

## Extension Connections Newsletter

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### Happy Labor Day!

In honor of the holiday, our offices will be closed on Mon. Sept 1.

## Healthy Aging Month: Nutrients of Need as We Age

*Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator*

September is Healthy Aging Month, a great time to reflect on how our nutritional needs evolve over time. As we age, our bodies absorb and process nutrients differently, and certain vitamins and minerals become especially important for maintaining health and vitality. While a balanced diet is the best source of nutrients, older adults may benefit from supplements—especially if they have dietary restrictions, chronic conditions, or limited sun exposure.

Here are five key nutrients to pay special attention to:

### 1. Vitamin D

- **What:** Supports calcium absorption, bone health, and immune function.
- **Why:** Skin produces less vitamin D with age; less time outdoors.
- **Amount:** 600–800 IU/day; some may need more based on blood levels.
- **Sources:** Sunshine, fortified dairy and plant milks, eggs, salmon, mushrooms.

### 2. Calcium

**What:** Maintains bone strength and helps prevent osteoporosis.

**Why:** Absorption decreases with age.

**Amount?** Women 51+ and men 70+ need 1,200 mg/day.

**Sources:** Fortified milk and plant milks, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, kale, chia seeds.

### 3. Vitamin B12

**What:** Supports nerve health and brain function.

**Why:** Absorption declines due to reduced stomach acid.

**Amount?** 2.4 mcg/day; may need supplements or fortified foods.

**Sources:** Fortified cereals and milks, eggs, cheese, salmon, trout.



### 4. Magnesium

**What:** Supports muscle, nerve, and heart function.

**Why:** Often low due to decreased intake or absorption.

**Amount?** ~320 mg/day for women, ~420 mg/day for men.

**Sources:** Chia seeds, flaxseeds, leafy greens, lentils, almonds.

### 5. Iron (Maybe)

Note: Most older adults do not need extra iron unless they have a diagnosed deficiency. Always consult a healthcare provider.

### Other Nutrients to Consider

- **Fiber** (e.g., psyllium) for digestion
- **Omega-3s** (DHA/EPA) for heart and brain health
- **Potassium** for blood pressure support (with medical guidance)

**Reminder:** Always talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian before starting any new supplement to avoid interactions or over-supplementation.

In honor of Healthy Aging Month, take a moment to evaluate your meals and snacks this week. Are you getting the nutrients your body needs to thrive as you age?

# Horticulture Event in Aledo & Pesticide Disposal

## Fall Harvest of Horticulture:

Thursday, September 18 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Aledo Fire Station

Gardeners, mark your calendars! Join our Mercer County Master Gardeners for an inspiring evening of learning and connection at the Fall Harvest of Horticulture! Enjoy two engaging presentations from University of Illinois Extension horticulture educators:



### Native Pollinators

*Presented by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle*

Pollination isn't just for honey bees! Learn about the many native insects that play essential roles in pollination and how to create a landscape that welcomes and supports them.



### Behind the Bloom: Seasonal Garden Tasks for Year-Round Success

*Presented by Emily Swihart*

Great gardens don't just happen—they're supported by smart, timely tasks all year long. Emily will walk you through seasonal care tips that answer common landscape questions like when to plant trees, repot houseplants, and fertilize lawns.

This event offers expert advice, practical takeaways, and the chance to connect with fellow garden lovers. Cost is \$10. Appetizers will be served.

**Don't miss this fun and informative evening!**

Register at [go.illinois.edu/FallHarvestHort](https://go.illinois.edu/FallHarvestHort) or call Illinois Extension at (309) 756-9978.



## Dispose of Old Pesticides Safely

Fall is the perfect time to clean out your chemical storage area and safely dispose of old or unwanted pesticides. The Illinois EPA has announced its one-day Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection schedule for this fall. F

### Local Collection Event

- October 11 | Rock Island County Fairgrounds, 4200 Archer Drive, East Moline, IL
- Sponsored by: Rock Island County Waste Management Agency Info: 309-788-8925
- Pre-registration required, sign up at: [signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/453192056015/false#/invitation](https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/453192056015/false#/invitation)
- Or visit [epa.illinois.gov](https://epa.illinois.gov)

### Disposal Options

**Use them up:** Apply to labeled-use sites (even without pests), unless banned (e.g., chlordane, 2,4,5-T).

**Give them away:** Neighbors may want them—just don't sell unless it's legal and properly labeled.

**Take them to a collection event:** HHW events accept many household pesticides.

### Special Collections

**Agricultural pesticides:** Contact IL Dept. of Agriculture at (217) 785-2427.

**Structural pesticides:** Contact IL Dept. of Public Health at (217) 782-4674.

### Transport Tips

Pack items in disposable boxes.

