

Winter-Spring Program Guide



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

Grow in your knowledge and skills with Illinois Extension!

Check out the programs, workshops, and events we have lined up for you:

8 Dimensions of Wellness | Wednesdays in January: Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 | 1–3 PM | Moline

Kick off the year with intention! Through interactive sessions led by local experts, you'll explore two dimensions each week: Physical & Spiritual; Environmental & Emotional; Intellectual & Vocational; and Social & Financial. Sessions includes a take-home self assessment tool, refreshments, and a wellness gift. Classes held at the Butterworth Education Center/Carriage House in Moline. go.illinois.edu/8Dimensions2026

Community Tree Care Webinar Series | Jan. 13–Feb. 17 | Fridays, 9–11 AM | Online

Learn from experts on pollinators, forest health, soils, pruning, climate impacts, and more. Six sessions provide practical insights for arborists, professionals, homeowners, and volunteers. go.illinois.edu/TreeCareSeries

Botanical Make & Take Series | Thurs. Jan 22, Feb 12, March 26, 1 - 3 PM | Milan

Hands-on monthly workshops with Horticulture Educator Emily Swhihart. Create floral arrangements, propagate houseplants, and start seeds—while taking home your projects. go.illinois.edu/Botanical

Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention | Mon & Wed, Feb. 2–Mar. 30 | 2–3 PM | Milan

Improve strength, flexibility, and balance with this 16-session, evidence-based program recognized by the CDC. Gentle movements support arthritis management and reduce fall risk. go.illinois.edu/TaiChiMilan

Lessons for Living Webinar Series | Feb 10, May 14, June 9 | 10 AM | Online

Free, one-hour online sessions designed to empower adults of all ages with practical, easy-to-understand guidance for living a fulfilling life. Topics include Feb: What's in my food: Decoding Chemicals and Safety, April; Gardening on a Budget, and May: Fur Real Companionship. go.illinois.edu/lessonsforliving2026

Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening | Sat, Feb. 21 | 8 AM–3 PM | Vibrant Arena, Moline

Spend a full day with Extension educators, Master Gardeners, and local experts exploring fresh ideas for your gardening projects and inspiration for environmental causes. Enjoy expert keynotes, breakout sessions offering practical advice from Extension educators, shop gardening vendors, and enjoy complimentary coffee, morning rolls, and a lunch buffet. Save with early bird registration! go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026

Spring Series of Home Horticulture | Mondays, April 13, 20 and 27, 6-8 PM | Rock Island

Explore hot topics in gardening, landscaping, and wellness. Evening sessions include light appetizers and expert-led discussions on soil health, beneficial insects, and more. go.illinois.edu/SpringSeries2026

Smart Families



Smartphones, Smart Families Survival Kit

Helping families tackle digital challenges at home

The Digital Age at Home Smartphones, social media, streaming sites, and other technologies have transformed daily life. While these tools bring opportunities, they also raise new questions and concerns for parents and families.

A New Family Resource University of Illinois Extension has developed the Smartphones, Smart Families Survival Kit — a hands-on resource designed to support healthy technology habits at home.

What's Inside the Kit? Tools and items to help families:

- Promote healthy sleep patterns disrupted by screen use
- Reduce sedentary behavior and excessive screen time
- Encourage open communication about technology use in the household
- Strengthen family relationships through mindful tech habits

Who It's For

- Families with children living at home
- Illinois residents (limited-time availability)

Cost & Ordering Free kit (only \$5 shipping)
Order now: go.illinois.edu/SurvivalKit

More Resources For additional tools, tips, and research-based guidance on managing technology use at home, visit: go.illinois.edu/SmartFamilies

Take charge of your family's digital well-being today!

Strong Couples



Strong Couples Program

Helping families build relationships that last

The Strong Couples Project provides couples with free, evidence-based relationship education.

