

VOL 2 ISSUE 4: OCTOBER 2025

ILLINOIS GREEN CONNECTIONS

Extension Master Volunteers Newsletter
Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell Counties



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Welcome to Fall

by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

We have officially moved from summer to fall. With cooler temperatures and shorter days, plants are starting to prepare for winter. We see these signs everywhere, from bright flowers turning into fluffy seedheads, green leaves changing to orange, red or yellow, to leaves falling. It is a beautiful time of year. We are seeing the fruitfulness of all of the summer work that was done. As we celebrate the harvest and work well done, we also prepare for gardens and wildlife to go through a season of rest as temperatures drop. Fall blooming flowers, seed heads and nutritious nuts and berries help both migrating and overwintering animals. Smart fall garden cleanup is one way we can provide habitat and resources for all types of garden wildlife friends.



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Add Fall Bloomers to the Garden

by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, ILRiverHort Blog

Adding flowers that bloom later in the season provides resources to pollinators into the fall. As they prepare for migration or overwintering, this is a critical season to ensure they have the required resources. Native plants are an excellent way to ensure that the blooms have the necessary pollen and nectar available at the right time.

[READ MORE](#)

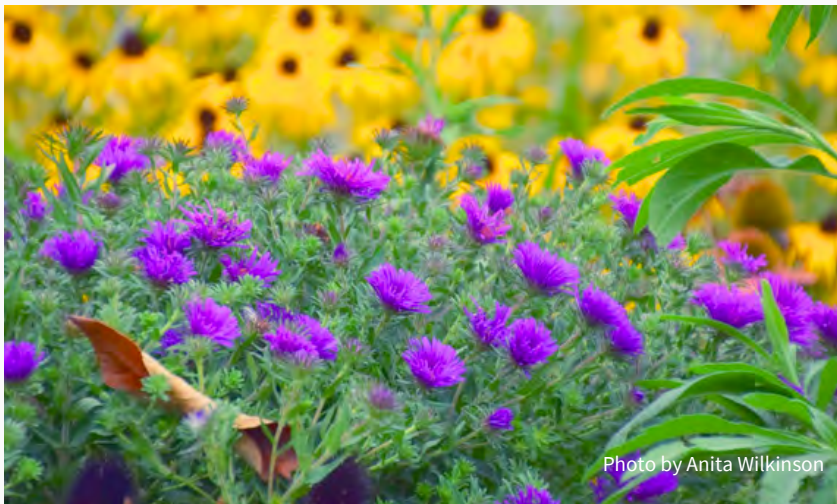


Photo by Anita Wilkinson

Poison Ivy: A friend to deer and bird, a foe to many humans

by Jennifer Bass, EMG, EMN, C@H, ILRiverHort Blog

I love my yard with all of the trees, the wilder areas behind my home, and the small prairie plot in the small sunny patch in the front of my house. But, I am frustrated by the amount of poison ivy that is in various places, not only in the woodland and along the woods, but in some beds of flowering plants. I spray and it comes back – seemingly twice as big!

[READ MORE](#)

“Having a variety of colors, flower shapes, and bloom time ensures that resources are available to many pollinator species.”

NICOLE FLOWERS-KIMMERLE





Fall Tree Planting

by Ella Maxwell, EMG, [ILRiverHort Blog](#)

Fall is an excellent time to plant a tree. But what tree to plant? A flowering ornamental tree, evergreen tree, shade tree, native tree, fruit tree, or the "right" tree for you, your space, and your environment.

[READ MORE](#)



How our Landscaping Project Became a New Garden Bed!

by [Cathy Endress, EMG, ILRiverhort Blog](#)

What started as a landscaping project, ended up becoming a blueberry patch! We installed solar panels several years ago in the back of our three-acre lot. Because we wanted to camouflage the steel structure, we decided to plant blueberry bushes to hide it. We could enjoy some blueberries and the leaves would turn red in the fall and eventually hide the solar panels. This was a WIN-WIN, right???

[READ MORE](#)

“Most of us don't have unlimited yard space, so only one tree may be chosen. So, right tree, right place is important.”

ELLA MAXWELL



Top 10 Pursuits to Fall in Love with Winter

by Jill Meints, EMN, ILRiverHort Blog.

Winter doesn't have to be a season of survival—it can be one of joy, rest, and wonder. Master Naturalist Jill Meints shares her top 10 ways to fall in love with winter, from cozy comforts to outdoor delights. Ready to see the season differently?