Keep chemicals secure and separate.

Transport in your trunk, away from passengers.



# Join us for these Webinars & Classes

## Honey and Health, Sept 11, 2 - 3 pm 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. Join Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator, to learn how to maximize honey in the kitchen and enjoy taste tests of common and rare varieties.

**Cost: \$5 Registration required. Contact Susan Carlson at the Kewanee Public Library by calling 309-852-4505**

## Canning with Confidence, Sept. 18, 2 pm Bradford Library



Learn the essentials of home canning and gain the confidence to preserve your favorite foods safely! Join Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator, for this class to learn proper techniques for using a water bath canner, including electric models, as well as steam canners and pressure canners. Participants will receive step-by-step instructions, tested recipes, helpful resources, and video demonstrations of these canners in action.

**Free to attend, registration required. Contact Sarah Boehm at the Bradford Library by calling 309-897-8400**

## Be a Seed Shaker: Which are Worth Saving? Tues., Sept 30, 1:30 pm



Fall is a time to enjoy nature and learn when to harvest seeds for next season's bounty or blooms. Learn how to harvest those zinnia seeds after the butterflies have fluttered away for the season. Get tips and build excitement for the next growing season before this one even ends.

*Presenters: Chris Lueking and Kim Rohling, Illinois Extension horticulture educators*

**Register at [go.illinois.edu/fourseasonsgardening](https://go.illinois.edu/fourseasonsgardening)**

## Wellness in Nature Webinar Thurs Sept. 11, 2 PM



Spending time in nature can benefit mental and physical well-being. From creating a sensory experience while growing vegetables and fruits in a garden, to hiking and exploring a forest preserve, even a short amount of time spent in nature can improve overall health. Explore the health benefits of being present in nature and discover simple activities to foster experiences in the natural world. Continuing education units, or CEUs, are available.

*Presenters: Cheri Burcham and Tessa Hobbs-Curley, Illinois Extension family life educators.*

**Register at [go.illinois.edu/WellnessNature](https://go.illinois.edu/WellnessNature)**

## Gardening in the Air! Virtual Gardening Symposium Sat. October 18 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Online via Zoom

Join horticulture educators and experts from Illinois Extension and Iowa State University Extension for a free, interactive online gardening event featuring expert-led sessions on timely topics.

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Choose one session per time block:

### 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Session:

#### **Everlasting Flowers – Drying and Pressing Techniques**

*Christina Lueking, University of Illinois Extension*

Learn which flowers dry best from a backyard garden, when to harvest, and how to press flowers for value-added products for friends and family.

#### **Good Bugs We Love to Hate**

*Ken Johnson, University of Illinois Extension*

Discover the surprising benefits of misunderstood insects like wasps, flies, and even cockroaches. Learn about the important roles these insects play in maintaining a healthy landscape.

#### **Value of Turf and Sports Turf Maintenance**

*Adam Thoms, Iowa State University*

Explore turfgrass care for athletic fields vs. home lawns, including safety and maintenance tips. Get tips and tricks on how athletic field managers can hide issues that you may never know about.

### 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Session:

#### **Grasses and Sedges in the Home Landscape**

*Erin Garrett, University of Illinois Extension*

Come learn which native grasses and sedges work best for formal landscape beds and more naturalized settings. Alternatives for non-natives and invasives currently planted ornamentally will also be discussed.

#### **Bulbs and Plant Storage Structures**

*Sarah Rummery, Reiman Gardens*

Dive into the fascinating world of bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes. Learn how they function, how they differ, and why they matter in both ornamental and edible gardening.

#### **Gardening in a Changing World**

*David McKinney, Iowa Arboretum and Gardens*

Plan for your garden's future with strategies for climate adaptation, water management, and plant selection.