Led by researchers and educators at the University of Illinois and Extension, the program equips couples with skills to:

- Improve communication and reduce conflict escalation
- Build partner support and relationship confidence
- Strengthen long-term stability and family well-being

How It Works

- Couples participate in the six-session online ePREP program, one of the most scientifically supported tools for relationship growth.
- Self-paced online sessions with presentations, videos, and discussion prompts
- Supplemented by five video calls with trained Extension coaches
- Personalized guidance, structured exercises, and encouragement throughout

Proven Results! Participants report:

- Increased satisfaction, support, and confidence
- Decreased stress, instability, and negative communication

Eligibility: Couples age 18+ who are Married, engaged, or cohabiting for at least six months.

Cost: FREE! Plus chances to win a \$25 Amazon gift card!

Learn More at: publish.illinois.edu/strongcouples

Lessons for Living Webinar Series

Discover practical tools for a healthy, inspiring life

Join Illinois Extension educators for free online sessions designed to empower adults of all ages with practical guidance for a fulfilling life.

Session Topics:

- **What's in My Food? Decoding Chemicals & Safety, Feb. 10 | 10 a.m.**
Learn to decode food labels, bust myths, and take control of your plate.
- **Gardening on a Budget, Apr. 14 | 10 a.m.**
Start a container garden that nourishes both body and wallet.
- **Fur Real Companionship, May 14 | 10 a.m.**
Explore the healing power of companionship—even if you can't care for a pet yourself.

Register online at: go.illinois.edu/lessonsforliving2026



8 Dimensions of Wellness Series

Wednesdays, January 7, 14, 21, 28 | Time: 1:00–3:00 PM
Butterworth Center | Deere-Wiman Carriage House | Moline, IL

Kick off the new year with intention and insight!

Join Illinois Extension educators and local experts to explore the 8 Dimensions of Wellness—key areas that contribute to a balanced, fulfilling life. Each week we'll dive into two dimensions through interactive sessions, hands-on activities, and thoughtful discussion.

What Are the 8 Dimensions of Wellness?

Physical, Spiritual, Environmental, Emotional, Intellectual, Vocational, Social, and Financial.

These interconnected aspects of our lives influence overall well-being. By nurturing each dimension, we can create a more resilient, vibrant, and purpose-driven life. This series invites you to reflect on your current wellness, explore new strategies, and set meaningful goals for the year ahead.



Weekly Topics & Presenters

January 7 – Physical & Spiritual

• Physical Wellness



Get an overview of the 8 Dimensions and the self-assessment tool. Then learn about the health benefits and engage in a Tai Chi demonstration including a warm-up and cool down. *Presenter: Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension Food & Nutrition Educator.*

• Spiritual Wellness



Explore indigenous spirituality and how it can guide personal growth, decision-making, and resilience through experiential practices. *Presenter: Kathleen Collins, Mental Health Specialist.*

January 14 – Environmental & Emotional

• Environmental Wellness



Our environment can have a profound impact on our health and well-being. Discover how a nature-inspired design in our homes, landscapes, and community can enhance our well-being, the environment, and lead to deeper connections. *Presenter: Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator.*

• Emotional Wellness



Explore simple, arts-based stress-reduction practices that support emotional balance for busy lives. No art experience needed; activities are designed to be low-pressure, calming, and restorative. *Presenter: Elaine Kaple, 4-H Metro Youth Educator.*

January 21 – Intellectual & Vocational

• Intellectual Wellness



Researchers agree that intellectual challenge is beneficial throughout life. Learn about lifestyle factors that contribute to brain health, and strategies to enhance thinking. *Presenter: Kara Schweitzer, Illinois Extension Family Life Educator.*

• Vocational Wellness –



Learn how to adapt to vocational changes, build new skills, and explore continuing education opportunities. *Presenters: Kole Shuda & Olivia Gonzalez, Black Hawk College PaCE Department.*

January 28 – Social & Financial

• Social Wellness



Discover how social engagement supports brain health and emotional well-being. Learn about the aging brain and what you can do to keep your brain engaged. *Presenter: Tessa Hobbs-Curley, Illinois Extension Family Life Educator.*

• Financial Wellness



Learn about the rising threat of fraud and what it means for both individuals and financial institutions. Hear real cases, methods scammers use, and how they target customers. *Presenters: Amy Hood, and Jennifer Kline, Blackhawk Bank & Trust.*

Sign up at: go.illinois.edu/8Dimensions2026 or call Illinois Extension at (309) 756-9978.

