

Extension Connections Newsletter

Rock Island County
321 W 2nd Ave, Milan, IL 61264
309-756-9978

Henry-Stark County
358 Front St., Galva, IL 61434
309-932-3447

Mercer County
910 13th St, Viola IL 61486
309-513-3100

Extension offices will be closed Monday September 7 for Labor Day
Website: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs | Email: uie-hmrs@illinois.edu

Feel Your Best at Any Age

By Kristin Bogdonas,
Illinois Extension food and nutrition educator

September is Healthy Aging Month, a time to celebrate the many ways we can support our health and well-being as we grow older. Healthy aging isn't about trying to stop the clock, it's about making choices that help us stay active, connected, independent, and engaged in the things that get us up in the morning.

Make choices that support physical health, mental well-being, and your sense of purpose each and every day.

Start by shifting your mindset and habits. Rather than focusing on a number, think about the time in life when you felt happiest and most energetic. What habits or activities brought you joy? Look for ways to bring those experiences into the present. Standing tall and practicing good posture can promote confidence and vitality. And don't underestimate the power of a positive outlook. Spending less time complaining, limiting negative environments, and making time to smile can support emotional well-being.

Next, make walking part of your daily routine. Getting outside provides an opportunity to move, enjoy fresh air, and connect with neighbors. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Support that activity with a



colorful, plant-based diet and focusing on fiber and protein.

Finally, keep the mind and social life active. Learn something new, take a class, try a creative hobby, and challenge your brain. Nurture positive relationships and look for opportunities to connect with others. Healthy aging also means staying current with preventive care and recommended screenings.

This month, focus on a daily habit that brings more movement, nourishment, connection, or joy into your life.

**Wake up to better health with
Wellness Wake Up Call!**
**Practical tips and motivation to help you take
small steps toward a healthier, happier life.**

**Check out their latest episode online at
go.illinois.edu/WellnessWakeup145**

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.
If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, contact (309) 756-9978.

Food & Nutrition Programs



MIND Diet, Tues., Sept 8, 10:30 a.m. Illinois Extension, Milan

Discover how the MIND diet—a blend of the Mediterranean and DASH diets—supports cognitive health and reduces the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. In this program led by Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension food and nutrition educator, you’ll learn which foods support brain health, how to structure balanced meals, and strategies for incorporating brain-healthy foods into everyday life

Register online at go.illinois.edu/MindDiet



Honey and Health | Mon. Sept 21, 5 - 6 p.m.

Coal Valley Public Library

Honey is a true superfood with unique characteristics and nutritional value. There are over 300 varieties of honey, each with unique flavor, color, and aroma profiles. The popularity of honey has continued to grow over the past decade due, in part, to its nutritional and therapeutic uses. Illinois Extension Food and Nutrition Educator Kristin Bogdonas will show you how to maximize honey in the kitchen and enjoy taste tests of common and rare varieties.

Sign up with Kaylee Floyd at the Coal Valley library, 309-799-3047.



Honey and Health | Tues. Sept 22, 2 - 3 p.m.

Kewanee Public Library

Honey is a true superfood with unique characteristics and nutritional value. There are over 300 varieties of honey, each with unique flavor, color, and aroma profiles. The popularity of honey has continued to grow over the past decade due, in part, to its nutritional and therapeutic uses. Illinois Extension Food and Nutrition Educator Kristin Bogdonas will show you how to maximize honey in the kitchen and enjoy taste tests of common and rare varieties.

Sign up with Susan Carlson at the Kewanee library, 309-852-4505



Get gardening answers from
a trusted source

Horticulture Helpline

Illinois Extension Master Gardeners
are available in person

Wednesdays, 9 a.m. - Noon.

Call 309-756-9978 or stop by

Extension in Milan

321 2nd Avenue West, Milan, IL

Submit your questions **anytime** online at go.illinois.edu/AskTheMasterGardener
or call to leave a message at **217-300-0240**

Rainscaping Education Program

Wed. Sept 23, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Gathering

335 5th Avenue , Moline IL 61265

Join horticulture educator Emily Swihart for the Rainscaping Education Program! This program will provide practical, research-based methods to manage rainwater at home or in small public spaces. *Lunch provided*

What is rainscaping?

Rainscaping uses landscape practices to manage rainwater where it falls- slowing it down and helping it soak into the ground. This reduces runoff, filters pollutants, and protects local lakes, rivers, and streams.

Sign up at: go.illinois.edu/Rainscaping2026



September 28, 10 a.m. - noon | Plants and Pollinators: A Perfect Pair

Join Horticulture Educator Emily Swihart for an educational program that explores the perfect pairing of plants and pollinators. The program will highlight how their interactions help sustain ecosystems, many of which directly benefit people. Bring your curiosity and leave with practical tips and tricks that will help you create a beautiful, pollinator-friendly garden. Following the discussion, participants will design and decorate a custom photo frame using an assortment of pressed and dried flowers. Learn basic tips for working with dried botanical materials while creating a beautiful keepsake to showcase a favorite photograph. All materials are provided, and no prior crafting experience is necessary. The cost is \$15 and includes all supplies.

Register at
go.illinois.edu/PlantsandPollinators2026



September 15, 1:30 p.m. | Bringing the Outside In: Overwintering Tender Perennial Plants

Four Seasons Gardening Webinar Series

Explore annuals that are actually perennials with a little extra care.

Zonal geraniums, black and blue salvia, coleus, and lemon grass are just a few of the dozens of plant varieties northern gardeners often treat as annuals. But these plants have a secret. They are tender perennials that can be overwintered indoors to enjoy again next year. Attendees will walk away from the discussion with options and strategies for overwintering and propagating tender perennial plants.

Presenter: Nancy Kuhajda, horticulture educator, Illinois Extension

Register at go.illinois.edu/FourSeasons.



Poverty Simulation

Sat, Sept 26 • 9-11:30 a.m.

Rock Island Bible Church

Address: 710 23rd St, Rock Island IL 61201

Take Part in This Life-Changing Experience!

The experience offers a brief but powerful look at the daily pressures faced by families living in poverty.

During this simulation, you will take on the role of a low-income family member trying to get through four simulated weeks on a tight budget. In each 15-minute session, participants must

secure food, housing, transportation, childcare, and employment while navigating community agencies and unexpected obstacles.

Event Organizers:

- Rock Island Bible Church - EveryChild
- Moline Public Library - University of Illinois Extension

Register for this FREE poverty simulation by Sept 18 at go.illinois.edu/PovertySimRI



Photo by Jessica Grissom

Experience the Prairie at Sunset

Tuesday, September 15 at 5:30 p.m.

Step into the beauty of an Illinois prairie with University of Illinois Extension and the Mercer County Master Gardeners. Enjoy an open hay rack ride across Prairie Hills Farm as owner Bill Joseph highlights native plants, land history, and the importance of prairie conservation.

Address: Prairie Hills Farm,
1121 160th St., Aledo, IL



Cost: \$10 person.

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/PrairieTourAledo

Space is limited, and each attendee must register.

Rain Date: Thursday, Sept. 17.