[READ MORE](#)



Fish hatcheries benefit everyone, anglers and non-anglers alike

by Kayleigh Smith, IDNR Outreach Specialist, Everyday Environment Blog

A public fish hatchery is a facility that raises fish from an early life stage, such as an egg or freshly hatched fry, to a larger size, with the intention of stocking them into a body of water where they could eventually be caught by a recreational angler or commercial fisher. In Illinois, public fish hatcheries are part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and their focus is on raising fish for recreational angling.

[READ MORE](#)

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Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Book Study Wrap-Up Discussion

November 13, 11 am on Zoom

November 17, 5:30 pm Illinois Extension office, 1505 Valle Vista Blvd, Pekin

Whether you've read just one book or tackled the entire Habitat Garden Book Study List, we would love to hear your thoughts during our end-of-year meetings. For more details about the book study list, please visit ILRiverHort. Either join us on a [Zoom meeting](#) on November 13 at 11 am or join us on November 17 at 5:30 PM at the Illinois Extension office, located at 1505 Valle Vista Blvd, for a time of discussion.

[ZOOM LINK](#)



Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Update Impacts by October 30

As we look to the end of 2025, we are eager to share about the work you have done throughout this year. Please update your impact and continuing education hours in Give Pulse by Thursday, October 30, 2025. We want to share about the positive impacts you have had on local communities in 2025, and this helps us to tell that story.

After that update, keep recording until December 15th. It would be helpful to have all 2025 impacts in by that date as we share that information with the state Illinois Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs at that time.

If you need assistance in recording impacts in Give Pulse, contact Karen Weigelt at kweigelt@illinois.edu or 309-685-3140.

Follow us on social media for more information and connect with other participants:

- [Illinois Extension Fulton, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell Book Study Facebook group](#)



Native Plant/Seed Share

October 30 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm

1505 Valle Vista Blvd

Native plant-lovers are invited to the Autumn Abundance: Native Seed and Plant Swap hosted by University of Illinois Extension. In addition to increasing your collection of native plants, guests will also network with current Conservation@Home members and Extension staff, learn more about the C@H program, and have the opportunity to begin the certification process for their own property.

Guests are invited to bring:

- Native seeds, labeled
- Plant starts, labeled with roots properly washed to avoid the spread of any undesirables
- A dish to share for a potluck meal

There's a mushroom costume contest to help showcase upcoming programs! Wear a mushroom print, t-shirt or full costume.



DETAILS



Volunteer Fair: Connect, Share, and Grow Together

On Friday, November 15, from 1 to 4 pm at Alpha Park Library, there will be a Volunteer Fair celebrating the work of local Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists.

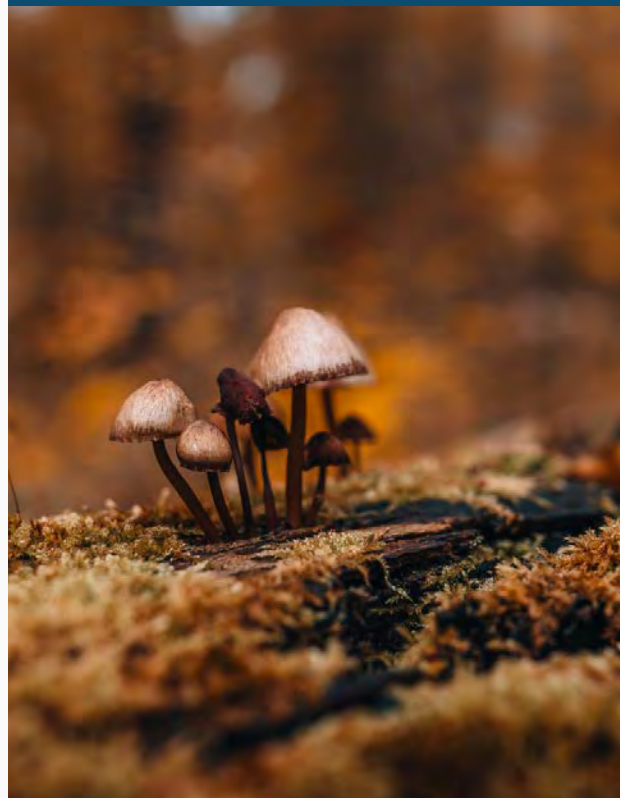
Current volunteers are invited to showcase their projects, share stories, and connect with new interns eager to learn from their experience. Whether you're involved in community gardens, habitat restoration, education, or outreach, your insights can help inspire the next wave of environmental stewards.

For new interns, this is your chance to explore the many ways you can get involved! Meet current volunteers, discover local opportunities, and find the projects that align with your passions. The Volunteer Fair is a space to ask questions, build connections, and begin your journey as a Master Gardener or Master Naturalist. We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact Ainsley Olsen ainsleyo@illinois.edu if you would like to share your project or if you plan to attend.

