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Wishing you the happiest of Holidays from all of us at University of Illinois Extension.  
Holiday Hours: Our offices will be closed from December 22, 2023- January 1, 2024

### Stocking your Winter Wellness Arsenal

*Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator*

As we embrace the winter season, it's time to gear up for both the joy of holiday gatherings and the challenges that colder weather can bring. Winter often ushers in cold winds, shorter days, and the risk of unwanted sick days. It's crucial to prioritize self-care and assess your needs for a healthy winter.

#### Building Your Winter Wellness Arsenal with these essential tips:

**Focus on a Nutrient-Rich Diet:** diet and lifestyle are the first things to focus on for good health. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables include immune-boosting foods like citrus fruits, garlic, ginger, and yogurt.

**Vitamin Supplements** - Winter can sometimes bring feelings of isolation or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Since sunlight exposure may be limited in winter, consider taking vitamin D supplements to support your mood. Consider additional supplements such as zinc, vitamin C, and echinacea.

**Regular Exercise:** Engage in regular physical activity to support your immune system and improve mood. Explore indoor exercises like home workouts or fitness classes, or embrace outdoor activities like cross-country skiing or taking a brisk walk.

**Adequate Sleep:** Prioritize quality sleep for a strong immune system. If you have trouble falling asleep, consider including more foods rich in magnesium, vitamin D, C, and omega-3 fatty acids.

**Winter-Appropriate Clothing:** Exposure to cold and wet conditions can compromise your health. Invest in warm, weather-appropriate clothing, including insulated jackets, hats, gloves, and waterproof boots.



**Hand Hygiene:** It's estimated we touch our face 23 times an hour! Wash your hands regularly to prevent the spread of germs, especially during cold and flu season.

**Skin Care:** Combat dry skin with regular moisturizing, using balms and salves made with natural ingredients.

**Plan Relaxation Time:** Schedule downtime for relaxation amidst holiday hustle and bustle. Reading a book, taking a bath, or practicing a hobby, find moments to unwind.

**Hydration:** The dry air can quickly lead to dehydration. Consume warm beverages like herbal teas or soups to stay hydrated and mend sore throats.

**Respiratory Health:** Support respiratory health by using a humidifier to add moisture to the air.

**Stay Informed:** Stay updated on weather forecasts and be prepared for extreme conditions. Use the QC Ready App for local alerts. Keep your car stocked with an emergency kit for unexpected travel delays.

**Personalization and Consultation:** Remember, everyone's winter wellness needs are unique, so tailor these tips to suit your individual preferences and health requirements. Always consult with a healthcare professional for personalized advice.

## NATURAL CHRISTMAS TREES



Did you know that approximately 25–30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States each holiday season, according to the National Christmas Tree Association? Unlike artificial trees made of petroleum or plastic, cut trees are a renewable resource, grown specifically for harvesting and replanting. Explore more about Natural Christmas Trees in **The Outsider: Issue 19: Christmas Trees**

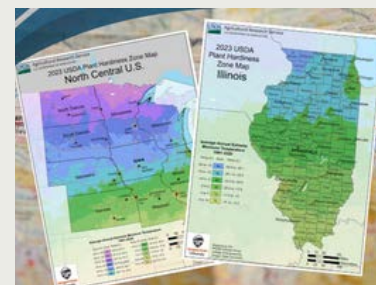
## HOLIDAY PLANT LORE



As winter descends, cultural holidays come alive with a diverse array of plants, each contributing in unique ways. Decorations, infused with symbolic meaning, evoke feelings of joy and fellowship. Some plants even carry mythical undertones, adding a layer of enchantment to our celebrations.

Delve into the horticultural facets of several plants and spices that enhance the spirit of our winter holidays like the Bodhi Fig Tree, Frankincense, Myrrha, Clove, Cinnamon, Mistletoe, and Amaryllis in **The Outsider: Issue 6: Horticulture Holiday**

## Understanding the USDA Plant Hardiness Map Changes: What Gardeners Need to Know



Have you noticed the recent updates to the USDA plant hardiness map? Wondering if your gardening zone has changed and what it means for your plants? University of Illinois Extension is here to help demystify the concept of zones.

