Thank goodness the long freeze is over! Now we New Englanders can complain that it’s too warm, right? How does that old jingle go?

“As a rule, a man’s a fool
When it’s hot, he wants it cool
When it’s cool, he wants it hot
What it is, he wants it not.”

We recall the bone-chillers all too well, but the situation globally is different. NOAA recently announced that the winter of 2014-2015 was the warmest one on record so far. There is a wealth of information about what’s going on in weather and climate on the NOAA web site, climate.gov.

We hope you enjoy the articles in this issue about getting outdoors again, doing healthy native landscaping, and loving your lawn while doing no environmental harm. You’ll read about some terrific efforts underway to monitor and improve ecosystem health whether upstream, on the shore, or in the water. Even if you aren’t a resident of the Nutmeg State, you can build a fabulous rain garden using the free UConn Rain Garden phone app, now multi-state. You’ll be diverting storm water that would otherwise pollute, to grow lovely native plants.

If you read your copy at the beach, you’ll appreciate knowing that seaweeds are our staunch allies and a powerful force in the fight to curb nitrogen pollution and prevent hypoxia in our favorite estuary.

Actually, there is more we should be packing in our “Go” bags these days than sandals and sunscreen! As I write this letter we are launching into the hurricane season, and the traditional motto of the Boy Scouts—Be Prepared!—wins the day. We expect to feature a lot of new information about how people perceive and prepare for hurricanes and other severe storms, and how communities can become more resilient, in our next issue, this fall.

Before I end this greeting, I want to thank all of our supporters who e-mailed or turned out in person to help Connecticut Sea Grant go through its recent federal review with flying colors! We appreciate the vote of confidence from those we serve.

Peg Van Patten

Peg Van Patten, editor

About our cover:
The lovely Monarda—bee balm—photographed by Judy Preston along the Eight Mile River in Old Lyme is a native plant that thrives just about anywhere. It’s an important species for pollinators and attracts butterflies. Keeping such plants in shoreline forest landscapes is a great way to keep ecosystems both healthy and sustainable.