



Henry/Starbuck Counties

358 Front St. Galva, IL
(309) 932-3447
Tues, Wed, Thur. 8 am - 4 pm

Mercer County

910 13th St. Viola, IL
309-513-3100
Tues, Wed, Thur. 8 am - 4 pm

Rock Island County

321 W 2nd Ave. Milan, IL
(309) 756-9978
Mon-Fri. 8 am - 4 pm

Visit our website: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs

Reducing Food Waste at Home: A Vital Step Toward Environmental Sustainability

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator

This April, as we dive into Food Waste Prevention Week (April 1-7), let's shine a light on the critical issue of food waste and explore practical ways to address it at home and when dining out.

The scale of food waste is staggering.



The hidden costs extend beyond the mere scraps tossed away. Each piece of discarded food represents wasted energy, resources, water, and labor invested in its production and transportation.

For instance, ponder the amount of water flushed away with discarded food—it can be quantified in shower minutes. A pound of bananas tossed into the trash equates to a 42-minute shower, while a pound of ground beef wastage clocks in at over 6 hours of continuous water flow!



Moreover, this waste is also draining household finances by an average of **\$1500 annually**.



Economically burdensome as it may be, food waste also significantly contributes to our carbon footprint. If quantified as a country, the combined greenhouse gas emissions from food loss and waste would rank third globally, following only China and the U.S.

To combat this crisis, collective action is imperative. Every individual can contribute to the national goal of slashing food waste by 50% by 2030. Simple adjustments in food planning, preparation, and storage can yield substantial reductions in waste, saving money and conserving the environment.



Here are some practical tips to minimize food waste at home:

- 1. Inventory Check:** Before heading to the grocery store, take stock of your kitchen inventory to avoid unnecessary purchases. Make a shopping list based on your weekly meal plan to curb impulse buys.
- 2. Prioritize Fresh Ingredients:** Utilize perishable items promptly, especially fruits and vegetables, which account for nearly half of all wasted food. Proper storage can also extend their shelf life.
- 3. Mindful Dining Out:** When dining out, consider sharing meals or taking leftovers home to reduce waste.

With the rise in home cooking, vigilance in monitoring food waste is paramount. Even small reductions can have a significant impact over time. Consider tracking your household's waste habits using online tools or creating your own food waste tracker.

Food waste is the predominant material in US landfills which means we all have a role to play. By adopting mindful practices, we can curb waste, one meal at a time. This Earth Month, let's take the challenge to implement these techniques and spread awareness among our circles.

Spring Series of Home Horticulture

University of Illinois Extension invites the community to participate in Spring Series 24, featuring a lineup of engaging topics presented by local horticulture and environmental experts. The series offers attendees the opportunity to delve into various subjects ranging from the importance of birds of prey to the latest trends in gardening.

The cost is \$10/night, \$25/series.

Register at: go.illinois.edu/SpringSeries24



Monday, April 8, 6 - 8 PM **Birds of Prey**

Jill Schmidt Naturalist, Clinton County Conservation

Discover the awe-inspiring world of birds of prey, including their remarkable hunting abilities and diverse species found in Iowa. Witness the majesty of two live raptors up close!

Is Your Tree Normal? Unveiling Challenges for Effective Tree Care

Scott Carlson, Lead Instructor for Iowa Arborist Consulting

Explore common challenges faced by trees due to improper care and learn essential practices for maintaining tree health and longevity.



Monday, April 15, 6 - 8 PM **Oh Baby, Watch Me Grow!**

Cindy Descamps, owner of Seeds and Stems Homegrown

Gain insights into professional plant propagation methods used in spring nurseries and discover tips for caring for your newly propagated plants.

Rusty Patched Bumblebee: Quad Cities Contributions to Recovery

Lauren Larson, Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service

Learn about the local efforts to conserve the federally endangered rusty patched bumblebee and explore recent findings from studies conducted in our region.



Monday, April 22, 6 - 8 PM **Homegrown Bouquets: Growing a Cut Flower Garden**

Emily Swihart, horticulture educator, Illinois Extension

Experience the joy of cultivating your own cut flower garden with expert guidance on selecting, planting, and caring for flowers that create stunning bouquets.

New Plants: Trying Them, Introducing Them, and Mixing with Our Favorites

Shanna Schneiter, greenhouse owner, and grower

Discover the latest plant selections for the upcoming season and learn how to incorporate them into your landscape for added beauty and diversity.

Illinois Extension Launches Housing Study in Henry, Mercer, and Stark Counties

Residents in these three counties are asked to provide their input by filling out the survey.

go.illinois.edu/HousingSurvey

University of Illinois Extension has initiated a housing study to address critical issues in Henry, Mercer, and Stark Counties, recognizing the evolving challenges faced by rural communities. Led by Russell Medley, the study aims to gather insights on housing accessibility, affordability, and quality to inform policymaking and sustainable development.

Residents are encouraged to participate by filling out a survey available at local Extension offices or online at go.illinois.edu/HousingSurvey. Deadline for participation is April 15. For more information, contact Russell Medley at (309) 756-9978 or rmedley@illinois.edu.