Cost: \$10 per session or all 4 for \$35.

Includes: Light refreshments, a take-home self-assessment tool, and a wellness-related item each week.





Community Tree Care Webinar Series

Fridays, Jan 13-Feb 17 | 9-11 AM | Online

Tree care isn't just for certified arborists—everyone can benefit from research-backed practices that keep our trees healthy. Healthy trees improve air quality, reduce stress, and enhance comfort in our neighborhoods. Join Illinois educators to gain practical skills and insights for supporting tree health in your local landscapes.

2026 Webinar Schedule | Fridays, 9-11 AM

Jan. 13 – Trees for Pollinators & Evergreen ID
 Jan. 20 – Forest Health Updates & Fungal Mutualists
 Jan. 27 – Construction Impacts & Urban Soils
 Feb. 3 – Chainsaw Safety & Pruning Young Trees
 Feb. 10 – Climate Change & Historic Pests
 Feb. 17 – Tree Care After Planting & Branch Management

Cost: \$10 general access | \$50 with CEUs
Register Today go.illinois.edu/TreeCareSeries



Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention

Mon & Wed, Feb. 2-Mar. 30 | 2-3 PM | Milan

Gentle, evidence-based exercise for older adults

Over 16 sessions, learn slow, flowing movements that:

- Improve strength & flexibility
- Boost balance & confidence
- Reduce fall risk
- Support arthritis management

Developed by Dr. Paul Lam and recognized by the CDC, this safe program is tailored for people with arthritis. These sessions will be led by: Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension Food & Nutrition Educator and take place at the Illinois Extension office in Milan.

Cost: \$20 for the full series (16 sessions)
Register by February 1 Commitment to all sessions is recommended for best results.

go.illinois.edu/TaiChiMilan

Branching Out: A Botanical Workshop Series

Thurs. Jan 22, Feb 12, March 26, 1-3 pm, Milan

Led by Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator, and Tracy Jo Mulliken, Horticulture Coordinator, this series blends practical learning with creative take-home projects included with your \$15 fee.

Cut Flowers 101: Grow & Arrange | Jan 22 | 1-3 PM

Discover the joy of homegrown bouquets. Learn how to cultivate a beautiful cut flower garden and gain skills in selecting, planting, and caring for species that combine into stunning arrangements. Then, create your own bouquet to take home.

Propagating Houseplants: Multiply Your Collection | Feb 12 | 1-3 PM

Expand your indoor garden! Learn simple propagation techniques to multiply your favorite houseplants. After the educational portion, practice propagation methods and take home plants you started yourself.

Seed Starting for Spring Success | March 26 | 1-3 PM

This beginner-friendly program covers the essentials of starting seeds at home. Learn how to select containers and soil, time your sowing, manage light, and troubleshoot common challenges. Leave with confidence—and your own seed starts ready for spring.

The cost is \$15 per session, or sign up for the series of three for \$40.

Register at: go.illinois.edu/Botanical



NURSERY SCHOOL

Lessons in Gardening

Saturday, February 21, 2026

8 AM - 3 PM

Vibrant Arena, Moline, IL

Illinois Extension's 27th Annual Gardening Symposium

Celebrate a day of learning, inspiration, and connection!

You are invited to University of Illinois Extension's signature event organized by our dedicated Master Gardeners. For 27 years now, hundreds of gardeners have gathered together for this popular winter symposium to learn from experts on a wide range of topics in horticulture - ornamentals, edible plants, environmental stewardship, and more! The event brings together experts and educators from a cross section of program areas to enlighten and inspire.

Please join us! Start your day with a thought-provoking keynote on **Growing Resilience in the Urban Forest**, exploring how climate change is reshaping our cities—and how we can respond with innovative strategies to protect and restore our community's green spaces.

Choose your own adventure by selecting two morning breakout sessions tailored to your gardening interests with six unique choices. Enjoy a buffet lunch, included in your registration, as you connect with fellow plant enthusiasts. Shop unique offerings from local garden and craft vendors.

Close your day with an inspiring keynote on **Plants of Concern**, a pioneering community science initiative working to protect Illinois' rarest plant species. Discover how everyday citizens are making a lasting impact—and how you can be part of it. The event ends at 2:30 with drawings for prize baskets donated by our vendors.

Don't miss out! Treat yourself to a unique day celebrating, exploring, connecting, and learning about topics that interest you! **Save \$10 when you register by Jan 31.** Sign up at go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026 We look forward to seeing you there!



Registration Details

Early Bird Rate: \$60 — through January 31, 2026

Standard Rate: \$70 — Feb 1 to Feb 15, 2026

go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

University of Illinois Extension

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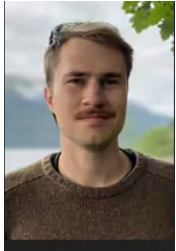
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, contact us at (309) 756-9978 or email uie-hmrs@illinois.edu. Early requests are strongly encouraged.

Nursery School Sessions

Morning Keynote: 8:30 AM *(includes morning coffee and rolls)*

Rebuilding Our Forests Amid Climate Challenges

Our urban forests are facing new pressures from a changing climate, pests, and other environmental stressors. This session will explore how these challenges are affecting trees in our cities and towns—and what we can do about it. Learn practical, forward-thinking strategies and tools to help protect, manage, and restore resilient urban forests for the future.



Justin Vozzo,

Illinois Extension Forestry Specialist, and ISA Certified Arborist

Justin holds degrees in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences from the University of Illinois and applies this expertise to statewide forest management, urban forestry, and ecological restoration projects. He brings a diverse background in education, consulting, and research, along with experience at the U.S. Forest Service and the National Ecological Observatory Network.



Breakout One: 10 - 11 AM

Select one from the following:

Ornamental Horticulture



Soak it Up: Rain Gardens in the Home Landscape

Emily Swihart, *Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

Discover how to manage stormwater beautifully and effectively in your own yard. This session highlights practical, homeowner-friendly techniques with a special focus on rain gardens—what they are, how they work, and how to design one that fits your landscape. Learn how to assess your site, choose the right plants, and create a garden that's both functional and visually appealing.

Edible Plants



Harvesting Happiness: Growing Fruit Trees at Home

Elizabeth Wahle, *Illinois Extension Specialist, Agriculture and Agribusiness*

There is no better feeling of self-achievement than successfully harvesting quality fruit from your own backyard trees. But to get to harvest, you need to manage and protect your trees season long. Join Elizabeth as she discusses the main challenges to bringing a crop to fruition, most especially integrated pest management and cultivar selection for apple, pear, and cherry.

Nature and Environment



Planting Herbs to Attract Pollinators

Jennifer Fishburn, *Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

Culinary herbs do more than flavor your meals—they can also invite pollinators into your garden. Learn how to select and grow herbs that attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects, while adding beauty and fragrance to your landscape.

Nursery School Sessions

Breakout Two: 11:15 am-12:15 pm

Select one from the following:

Reclaiming Runaway Landscape

Chris Enroth, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator

Have a garden that's gone wild? Explore practical tips for taking back an overgrown, chaotic landscape. Learn design strategies, effective weeding tools, use of mulch, and other techniques. Finally, get guidance on how to decide which plants need to go and which ones can be tolerated.



Ornamental Horticulture

Explore the Foods, Flavors, and Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension Food and Nutrition educator

The Mediterranean style of eating is a one of the world's most researched and celebrated healthy eating patterns. Explore the origins and science behind it. Enjoy flavorful samples and take home practical tips to bring Mediterranean-inspired choices into your daily routine.



Edible Plants

Support Biodiversity by Landscaping with Native Midwestern Shrubs

Rob Liva, Ecological Land Management Consultant

Native shrubs are a diverse group of plants ranging in size, shape, color, and habit, making them an excellent source of seasonal interest in your home landscape. These plants offer shelter and food for pollinators and birds that many garden-varieties do not. Learn characteristics and preferences of native shrubs and how they can connect your property to the magic of the broader wooded ravines of the Quad Cities.



Nature and Environment

Lunch 12:15-1:15 pm: Complimentary Buffet

Visit the vendors to win a Prize Basket!

Visit the vendors over lunch break. Fill out your "library card" as you "check out" the vendors and earn entry to the vendors' giveaway held after the last session.



Closing Keynote 1:15 PM

Plants of Concern

Celebrate nearly 25 years of rare plant monitoring through the groundbreaking Plants of Concern program!



With almost 30% of U.S. plant species at risk of extinction, this initiative brings together volunteers, scientists, and landowners to protect Illinois' rarest plants. Learn how community science is driving conservation, climate research, and habitat restoration—and discover how you can help. This session also highlights the unique natural landscapes and rare flora of Northwestern Illinois.

Grant Fessler, Northwestern Illinois Plants of Concern Coordinator

Grant Fessler, a Quad Cities botanist, is putting his ecology degree to use as the Regional Coordinator for the Plants of Concern program. He oversees rare plant monitoring in Northwestern Illinois and is cataloging the vascular flora of Rock Island County.



Prize Drawing 2:30 PM

Don't miss this day of learning and inspiration!

Register Today!

Early bird rate: \$60 thru January 31, 2026

Standard rate: \$70 Feb 1-Feb 15, 2026.

go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2026



Spring Series of Home Horticulture



Mondays, April 13, 20, & 27
6–8 PM | Hauberg Estate
Carriage House | 1300 24 St,
Rock Island, IL

Grow your knowledge with Illinois Extension's annual spring horticulture series!

Explore hot topics in home gardening, landscaping, and wellness with expert Extension educators.

Sign up for the series or pick the weeks that work for you.

Cost | \$15 per evening | \$40 for all three | Light appetizers provided.

Location: Hauberg Carriage House | Doors open at 5:30 PM | Sessions run 6–8 PM

April 13

Good Bugs in the Garden

Ken Johnson, Horticulture Educator



Learn how to recognize the many beneficial insects in your garden and explore strategies to attract them. Many insects play vital roles such as pollinating plants, preying on harmful species, enriching soil, and keeping ecosystems in balance. Discover how these “good bugs” help gardens thrive and how you can invite them into your landscape.

Building Healthy Soil for Your Landscape

Chris Enroth, Horticulture Educator



Healthy soils are the foundation of a thriving landscape. Explore the science and the strategies behind building and maintaining soil that supports plant health. Chris will share strategies for testing and improving your soil with compost, cover crops, and sustainable practices.

April 20

Pollinator Pathways: Using the Illinois Pollinator Website to Guide Action

Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, Horticulture Educator



Discover the world of Illinois pollinators and learn how to support them through gardening and conservation. Nicole will also introduce you to the Illinois Pollinator website, a statewide resource for pollinator identification, habitat creation, and citizen engagement.

Landscape Design with Natives: How to Avoid Growing a Jungle

Emily Swihart, Horticulture Educator



Historically, home landscapes have reflected residents' needs—from food production to status symbols—often using non-native plants. Today, native plants are gaining popularity, but not all are suitable for home settings. Emily will cover design basics, selecting well-behaved native plants, and tips for managing native landscapes.

April 27

The Garden Within: Nourishing Your Gut for Better Health

Kristin Bogdonas, Food & Nutrition Educator



Just like a thriving garden needs the right soil, sun, and care, your gut depends on balance, nourishment, and variety to flourish. Learn how to “feed” your gut microbiome through foods rich in fiber, fermented favorites, and plant diversity. We'll dig into practical tips that support digestion, immunity, and overall wellness. Learn how to tend to your inner garden for lasting health.

Growing, Drying, and Using Fresh Herbs

Carol Longley, Illinois Extension Master Gardener, and Retired Dietitian



Herbs can enrich your cooking, support pollinators, and add fragrance and beauty to your garden. Explore techniques for cultivating, preserving, and enjoying herbs such as basil, lemon verbena, rosemary, thyme, lavender, and lemongrass. Get practical methods for drying and storing herbs so you can savor their flavors and uses year-round.

Sign up at:

go.illinois.edu/SpringSeries2026

Cost \$15 week or \$40 for all 3 weeks.



New location: Hauberg Carriage House!

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, contact us at uie-hmrs@illinois.edu Early requests are strongly encouraged.