**What are "zones"?** When someone mentions being in zone 5b or 6a, they're providing information about the average coldest day in their region. The USDA has divided the US into nine zones, each representing a 10°F spread of the average coldest day's temperature. This zoning system helps gardeners understand the general climate of their area and how plants will fare.

**Why do average coldest days matter?** The average coldest days matter because they influence the survival of plants. When buying plants, you might have noticed labels like "perennial" or "annual." Some plants cannot withstand the winter cold in certain zones, impacting their ability to return each year. While microclimates can exist, zones offer a helpful shortcut to gauge an area's overall climate and plant compatibility.

**Why the change and what does it mean?** Recent changes in the USDA hardiness map might have caught your attention, but fear not—these adjustments are not likely to revolutionize gardening practices. The main reason for the change is the collection of more accurate data, thanks to advances in Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and an increased number of weather stations. These changes aim to better represent historical weather patterns, rather than signaling drastic shifts in temperatures.

So, if your zone has changed, don't panic. Your favorite plants are likely to still thrive, and a shift in zones can be an opportunity to experiment with new varieties that you may not have considered before.

**How to check your zone:** Curious about your updated gardening zone? Enter your zip code at [planthardiness.ars.usda.gov](https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov) to see if there have been any changes.

### More information

For a deeper dive into the changes from the 2012 version of the USDA plant hardiness map, visit [planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/pages/map-creation](https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/pages/map-creation).

For comprehensive gardening tips and information, explore the University of Illinois Extension's website at [extension.illinois.edu/plants](https://extension.illinois.edu/plants).

Source: Jamie Viebach, Illinois Extension horticulture educator

# December In-Person Workshops

## Knot Your Mom's Macramé: DIY Plant Hanger & Plant Propagation Workshop Tues. Dec 5, 1-3 pm, IL Extension, Milan, IL

Discover the fascinating world of house plant propagation while unleashing your creative flair in a unique, hands-on class. Learn the art and science of plant propagation with Emily Swihart, horticulture educator. Gain valuable knowledge about nurturing new plant life and expanding your indoor garden. Then create your very own knotted plant hanger under the guidance of Tracy Jo Mulliken, program coordinator, and Angie Harrison, macramé expert.



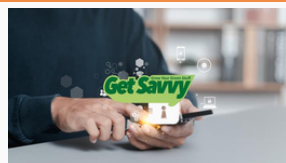
The cost is \$25 person. Class size is limited. Register at [go.illinois.edu/MacramePlantPropagation](http://go.illinois.edu/MacramePlantPropagation) or call (309) 756-9978.



## 4-H Holiday DIY Holiday Gifts Workshop Wed, Dec 6, 5 - 6:30 PM, The REC Center, Viola, IL Sat., Dec 9, 10 am - Noon, IL Extension, Milan, IL

Youth and teens ages 5 to 18 are invited to get into the holiday spirit with us as we craft handmade gifts for their loved ones. They will get to create a variety of unique and heartfelt items as they visit 7 different hands-on stations. They will leave with their hand-made gifts wrapped and ready to give!

**Spread more joy-** in lieu of a fee, we are asking participants to bring 3 or more cans of foods for the 4-H Food Drive. Class size is limited. Sign up today! Register for Viola at [go.illinois.edu/HolidayDIYViola](http://go.illinois.edu/HolidayDIYViola) Register for Milan at [go.illinois.edu/HolidayDIYMilan](http://go.illinois.edu/HolidayDIYMilan) or call (309) 756-9978.



## Get Savvy: Your Financial Tool Chest Dec 6, Noon - 1 pm Free

Nowadays, various financial products and tools meet complex consumer needs. Explore in this free webinar which services can help you achieve your goals and keep your money safe and costs low. Register at [go.illinois.edu/getsavvywebinars](http://go.illinois.edu/getsavvywebinars)



## Northern Saw-Whet Owl Everyday Environment Dec 14, 1 - 2 pm Free

The northern saw-whet owl secretly lives in our backyards in the winter. Learn about the latest research, what researchers are looking for, and what we are learning about the birds. Register at [go.illinois.edu/SawWhetOwls](http://go.illinois.edu/SawWhetOwls)



## Collective Tree Care Dec 11, 9 - 11 AM Cost: \$10

It takes a community to strengthen tree health. Trees are a beautiful and vital part of our communities, providing many long-term benefits to the public. Trees impact the local environment, economy, and overall quality of life. Participants will learn to identify tree stressors in community environments, hazardous tree defects, and assess and mitigate risk.

