outside for many weeks without protection. We have pansies and hand-painted Austrian Easter eggs, Easter garden baskets, and a whole new line of Mary Engelbreit fairy items that we introduced at the flower show last month.



Magic is certainly in the air. What a gift an early, warm spring is. We deserve this, for sure. I am astounded by what is blooming in my yard. Yes, of course the early bulbs such as crocus and snowdrops are up. But I had my first daffodil on Saturday along with flowers on a forsythia, an Abeliophyllum, and my Lonicera fragrantissima. I even found a primrose (*Primula veris*) in flower! That really made me do a double take.

I had a friend help me to harvest my pussywillows and we will be selling them at Natureworks this weekend. Many are the twisted, fasciated types, ideal for studding pots and making wreaths. The pots on my deck are already studded, staged and ready for pansies in anticipation of the early Easter on March 27th.



My very first miniature daffodil popping up next to a great, long blooming foxglove 'Polkadot Pippa'. The perennials are emerging quite quickly this year as well.



Have you started sowing seeds yet? With this warm weather, you actually COULD consider planting your peas on St. Patrick's Day to give them a nice early start. For the next 3-4 weeks, you should be starting your warm season veggies such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants *indoors*. We have restocked our seed racks and have everything you need to get growing. A week from Saturday we will be offering a hands-on **Seed Sowing**

Workshop. The class is limited to 8 participants so register early to be sure you get a spot. The details can be found below.



When I am working in my yard right now, I hear the bees before I see them. They *depend* upon the early bulbs for nectar. The same is true for the end of the season, in late fall. I have put together a package of 3 really late blooming,

very easy to grow native blue asters to help the late pollinators. [Click here](#) to read all about it and reserve yours. If you plant these asters this spring, they will be large and well established by the fall. They will bloom in succession from September through late October/early November.



We also will be selling some Natureworks field dug plants again this year. These are perennials that you can't find easily. They are mainstays of my garden design projects. I keep a stock of them at Natureworks and in my home garden to assure that my favorite varieties will be around for years to come.



**'Lucie's Pink' perennial mums
can reserved for spring
planting.**

There are limited numbers of these plants available and they include 'Lucie's Pink' mums, November blooming Aster 'Fanny', Coreopsis tripteris 'Flower Tower', and classic, old fashioned coral bells with long stems for cutting. [Click here](#) to see the plant descriptions and order form.

Opening weekend at Natureworks is a true celebration. Last year we had a snowstorm; this year I expect to find our customers browsing the benches for perennials, planting up pots of pansies, and shopping for Easter eggs and seeds inside the shop. You can wander our gardens and check out the dwarf Iris reticulata bulbs in flower and "worship" the many Hellebores that are in full, glorious bloom right now.





Species crocus open wide to the sun, emerging through a clump of perennial mums. The perennials are waking up too!

Make time to visit Natureworks this weekend and shop locally for very special Easter gifts. Stock up on early spring seeds and plants and all the organic supplies you need to wake up your garden in March this year. We have "eggs-actly" what you need to THINK SPRING!



See you this weekend...

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*.

Cutting Back the Early Spring Garden

I don't know about you, but I can't resist working outside right now. It is a gift from Mother Nature to finally have a warm, gentle spring.

I have spent all of my days off cutting back plants in my own gardens. I use my garden sickle to save wear and tear on my hands and wrists. I have been cutting down ornamental grasses and chopping them up for mulch in the aisles of my raised beds. I am cutting down perennial mums (whose stems were purposely left up all winter) and lots of other late fall bloomers that I left up for bird seed and to shelter the animals in my yard.



Cut off old leaves from your Hellebores now.

Don't hesitate to remove the old, bedraggled foliage from your Hellebores. Even though they are technically "evergreen", the new leaves are so much fresher looking. Besides, the focus should be on the flowers right now.



Cut back your Montauk daisies (*Nipponanthemum nipponicum*) now to about 12" tall. You should also cut out any disfigured, old wood; young wood is much hardier and produces more flowers. You will be cutting them back again in June. Two pinchings mean a full, bushy plant with tons of flowers in the fall.



The earlier you can get into your gardens and cut plants back, the better. You will already find yourself dancing among emerging bulbs and the crowns of perennials. The garden is in FAST FORWARD this year! I made sure to cut back my

Epimedium leaves this weekend. This sturdy, dry shade tolerant perennial is one of the highlights of my low-light bed under my wisteria. I found flower buds already formed so I had to cut VERY carefully.



My Epimedium 'Domino', a magnificent variety with long flower stems

and evergreen leaves. I cut the old foliage back on Sunday. We have a limited number of this plant coming in this spring for the first time ever. I am thrilled.

You can begin the process of cutting back your late summer and fall blooming shrubs now. I begin with my rose of Sharon trees, then move on to beautyberry (Callicarpa), St. Johnswort, crape myrtle, and **tree** hydrangeas (Hydrangea paniculata varieties). Even my shrub roses will be open-pruned in the next few weeks.

If you want to really learn how to prune properly, I will be having a two hour pruning class at the Zion Episcopal Church hall on Saturday, April 2nd from 10 am until noon. It is called **Overcoming your Fear of Pruning!** I have taught this class many times, and everyone leaves and goes right home and starts pruning. You will be empowered. This is your chance to really understand the basic pruning principles without trying to see and hear me during a garden walk. I have been gathering before and after photos of pruning practices for years. I LOVE to teach pruning...

We will also be demonstrating waking up the garden and pruning summer/fall blooming shrubs at our Saturday Morning Garden Walks which begin on April 9th.

Spring Blooming Highlights



Do you want to do something a little different with your spring pots this year? Consider adding some unusual cold-tolerant plants that will continue to flower until late May or June. Shown above is *Bellis perennis*. I love *Bellis* because it never stops flowering and mingles beautifully with pansies, Hellebores, and other April perennials.



Another long bloomer is *Lewisia*, shown above. This is really more of an alpine, and would thrive in trough gardens. However, because it blooms so early and keeps on setting up flower buds, I often add them to my porch pots and then transfer them to my trough gardens later.



Veronica 'Georgia Blue' is a very hardy perennial that blooms really early.

Another favorite early blooming perennial that I couldn't garden without is *Veronica peduncularis* 'Georgia Blue'. When I use these in containers, I plan on adding them to my permanent collection later, when I redo the pots for the hot summer season. This is a great way to build up your garden, having plants do double duty for you.

Upcoming Events

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. Oh Wait...

we're all set up so let's make that Saturday, March 19th 9 am to 6 pm.

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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Hours

Natureworks retail shop reopens this Saturday, March 19, 2016. Hours are:

Monday - Saturday 9 am - 6 pm.

Sunday 10 am - 4 pm.

CLOSED Easter Sunday, March 27th.

Class Location

Natureworks classes on April 2nd 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 [\(map\)](#)

518 Forest Road, Northford, CT 06472

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