

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

Website: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs | Email: uie-hmrs@illinois.edu

Breathe Easier This October: 7 Steps to Improve Your Indoor Air Quality

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator

October is Healthy Lung Month, a timely reminder to prioritize lung health and early detection. With most people spending nearly 90% of their time indoors, the air inside our homes plays a critical role in overall well-being.

Children, older adults, and individuals with asthma or heart disease are especially vulnerable to poor indoor air quality. Pollutants can trigger both short-term symptoms—like headaches and skin irritation—and long-term conditions such as emphysema and even cancer.

7 Steps to Cleaner Indoor Air

1. Dust and vacuum weekly—more often if you have pets, kids, or allergies.
2. Open windows for 10 minutes daily to flush out indoor pollutants.
3. Test for radon every two years, even if you have a mitigation system.
4. Use furnace filters with a MERV-13 rating and replace them regularly.
5. Skip air fresheners. Choose unscented or low-VOC cleaning products.
6. Control moisture to prevent mold. Aim for 30–50% humidity and watch for condensation.
7. Prepare for wildfire smoke. Create a “clean room” with portable air cleaners or a DIY box fan filter.



Pumped for Pumpkins

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator

October is also National Pumpkin Month—a great time to celebrate this versatile fruit grown close to home. Illinois produces over 90% of the processed pumpkins in the U.S., with most grown within 90 miles of Peoria.

Fun Pumpkin Facts

- Pumpkins are 90% water and part of the cucurbit family.
- They range from under 1 lb to over 1,000 lbs.
- Vines can grow up to 30 feet and take 120 days to mature.
- Largest pumpkin pie: Over 350 lbs and 5 feet wide.
- Early pumpkin pie: Colonists baked pumpkins filled with milk, spices, and honey in hot ashes.

Nutritional Perks

Pumpkins are rich in beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A and supports immune health, vision, and may reduce cancer risk.

Easy Pumpkin Chili: Brown 1 lb ground beef with ½ cup chopped onion. Drain excess fat. Add 1 can pumpkin, 2 cups water, 1 can kidney beans, 1 pkg taco seasoning, and 1.5 tsp chili powder. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer 30 minutes. Top with cheese and sour cream if desired.



Pumpkin FAQs



Annual Fall Horticulture Online Symposium

Gardening in the Air! Virtual Gardening Symposium Sat. October 18 | 9:00 AM – 12:30 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.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

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

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



NATIONAL 4-H WEEK

October 5-11, 2025

**Visit 4-H at the Tractor Supply Grand Opening
Sat. October 4, 10 am - 4 pm, Moline, IL**



We're gearing up for National 4-H week with a booth at the **Grand Opening of the new Tractor Supply Store, 4555 16th St, Moline. Stop by on Sat Oct 4, between 10 am 4 pm to learn how you can join or volunteer.** Pick up a 4-H goodie bag, see 4-H projects, talk to 4-H members and staff! You can also enjoy food trucks, antique tractors, farmer's market vendors, and other activities that are part of the Grand Opening. We hope to see you there!

**Join 4-H Teen Teachers |
Kickoff Meeting Oct 14, 6 PM
Illinois Extension
321 W 2nd Ave., Milan, IL.**



Ready to grow as a leader, inspire others, and make a real difference in your community—all while making new friends?

Join the 4-H Teen Teachers Training Program.

Through monthly meetings, you'll:

- Build essential leadership and teaching skills
- Access opportunities to apply what you learn
- Strengthen your resume with meaningful experience.

Pizza will be served. Join us to learn more!

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/TeenTeacherKickoff



or call (309) 756-9978.

**Start your 4-H Adventure
with us today!**



EXPLORE PASSIONS, IGNITE POTENTIAL

4-H offers 150+ hands-on project areas to explore - from arts to robotics, cooking to forestry, interior design, to shooting sports, and more!



UNPLUG AND ENGAGE

4-H is a place youth and teens can unplug and engage in real-world activities.



MAKE NEW FRIENDSHIPS & CONNECTIONS



Everyone is welcome! Meet new friends, explore your passions, and build skills that will last a lifetime.



BECOME A HERO: VOLUNTEER

We need dedicated leaders to inspire youth. Lead a club or start one in your neighborhood. Share your talents as a 6-session Special Interest Club leader!

To volunteer, visit:

go.illinois.edu/4-HVolunteerHMRS



START YOUR 4-H ADVENTURE!

Discover endless possibilities with 4-H!

Connect at go.illinois.edu/4-Hlearnbydoing or call your county 4-H office.



Rock Island County 4-H 309-756-9978
Mercer County 4-H 309-513-3100
Henry/Stark Counties 4-H 309-932-3447

Join us for these Webinars & Classes

Honey and Health: Nature's Sweet Treat Lesson for Living | October 14, 2 pm



Honey is nature's perfect gift, produced from the nectar of flowers. There are 320 varieties of honey, which vary in color, odor, and flavor depending on local flowers. The popularity of honey has continued to grow over the past decade due in part to its nutritional and therapeutic uses. We will discuss the basics of honey and its nutritional and therapeutic uses and share delicious recipes to try at home.

Register at go.illinois.edu/HoneyHealthOct or call Extension at (309) 756-9978.

Uncovering the Winter Secrets of Whip-poor-wills | Oct 16, 1 PM



Often heard and rarely seen, the eastern whip-poor-will and its namesake nighttime call is an iconic Midwestern woodland bird. But like many other insect-eating birds, its numbers are declining. University of Illinois avian researchers are working to uncover the secrets of where this elusive bird goes and what it does when it leaves Illinois to overwinter in Florida, Central, and South America to better understand its full annual cycle.