The third and final webinar session is Collective Tree Care from 9 to 11 a.m. on Dec. 11. The cost is \$10 per session, and registration is required. Individuals can attend one or all sessions, and Illinois Arborist Association continued education units are available to those who qualify. Register at [go.illinois.edu/TreeCareSeries](http://go.illinois.edu/TreeCareSeries)



## Land Leasing Basics for Illinois Small Farms Dec 18, 7-8 PM Free

Legal risks can be fatal to a farm business and addressing them proactively can keep farms in business. Just as important, understanding legal issues can dispel anxiety and help farmers realize their power to control their circumstances.

This is the third in a quarterly webinar series for all Illinois small farmers brought to you by University of Illinois Extension's Local Food Systems and Small Farms team and presented by Farm Commons. Register at [go.illinois.edu/LandLeasingBasics](http://go.illinois.edu/LandLeasingBasics)

# Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening

Sat, February 10 | 8 am - 3 pm  
The Vibrant Arena at the Mark  
1201 River Drive, Moline, IL



Illinois Extension and our Master Gardeners invite you to get inspired and grow in your horticultural knowledge at the Quad Cities' premiere gardening symposium! Experts lead workshops on a variety of topics for the home gardener.



The 25th annual event opens with a keynote address by Duane Friend, Illinois Extension's State Master Naturalist and Climate Change Specialist on: **"This isn't your Grandparents' Gardening Weather"**.

Duane delves into the profound impact of weather on our gardens and landscapes and explores trends in weather spanning the past few decades. Leveraging his extensive background in meteorology and climatology, coupled with over 30 years of invaluable experience, he will share insights into these shifts and offers practical guidance on adjusting gardening and landscape activities to optimize outcomes amidst evolving climatic conditions. Duane's expertise positions him at the forefront of this dynamic field, making his keynote a must-attend for anyone seeking cutting-edge knowledge on weather's effects on our gardens.



Duane Friend

In addition to the Keynote, you will register for your choice from each session time. You can mix and match the track topics.



## Ornamentals

See session descriptions on registration



## Edibles



## Nature

### Session Times

#### AAA Winners: The Secret Ingredient to Gardening Success

*Diane Blazak, Executive Director of All-America Selections and National Garden Bureau*

#### Seed Starting: How to Start Seeds for Seedling to Plant this Spring.

*Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

#### Hunters of the night: The Owls of Iowa and Illinois

*James Wiebler, Naturalist and Research Coordinator at Nahant Marsh*

Session 1  
10 - 11 am

#### Beneath the Canopy: Exploring Spring Ephemeral Flowers

*Emily Swihart, University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

#### Organic Vegetable Gardening

*Ken Johnson, University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

#### Climate/Weather Tools for Gardening

*Duane Friend, Illinois Extension State Master Naturalist & Climate Change Specialist*

Session 2  
11:15 am - 12:15 pm

#### New Plants and Inspirations for the Spring Season!

*Molly Blogg, Manager, CEO, Co-Owner of Hornbaker Garden Center, Arboretum and Botanic Garden*

#### You can't go wrong with culinary herbs in your garden/kitchen!

*Christopher Enroth, University of Illinois Horticulture Educator & Chef Elly Voss, Chef, Nest Cafe*

#### Enrich Your Yard with Native Plants

*Amy Loving, Director of Education at Nahant Marsh*

**REGISTER EARLY & SAVE** Registration fees are **\$60 through Jan 5** and \$70 from Jan 6 - Feb 5, 2024

You must register in advance—no walk-ins. Your registration includes morning coffee and rolls, keynote session, taco bar lunch, 3 additional classes, and access to the Nursery School vendor area. Call our office at (309) 756-9978 or use the link below:

**Register by Feb 5 at [go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2024](https://go.illinois.edu/NurserySchool2024)**



University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, contact (309) 756-9978.