### 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Session:

#### **Growing Under Lights**

*Aaron Steil, Iowa State University*

Learn how to successfully grow plants indoors using supplemental lighting. Get tips for selecting the best light source, how lights can be used most effectively, and how light is used by plants.

#### **Pet-Friendly Landscaping**

*Jamie Viebach, University of Illinois Extension*

Design safe, functional, and beautiful outdoor spaces for pets and people. Explore the principles of pet-friendly landscaping, including non-toxic plant choices, safer hardscaping, and creative enrichment features.

#### **Midwest Apple History and Orchard Management**

*Olivia Meyer, Iowa State University*

Explore the heritage and care of Midwestern apple orchards, from pruning to weed management. Participants will gain both context for the region's apple heritage and take-home insights for effective, modern orchard management.

#### **Registration and Requirements:**

Participants must have internet access and a valid email address to receive Zoom links.

Registration is free, donations are appreciated.

Sign up by Oct 15 at  
[go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAir](https://go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAir)

For more information, contact  
University of Illinois Extension  
321 W 2nd Ave. Milan, IL 61264  
(309) 756-9978 | [extension.illinois.edu](https://extension.illinois.edu)





# Fall Gardening Chores & Horticulture Helpline

## Late Summer Gardening To-Dos

Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension horticulture educator  
(adapted from her Outsider Newsletter)

Late summer gardening may not have the glamour of spring planting, but it's a powerful time to set your landscape up for success. A little effort now means healthier plants, fewer weeds, and a more vibrant garden come spring.

Here are some key tasks to tackle in your landscape before fall fully sets in:

### Lawn Maintenance

While lawns get plenty of attention in summer, fall is the best time to rejuvenate tired turf.

- Core aeration helps break through thatch and compacted soil, improving air and water flow to the roots.
- Reseeding bare or thin areas is ideal now—warm soil and cool air create perfect conditions for cool-season grasses.
- Use high-quality seed, follow recommended rates, and keep soil moist for successful germination.

### Keep Weeding

Annual weeds are working hard to produce seeds—don't let them!

- Removing seed heads now means fewer weeds next year.
- Be mindful: some seed heads feed songbirds in winter, so consider leaving a few for wildlife.
- Fall is also ideal for tackling perennial weeds like dandelions and creeping Charlie.

Systemic herbicides are more effective now as plants move nutrients to their roots. Always follow label instructions carefully.



### Order and Plant Spring Bulbs

Late September through mid-October is prime time to plant bulbs like crocus, daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths. These bulbs need a chilling period to bloom, which Midwest winters naturally provide.

**Tip:** Plant in clusters or masses for the most striking spring displays.

### Divide Perennials

If your favorite perennials are looking tired, it might be time to divide them.

Fall is perfect for dividing plants like peonies, iris, hostas, and daylilies.

- Choose a cool, cloudy day.
- Dig up the plant, remove excess soil, and divide using hands, a knife, or a garden fork.
- Keep divisions moist and shaded until replanting.

### Refresh Mulch Around Prized Plants

Mulch applied in spring has done its job—but it may need a refresh.

- Reapply natural mulch (wood chips, straw, leaf litter) to protect roots from winter temperature swings and conserve moisture.
- Aim for a total depth of about four inches.
- Wait until plants are dormant before mulching to avoid disrupting their natural cycle.

**Horticulture Helpline | Wednesdays, 9 am - noon**  
**(309) 756-9978 | Illinois Extension, Milan, IL**

### Have a Plant Question? Ask the Master Gardeners!

Our Horticulture Helpline is open every Wednesday from 9 am to Noon.

Call us at (309) 756-9978 or stop by the Extension office at 321 W 2nd Ave in Milan to speak with a Master Gardener in person.

**You can also get answers anytime by filling out our online form at [go.illinois.edu/askthemastergardener](https://go.illinois.edu/askthemastergardener).**

***We're here to help with your gardening questions!***



# COULD YOU PICTURE YOURSELF IN 4-H?



## WHO CAN JOIN 4-H?

4-H is the place for all Illinois kids and teens ages 5-18 where you belong and are part of a community!

## WHAT IS 4-H?

Illinois 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois, where you “learn by doing” with fun, hands-on activities that teach skills you can use now and in the future!