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/whippoorwills or call Extension at (309) 756-9978.

Reclaiming Runaway Landscapes: Four Seasons Gardening | Oct 21, 1:30 PM



Take back control from an overgrown, chaotic landscape. Have a garden that's gone wild? Explore practical methods for taking back an overgrown, chaotic landscape and guidance on where to start when garden beds feel overwhelming.

The session covers the use of mulch, design strategies, and effective weeding tools and techniques. Finally, learn how to decide which plants need to go and which ones can be tolerated.

Presenter: Chris Enroth, horticulture educator

Register at go.illinois.edu/fourseasonsgardening or call Extension at (309) 756-9978.

Dementia Friends Webinar | Oct 9, 2 PM



Learn simple ways to better understand, support, and connect with people living with dementia.

Dementia Friends is a global movement with the goal of helping everyone in a community understand five key messages about dementia, how it affects people, and how we can make a difference in the lives of people living with it. People with dementia need to be understood and supported in their communities.

Continuing education units/CEUs, are available.
Presenters: Molly Hofer and Robin Ridgley, Illinois Extension educators.

Register at go.illinois.edu/DementiaFriends or call Extension at (309) 756-9978.

Plant Expert Programs at the Library | Oct 1, 16 & 30



Join Illinois Extension horticulture educator Emily Swihart for a fun and informative gardening series at your local library. These free, in-person workshops will help you grow deeper in your gardening knowledge. Class descriptions are on the registration page.

Wednesday, October 1 – Colona Library

- 10:00 AM – Flowers in the Home Garden
- 1:00 PM – Planting, Pruning, & Tree Care

Thursday, October 16 – East Moline Library

- 10:00 AM – Seed Starting 101
- 1:00 PM – Container Gardening Made Easy

Thursday, October 30 – Galva Senior Center in partnership with the Galva library

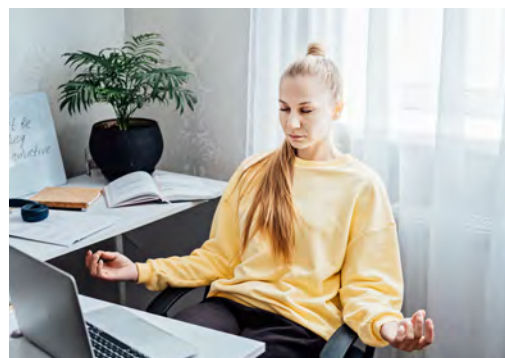
- 10:00 AM – Trees and Natural Disasters
- 1:00 PM – Container Gardening Made Easy

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/LibraryPlantsProgram or call the Extension office at (309) 756-9978.

Meditation Mornings | Mon Wed Friday, | 8 a.m. | October 1-17

Join Illinois Extension Educator Michele Crawford for Meditation Mornings. This free virtual series consists of fifteen-minute guided meditation sessions held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Oct 1 - 17. Learn tools and techniques to support your overall well-being. All are welcome; no prior meditation experience is necessary!

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/MorningMeditation



Mental Health First Aid for the Agriculture Community

Support your community, coworkers, and yourself. This training helps agricultural professionals recognize and respond to mental health and substance use challenges in adults.

Designed for those who live and work in agriculture, this course empowers you to:

- Spot signs of mental health struggles
- Offer meaningful support in times of crisis
- Break the silence around mental health
- Build a culture of care and connection
- Access local and national support networks

Available Dates:

October 13 | 9:00 AM–4:00 PM | Online

November 5–6 | 9:00 AM–Noon | Online

November 12 | 9:00 AM–4:00 PM | In-person, Carlyle, IL



Register here:

go.illinois.edu/AgMentalHealthFA
or call Extension at (309) 756-9978.

October is Vegetarian Awareness Month

Some people think vegetarians don't get enough protein because they don't eat meat, but that's not true.

Most people need about 0.36 grams of protein per pound of body weight. The **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** recommend 46 grams per day for women and 56 grams for men in cases of low physical activity. These amounts may vary depending on activity level, weight, and other factors.

There are many ways to get protein without including meat in the diet. Here are some great non-meat options:

- Greek yogurt: 23 g per cup
- Cottage cheese: 14 g per ½ cup
- Lentils: 9 g per ½ cup cooked
- Quinoa: 8 g per cup
- Beans: 6–10 g per ½ cup cooked
- Peas: 8 g per cup
- Peanut butter: 7 g per 2 tablespoons

Eating vegetarian can be healthy and full of protein.



MEDITERRANEAN HUMMUS DIP

Serving: 10-12

INGREDIENTS

- 17-ounce container of classic hummus
- 5.3-ounce container of plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup feta cheese, crumbled or cubed
- 1 teaspoon za'atar seasoning
- 1 chopped and diced tomato
- 1 English seedless cucumber, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- ¼ cup Kalamata olives cut in half
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- ½ teaspoon freshly cracked ground black pepper
- Dash of salt
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- Serve with: Carrot coins, celery, pepper strips, pita bread, or pita crisps

DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, whip hummus and Greek yogurt together.
2. Transfer the mixture to a serving dish or platter. Sprinkle with za'atar seasoning.
3. Add feta cheese in a layer over the hummus mixture.
4. Top with tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion, and olives.
5. Optional: Season with chopped herbs; choose fresh dill, basil, chives, or oregano.
6. Season with salt and ground pepper.
7. Drizzle with olive oil.

Nutrition information per serving:
81 calories; 5 g fat (1 g saturated); 119 mg sodium; 6 g total carbohydrate; 1 g dietary fiber; 6 g protein.