MANAGING INVASIVES: EIGHT REPLACEMENTS FOR THE CALLERY PEAR | APRIL 23

Now considered an invasive species, the Callery pear is a widely used ornamental flowering tree with negative effects on native ecosystems. Until policies are amended and put in place to regulate the Callery pear, also called Bradford pear, this tree continues to be commonly produced and planted. Discover the numerous Illinois native species that are suitable alternatives or replacements for the Callery pear in the landscape.

Register at go.illinois.edu/CalleryPear



HOW SOON IS TOO SOON FOR SOLIDS APRIL 4 | NOON

Start babies on solid foods at the right time. Nearly 40% of babies start solid foods too early. Starting solid foods too early or too late can impact your baby's health and growth. Learn when to introduce foods to babies and which foods to start with.

Register at go.illinois.edu/NurturingFoundations

GUIDING LITTLE PALATES TO HEALTHY EATING APRIL 18 | NOON

Babies and toddlers can be picky, but a nutritious diet impacts their health and development and can shape their eating habits for the future. Explore the nutrition guidelines for babies and toddlers and practical tips for dealing with picky eaters.

Register at go.illinois.edu/NurturingFoundations



UNDERSTANDING CREDIT | MONEY BASICS APRIL 10, 11 AM

Learn how credit reports can help you reach your financial goals. What is credit, and why is it so important to have good credit? Let's discuss credit reports and credit scores together!

Register at go.illinois.edu/MoneyBasics2024.



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR MANAGING INVASIVE PLANTS IN THE SPRING | APRIL 11, 1 PM

Non-native invasive plants can cause a lot of damage in backyards and wild spaces across Illinois and managing them is a year-long endeavor. Explore invasive plant phenology, identification, the most effective timing for management, and best practices for springtime control.

Register at go.illinois.edu/invasiveplantsinspring



EMBRACING AI: ASSISTANCE FOR ENHANCED LIVING | APRIL 17, NOON

Discover the potential of AI assistants in promoting independence and combating loneliness for older adults in their own homes, offering companionship, and simplifying daily tasks.

Register at go.illinois.edu/SpringtimeScience2024.

Socioeconomic Differences & Poverty Simulation Experience

A Transformative Journey into the Realities of Poverty.

April 23, 8 am - Noon,

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rock Island, IL

Experience what it's like to live in poverty. Take part in this life-changing experience. University of Illinois Extension, St Paul Lutheran Church, EveryChild, Moline Public Library, and Opportunities Quad Cities are hosting a Poverty Simulation.



During this event, you'll step into the shoes of a low-income family member and experience the stark realities of living on a limited budget at our upcoming Poverty Simulation. Poverty is not a game, and understanding its impact requires more than just empathy—it demands a firsthand encounter. Whether you're working with clients from diverse backgrounds or simply seeking to broaden your perspective, this life-changing experience offers a unique opportunity to delve into the daily struggles faced by those living in poverty. Please join us!

There is no cost to attend, but advance registration is required at go.illinois.edu/PovertySimulation2024

Event Schedule:

- 8:30 Poverty Simulation: Live through four weeks (four 15-minute sessions) in the role of a low-income family member living on a limited budget where you must provide for your family- ensuring that basic necessities are met while maintaining your home.
- 10:30 am SocioEconomic Differences Presentation: People who live in poverty make decisions based on their culture - what they value and rules they live by. Learn to better understand their reality vs. yours.

Upcoming 4-H Special Interest clubs

Check out these great special interest club opportunities!
Open to all youth (non-members can join and enroll too!)

Here's what's coming up:

Livestock Fitting Clinic Sat April 13

Are you a youth eager to step into the world of livestock showing? Look no further! Sherrard FFA & 4-H are here to help!

Join us at the Mercer County Fairgrounds, Aledo, IL.
Register at go.illinois.edu/LivestockFittingClinic

Mercer County 4-H Fishing Club April 20-May 25

Cast off with us! Spend Saturdays fishing at local ponds.
Register at 4h.zsuite.org/event-registrations/28342

4-H Goat Club, Select Sundays, May 5-July 14

Learn all about goats with lease options available!
Then, show off your skills at your county 4-H goat show.
Club meets at the Rock Island County Fairgrounds, East Moline.
Register by April 29 go.illinois.edu/GoatClub

Delicious way you can support 4-H!



**Rock Island County
Extension & 4-H Foundation's
4-H Pork Chop Dinner
Drive-thru Fundraiser**

Thurs, April 25 | 4 - 6 pm
Illinois Extension, 321 W 2nd Ave, Milan, IL



Stop by our **Drive-thru** event at the **IL Extension office in Milan** to pick up a delicious meal to go and **support Rock Island 4-H and Extension programs!** **Indoor seating available in our conference rooms.** Just park, come inside and place your order.

Prices: Pork Chop Meal \$10, Hot Dog Meal, \$5
Meals include: grilled pork chop sandwich, or hot dog, potato chips, baked beans, applesauce, dessert.

Take Home a Pie! We will have an assortment of pies made by our 4-H members and volunteers you can purchase at the drive through.

Get all details at: go.illinois.edu/4HPorkChopFundraiser