## WHEN DO CLUBS MEET?

Most clubs meet once a month. 4-H members help to run the meetings, so you'll get practice learning parliamentary procedure, practicing public-speaking, decision-making, teamwork, and more! There are also other 4-H experiences like workshops, camps, special interest clubs and more!

## WHY JOIN 4-H?

In 4-H, you learn about what interests you! 4-H helps youth build awareness of careers and skills needed to excel in those careers. Areas you could explore include: Aerospace, Career Readiness, Creative Writing, Environment, Plants & Soils, Sportfishing, Interior Design, Photography, e-Sports, Theater Arts, Veterinary Science and 150 more!

## INTERESTED IN JOINING?

Fill out our New Member Interest Form @ [go.illinois.edu/join4-Hhms](https://go.illinois.edu/join4-Hhms) and we will help you find the 4-H group that's just right for you.

## VISIT YOUR COUNTY'S 4-H PAGE

**Henry County:** [extension.illinois.edu/hms/henry-county-4-h](https://extension.illinois.edu/hms/henry-county-4-h)

**Mercer County:** [extension.illinois.edu/hms/4-h-mercercounty](https://extension.illinois.edu/hms/4-h-mercercounty)

**Rock Island County:** [extension.illinois.edu/hms/rock-island-county-4-h](https://extension.illinois.edu/hms/rock-island-county-4-h)

**Stark County 4-H:** [extension.illinois.edu/hms/stark-county-4-h](https://extension.illinois.edu/hms/stark-county-4-h)

### Questions? Contact 4-H staff at University of Illinois Extension

Rock Island County: 321 W 2nd Ave Milan, IL (309) 756-9978

Mercer County: 910 13th St. Viola, IL (309) 513-3100

Henry/Stark Counties: 358 Front St. Galva, IL (309) 932-3447



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## Tips for Restarting Good Habits After a Summer Schedule

As the summer schedule winds down, it's a great time to reset and ease back into a regular work routine. Start by gradually reestablishing consistent sleep and wake times. Set up a clean, organized workspace to stay focused and productive.

Use SMART goals:

- **Specific:** What's the goal?
- **Measurable:** How will progress be tracked?
- **Achievable:** Is the goal realistic?
- **Relevant:** Does it align with the priorities?
- **Timely:** What's the deadline?

Embrace a growth mindset by viewing challenges as chances to improve. Prioritize health with quality sleep, nutritious meals, movement, and stress management. If feeling overwhelmed, don't hesitate to seek help.



## September is Food Safety Month

Use a food thermometer to ensure food is cooked thoroughly.

Safe minimum internal temperatures:

- 140 F: Reheating fully cooked ham
- 145 F: Beef, pork, veal, lamb, fish, shellfish, fresh or smoked uncooked ham
- 160 F: Ground beef, pork, veal, lamb, and egg dishes
- 165 F: Casseroles, poultry, stuffing, leftovers

Source: USDA, 2025

## Hydration: What to Drink and When

The human body is about 60% water. Staying hydrated is important, especially during sports and exercise, but what is the best drink for hydration? Here are some common drinks and when it is advisable or not to drink them:

- **Sports drinks:** Many of these drinks have lots of added sugar, and many now contain caffeine, which could cause the blood sugar to spike. These drinks can help maintain hydration levels during lengthy exercise like long-distance running or cycling, but are not recommended for normal hydration needs.
- **Water and flavored water:** Water is always great when suffering from any level of dehydration. If dehydration is severe, water with electrolytes will also be needed.
- **Juice:** If drinking juice, try not to drink more than 8 ounces daily and drink 100% fruit juice. It can help with hydration, but may not be the best choice since it is high in carbohydrates.
- **Milk:** Milk can be a good choice since it's about 87% water. It's also a natural source of electrolytes, carbs, and high-quality protein. Some dairy-free alternatives can also be good sources of electrolytes, so check the label.
- **Sugar-sweetened beverages,** like lemonade, punch, soda: Consuming too much sugar when dehydrated can increase urination, which worsens dehydration. If something sweet is wanted, try no-sugar varieties, or add fresh fruits and herbs to water.



Check out this blog for a list of financial tasks for the fall:  
[go.illinois.edu/financial-fall-do](https://go.illinois.edu/financial-fall-do).