**The Volunteer Fair is
where inspiration
meets opportunity:
come share your story
or start your own.**

**Friday, November 15
1 to 4 pm
Alpha Park Library**





Horticulture and Naturalist Core Education Photo Albums

Both the Horticulture and Naturalist Core Education trainings were held in October in 2025. What a great time to learn and make connections. For a glimpse into the training, check out these photo albums.

[Horticulture Core Education Album](#)

[Naturalist Core Education Album](#)

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar

- **October 27, 5:30 pm Garden Share and Potluck**, 1505 Valle Vista Blvd, Pekin.
- **October 30, 5:30 to 7:30 pm** Native Plant/Seed Share, 1505 Valle Vista Blvd, Pekin.
- **November 10 at 1 pm:** Herbal Teas (Tisanes) and Tea Party, 15411 N IL 100 Hwy, Lewistown, IL
- **November 13 at 11 am:** 2025 Habitat Garden Book Study Zoom meeting. Details at facebook.com/ILRiverHort events. [Click here](#) for zoom meeting.
- **November 15 from 1 to 4 pm:** Volunteer Fair at Alpha Park Library 3527 S Airport Rd, Peoria
- **November 17 at 5:30 pm:** 2025 Habitat Garden Book Study In Person. 1505 Valle Vista Blvd, Pekin
- **November 19 at 1 pm:** Garden Share and Potluck, 4810 N. Sheridan Rd, Peoria
- **December 2,3,4 from 9 am to 4 pm.** Greater Peoria Farm Show. Volunteer to share information at the Master Volunteer table, Peoria Civic Center
- **December 9 at 5:30 pm:** Illinois Green Connections Event End of the Year Gathering. Peoria Zoo, 2320 N Prospect Rd, Peoria
- **March 14 from 8 am to 1 pm:** Gardeners' BIG Day, Cuba High School.

Details

Check online for more information about upcoming events

- [Illinois Extension FMPT Events](#)
- [U of I Extension ILRiverHort Facebook Page](#)





Volunteer Opportunities

- **Pekin Giving Garden:** [Julie Dantone](#)
- **Morton Giving Garden:** [Pam Scott](#), Monday & Thursday am.
- **Tazewell County Health Department Garden:** [Trudy Yazujian](#), Tuesday & Friday, 8 am - noon.
- **Canton Giving Garden:** [Gayle Blodgett](#)
- **4-H Learning Garden:** [May Bach](#), Tuesday & Thursday 9 - 11 am.
- **Holy Family Church's St. Fiacre Gardens:** [Bob Reading](#), Wednesday & Saturday, 9 am - noon.
- **Rt 150 Garden:** [Polly Wagner](#), Tuesday from 7 - 9 am.
- **Kim St John Butterfly Habitat:** [Randy Huber](#) and [Louise Bassett](#), Wednesday from 8:30 - 11:30 am.
- **ICC Demonstration Garden:** [Jennifer Bass](#), Tuesday 9 - 11:30 am.
- **Morton Public Library:** [Janine Donahue](#) and [Sarah Smith](#)
- **Jubilee Butterfly Garden:** [Patricia Melaik](#), Thursday 9 - noon.
- **St. Anne's Garden of Hope:** [Mike Brooks](#), Please sign up on our [website](#).
- **Peoria Academy's Vegetable Garden:** [Laura Hertz](#), Wednesday 9 - 11 am.
- **Peoria Zoo Pollinator Garden:** [May Bach](#), Tuesday &/or Wednesday am.
- **Friendship House:** [Kendra Belk](#)
- **Spring Creek Work Days:** [Mike McGraw](#), 2nd Wednesday of the month.
- **Elwood Work Days:** [Ed Coleman](#), 3rd Sunday & 3rd Wednesday of each month, 9 am - noon.
- **Donovan Park workday:** [David Pittman](#),
- **Rocky Glen Work Days:** [David Pittmann](#)
- **Gardening Helpline:** [Holly Teig](#)
- **Conservation@Home Evaluator:** [Ellen Denler](#) or [Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle](#)
- **Speaker's Bureau:** [Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle](#) and [Fran Stroemer](#)
- **Newsletters:** [Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle](#) and [Jennifer Bass](#)

Project Stoplight Video

[Peoria Zoo Pollinator Garden](#)

The pollinator garden at the Peoria Zoo was started in 2019 to demonstrate to the public that there are many ways to support pollinators in the homelandscape. From containers to raised beds to in ground garden spaces this lovely area of the zoo is providing habitat for all types of Illinois pollinators.

[WATCH](#)

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University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture | Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to attend, call 309-347-6614. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.

Work Days

Check with project lead about specific dates, work days can change due to conflicts and weather issues.



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Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle