



# Illinois Extension

MAY 2023

## Connections Newsletter

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

### Henry/Stark 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. 8am - 4 pm

WE WILL BE CLOSED ON MEMORIAL DAY, MONDAY, MAY 29

[Visit our website: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs](http://extension.illinois.edu/hmrs)



## Caring for spring-blooming bulbs after flowering

*Ken Johnson, Illinois Extension horticulture educator*

Our days are getting longer and warmer, and many gardens are awash in color from spring-blooming bulbs like daffodils and tulips. Unfortunately, the blooms will eventually fade, leaving many of us wondering what we can do to help make sure that they are ready to go again next year.

**Leave the leaves.** The most important thing you can do to help your bulbs is to leave the foliage on the plants. The leaves are needed so the plants can photosynthesize and produce the food that the bulbs need to form flower buds for next year. If the foliage is removed or mowed too early, it can result in a smaller, weaker bulb that will gradually decline and die out.

Leave the foliage on the plants until it begins to yellow and dieback. It can then be removed because it will no longer produce food for the plants. For smaller bulbs like snowdrops and squill, this will happen relatively quickly. For larger plants, like tulips and daffodils, it can take several weeks for the foliage to die back on its own.

One problem with letting foliage remain is that it can become unsightly over time. In an attempt to make their gardens look tidier, many people will tie their foliage together to make it less noticeable. However, this is not recommended because doing this will reduce the amount of light the leaves can intercept, reducing the amount of photosynthesis, which leads to less energy produced by the plant.

As an alternative to tying up foliage, you can try to hide it. Consider interplanting annuals with your bulbs to help hide the foliage. You can also incorporate perennials like hostas in with your bulbs. Cornell University has conducted trials to see what combination of bulbs and perennials work well together. In addition to helping hide foliage, interplanting can also help extend the bloom season in your beds.

**Deadhead your plants** While we don't want to remove the leaves, it's a good idea to remove spent flowers from plants to prevent the formation of seedpods. If plants are allowed to produce seeds, this will use energy that could otherwise be used for the bulbs and often result in smaller bulbs.

If you wish to save seeds from your bulbs allow the seed pods to develop. Many bulbs are hybrids, so seeds likely won't be true to type (they can also be cross-pollinated). You'll also need some patience, it can take several years for plants to bloom that are grown from seed. For example, it can take 5+ years for tulips and daffodils to grow from seed to bloom.

### Fertilize your bulbs

Spring-blooming bulbs can be fertilized once they are done blooming, although the best time to fertilize is when plants begin to emerge. Look for a fertilizer high in phosphorous (middle number) and low in nitrogen (first number), such as a 5-10-5. Fertilizers are generally applied at 1-2 pounds per 100 square feet. Make sure to gently work or water the fertilizer into the soil. If you are unsure if you need to fertilize, conduct a soil test.

### Crowded plants and fewer blooms

After several years you may notice that your bulbs are producing smaller or fewer flowers. This often happens when they become crowded. Bulbs will often reproduce by division, where new 'daughter' bulbs form from the original 'mother' bulb, causing plants to become crowded. If this happens, bulbs can be dug and divided once the foliage has died back and the bulbs are dormant.

Carefully dig around the bulb cluster and lift it out of the soil. Clean soil off of the bulbs so you have a good view of them. Separate bulbs by gently twisting and pulling the 'daughter' bulbs and dispose of any that are damaged or soft. Bulbs can then be replanted immediately, or they can be dried and stored in a cool place to be planted in the fall. Smaller bulbs may take a year or two to begin blooming.

## Learn to can with confidence in June!

One of the best ways to preserve food is canning, a home-based method of food preservation that helps people prolong garden harvests, save on food costs, participate in family traditions, and control the quality of the food they eat.

Discover how to can with confidence and learn the proper techniques for safely using a water bath canner, including an electric water bath canner, steam canner, and pressure canner, in the 3-week online series “Fill Your Pantry: Canning with Confidence,” presented by Illinois Extension. Each session will offer instructions, recipes, and resources to get started canning safely and will include a video demonstration showing each canner in action.

### Session dates:

**June 8 | Noon: Boiling Water Bath Canners**

**June 15 | Noon: Steam Canners**

**June 22 | Noon: Pressure Canners**

Register at [go.illinois.edu/FillYourPantry](http://go.illinois.edu/FillYourPantry) or call our office at (309) 756-9978



Want to learn about other food preservation methods? Watch recorded sessions that cover drying, fermenting, freezing, pickling, and processing foods such as tomatoes, apples, jams, and jellies at: [go.illinois.edu/CanningVideos](http://go.illinois.edu/CanningVideos)



## May is Better Sleep Month and the perfect time to evaluate your current bedroom.

*Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator*

There are many little things you can do to make your bedroom more relaxing and conducive to a good night's rest so you can wake up feeling rejuvenated and ready to take on the day. The Better Sleep Council recommends following your senses when analyzing your sleep environment.

**Light:** It's a natural alarm clock and can disrupt deep and restful sleep. Any light in the room can impact sleep quality. Also, try to avoid blue light from your phone, computer and T.V. in the hour before bed. Here are some lighting considerations:

- Is your room as dark as possible? Are outside lights creeping through your blinds?
- Are the T.V. and hallway lights turned off?
- Are there any alarm clocks near your bed emitting bright lights throughout the night?

**Touch:** This has to do with the comfort and quality of your bed- a critical component of the bedroom. If you regularly wake with aches and pains, it may be time to invest in a new mattress. The Better Sleep Council recommends investing in a new mattress every 7 years.

**Smell:** Scents can play a major role in our mood and unpleasant odors could impact your sleep even if you have grown to 'block them out'. Pleasant odors such as lavender can help with relaxation. Find calming scents and incorporate them into your sleep routine. Calming scents include lavender, vetiver, bergamot, geranium, jasmine, rose and frankincense. Try diffusing essential oils or adding them to your laundry when washing bed sheets.

**Taste:** This has to do with personal touches and creating a space that reflects your personality. You may be drawn to bright, flashy colors but they may not be the best choice when creating a calm environment. It's good to have personal touches but keep your room clutter-free to maximize sleep quality.



### Additional Tips for Restful Sleep:

- Your bed should not double as a desk, dining room table, or couch
- Avoid consuming alcohol and caffeine right before bed
- Eat a balanced diet and nothing too heavy before lying down
- Stick to light activities such as yoga and stretching
- Feeling anxious? Try taking a bath and writing down what's on your mind
- Last but not least, make sleep a priority. It's an appointment you should never miss!

Research from the National Sleep Foundation found that “being motivated and having a bedtime routine was associated with more sleep and higher sleep quality even among those with more severe pain.”

For more information on creating the ideal bedroom, sleep disorders, positions, or just fun quizzes, visit [www.bettersleep.org](http://www.bettersleep.org). For bedroom safety tips visit [www.safesleep.org](http://www.safesleep.org).



## EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT WEBINAR: LESSONS FROM NATURE IN YOUR HOME LANDSCAPE TUES. MAY 11, 1 PM

When managing a yard or landscape, there are many things to remember, including the best times to plant and fertilize, where best to place plants, and managing a landscape. However, these things, assisted by a few simple ecological concepts, can help with design considerations and make a landscape an oasis for nature and the envy of neighbors. The webinar teaches basic ecological concepts and how best to apply them to landscaping decisions. An understanding of the concepts may even reduce landscape maintenance needs.

*Presenter: Abigail Garofalo, Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy educator*

Register at [go.illinois.edu/EverydayEnvironment](https://go.illinois.edu/EverydayEnvironment) or call our office at (309) 756-9978.

## FOUR SEASONS WEBINAR: INVASIVE PLANTS: BEYOND OUTLAWED | TUES MAY 16, 1:30 PM

Find alternatives for plants with troublesome tendencies.

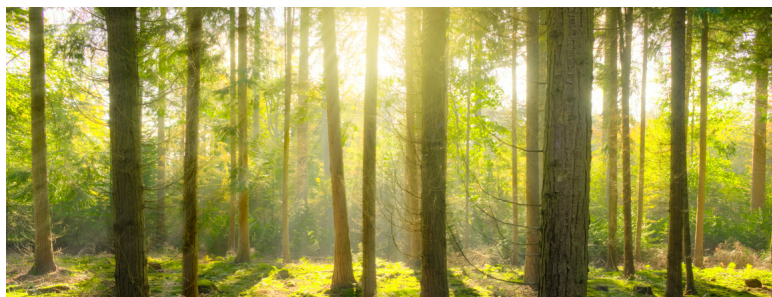
What makes a plant invasive is a specific set of criteria that can land it on regulated federal and state invasive plant lists. Some plants meet the same criteria but are not deemed invasive. These plants are readily available at most garden centers and found in most of our yards, despite a constant battle of landowners and conservation workers to keep them out of natural areas.

During this class, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator Chris Enroth will describe these species of concern, controlling them in natural areas, and some alternatives for our yards.

Register at [go.illinois.edu/FourSeasonsMay](https://go.illinois.edu/FourSeasonsMay) or call our office at (309) 756-9978.



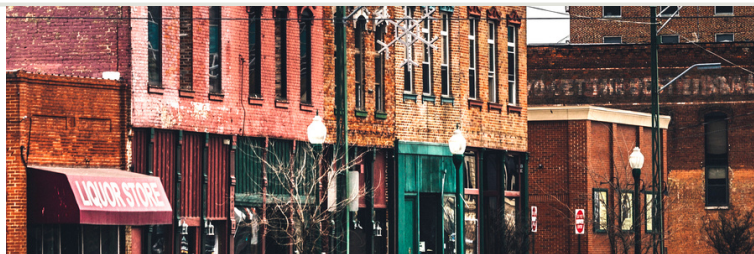
## FORESTRY SPRING WEBINAR SERIES



## FORESTS, MOTHS, BIRDS, & BATS, OH MY! WED MAY 10, 2 PM

Forests serve as important habitat for many species of conservation concern, including several bats and birds as well as the food sources they depend upon, often lepidoptera including adult moths and their caterpillars. This presentation will review how forest management practices may affect moths and introduce a new research project studying moth occurrences in areas under different forest management. In addition, we'll highlight some ways anyone can attract moths and contribute to citizen science projects to help track changes in moth communities over time.

Register at: [go.illinois.edu/ForestryWebinars](https://go.illinois.edu/ForestryWebinars) or call our office at (309) 756-9978.



## HISTORIC PROPERTIES: DOWNTOWN RESTORATION SERIES | WED MAY 16, 12 PM

Communities are concerned about aging buildings in their downtowns. How can these historic resources be saved and safely restored? What opportunities exist and how to overcome the challenges?

Explore in a two-part webinar series on historic properties and projects. In this first part, participants will learn about listing properties on the National Register, creating a National Register Historic District, what it means to be on the National Register for redevelopment, and what restrictions do and do not exist from designation.

*Presented by Quinn Adamowski, Regional Advocacy Manager, Landmarks Illinois*

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

## Illinois Groundwork provides community resources and guidance for creating community green infrastructure.



During large rainstorms, many Illinois residents brace themselves for flooding in their basements, streets, and neighborhoods. Illinois Groundwork, [illinoisgroundwork.org](http://illinoisgroundwork.org), is a new free, online tool for communities and stormwater professionals with resources on green stormwater infrastructure, which provides a way for rain to be absorbed into the soil where it lands.

Green stormwater infrastructure is an approach to enhancing traditional or “grey” infrastructure using a rain garden or even permeable pavement. But this method doesn’t always work as well as it might. By improving access to data, research, and other resources, this tool can help increase the effective use of green infrastructure to address stormwater management challenges.

The web tool outlines a process that users can follow to incorporate soil data into green infrastructure design. Illinois Groundwork provides insights into helpful or necessary expertise, specific tasks, and additional resources. It also includes an interactive resource to help optimize green infrastructure sizing and Plant Finder, which covers 119 plants, with information on soil type, light, and moisture needs for each, as well as photos and descriptions.

“Plant Finder helps designers select plants that are best suited for site conditions and promotes designing with maintenance in mind,” says Layne Knoche, University of Illinois stormwater associate. Other resources include relevant Illinois regulations, scientific literature addressing a range of green infrastructure benefits, and real-world green infrastructure examples.



Get resources at [illinoisgroundwork.org](http://illinoisgroundwork.org)

## A delicious way to support 4-H!



**Cookout to benefit Henry County 4-H**  
**Fri, May 27, 11 am to 1 pm**  
**Fareway, 540 Pritchard Dr. Geneseo, IL**

Make plans to grab a grilled lunch to go at Fareway and support Henry County 4-H! Menu includes: Pork Chop Sandwich, Hamburger, Brat Patty, Pork Patty, Brat Link, Hot Dog, Chips, Pop, and Water.



Adolescence is an exciting time of remarkable milestones, growing independence and responsibilities enjoyed by caregivers and youth alike. Despite that, it can be challenging. Poor mental health harms students’ health, grades, and decision-making skills. It is crucial to address mental health early to prevent issues from worsening.

What can we do to support youth’s mental well-being?  
Learn more [go.illinois.edu/SupportingYouthMentalHealth](http://go.illinois.edu/SupportingYouthMentalHealth)