



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



September 12-13, 2024 State Master Gardener Conference Schedule

Illinois Conference Center- 111 St Marys Rd, Champaign, IL 61820

Thursday, September 12 — Pre-registration is required for all tours.

All Day Guided Tour at Allerton Park in Monticello, IL

This tour is self-driving and no bus will be provided. You'll meet and park at Allerton Park in Monticello, IL for the day, a 35 minute drive from the conference location, the Illinois Conference Center. Detailed driving and parking instructions will be shared with registrants closer to the conference. This tour is scheduled from 9:45-3:00pm, but registrants are welcome to explore more of Allerton following the guided tours as well.

Allerton Park is a unique, one-of-a-kind mixture of art and nature, offering a fascinating combination of purposefully designed formal gardens that integrate wonderfully into high-quality natural areas. The park is situated on 1,500 acres in central Piatt County, along the expansive floodplains and uplands that surround the Sangamon River corridor.

This day-long tour will begin in Allerton's famed formal gardens. Between 1899 and 1946, 14 formal gardens were created on the Allerton Estate, featuring extension plantings and over 100 ornaments and sculptures. The tour will explore the history of both plants and art in these interesting and carefully designed garden spaces that reflect the vision and personality of the park's founder, Robert Allerton.

Lunch will be provided on the Allerton grounds in a climate-controlled space over the noon hour.

In the afternoon, join Allerton Park Natural Areas Staff for a tour of old-growth oak stands, teeming prairies and extensive bottomland forests. They will discuss past land use history, current flora and fauna, and future restoration goals for the park.

Don't miss this chance to view some of central Illinois's most pristine and well-preserved natural areas, along with Allerton's exceptional formal garden spaces.

Please note: This tour will require several miles of walking on potentially uneven surfaces, such as garden paths and trails in the natural areas.

Half Day Tour Options- All tours depart from the Illinois Conference Center- 111 St Marys Rd, Champaign, IL 61820

Build your own day by choosing a selection of half day tours to fit your schedule. The morning and afternoon tours are all guided tours on a charter bus that will load at the Illinois Conference

Center. Participants must ride on the bus for these tours as parking is not available or limited at any of these locations.

1. Morning Campus Tour: Half Day bus tour to the Champaign County Idea Garden and Japan House

Departs at 9:00 am, returns by 12:00 pm

Load onto the charter bus at the Illinois Conference Center and take a very short ride to the Champaign County Master Gardener Idea Garden and Japan House.

The Idea Garden, located on the University of Illinois Arboretum in Urbana is 18,000 square feet of planted space. Master Gardener volunteers work more than 4,500 hours each year in the garden to provide a source of inspiration, relaxation, and continuing education for our community and its visitors. Since 1997, the Idea Garden has been maintained as an educational tool to demonstrate garden design and maintenance ideas, to encourage novice and experienced gardeners to experiment with new plants and techniques, and as a site for public workshops.

Japan House aims to make the beauty of traditional Japanese arts and culture accessible to everyone. Learn about Japanese gardens and how they incorporate nature in their design and philosophy as well as the history of our gardens. Japan House is surrounded by Japanese gardens, including a tea garden, a dry rock garden, and an allée of fifty cherry trees.

2. Morning Flower Farm Tour: Half Day bus tour to Delight Flower Farm

Departs at 9:30 am, returns by 12:00 pm

Load onto the charter bus at the Illinois Conference Center and take a short 20 minute ride to Delight Flower Farm.

Delight Flower Farm, established in Champaign-Urbana in 2011, grows sustainable, fresh cut flowers of the highest quality. They are an environmentally-friendly flower farm providing the community with a local, sustainable option for gorgeous flowers. They grow flowers to help people become aware of and connected to locally grown flowers, to support themselves in their livelihood as farmers, and to aid in land and pollinator restoration. Their method of farming is a union of organic gardening and experimenting in more integrated styles of crop cultivation and permaculture.

3. Afternoon Campus Tour: Half Day bus tour to Red Oak Rain Garden, Herbarium/ Paleontology Fossil Collections, and Plant Biology Greenhouse:

Departs at 1:00 pm, returns by 5:00 pm

Load onto the charter bus at the Illinois Conference Center and take a short ride to the south side of campus.

The **Red Oak Rain Garden** soaks up rainwater, enhances the campus and community aesthetic and educational experience, and promotes well-being for everyone who visits. As part of Illinois Extension, the Red Oak Rain Garden Team believes in providing excellence in educational programming and providing accessible programs that help people solve problems. The rain garden does both! The Team creates service-learning opportunities for students and community volunteers and inspires visitors to find out how they can create healthier landscapes where they live.

The **Illinois Natural History Survey Herbarium** holds approximately 520,000 vascular plants with one-third of the specimens from early Illinois; one-third from other states, largely from the west; and the last third of the specimens from outside the United States.

The **Plant Biology Greenhouse** consists of three wings in the Plant Science Laboratory complex that support research, education and outreach in the plant sciences. The research and education rooms are primarily shared by faculty and students in the School of Integrative Biology in the College of LAS. They also house a Conservatory and diverse Collections that are utilized by University courses and for outreach purposes.

4. Afternoon Vegetable Farm Tour: Half Day bus tour to Sustainable Student Farm and Sola Gratia Farm

Departs at 1:00 pm, returns by 5:00 pm

Load onto the charter bus at the Illinois Conference Center and take a short ride to the Sustainable Student Farm on campus and to Sola Gratia farm in Urbana.

The **Sustainable Student Farm** grows 40-50 vegetable and fruit crops on 6 acres on South Lincoln in Urbana. Student workers and volunteers' plant, cultivate and harvest produce using low input and organic practices. The majority of our produce goes to the dining halls on campus all year around. They also sell produce at a farm stand on the quad and through an online store starting in late May and going through the fall semester.

Sola Gratia Farm is a non-profit urban farm dedicated to producing locally-grown, high-quality natural produce, especially for those with limited food resources. Founded in 2012 by St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Sola Gratia Farm was established with the overall goal of building a regional food system where high-quality, locally grown produce is available to everyone, especially those at an economic disadvantage.

*Walking on uneven ground and in various weather conditions will be a part of these tours. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please reach out to Candice at mille116@illinois.edu.

Evening Mixer at the Conference Center- 6:30-8:00 PM-additional registration required

Join your fellow Master Gardener volunteers for an evening mixer with light appetizers provided. Chat and learn from your fellow volunteers from across the state.

Friday, September 13- Illinois Conference Center- 111 St Marys Rd, Champaign, IL 61820

8 am: Registration, Coffee and Light Continental Breakfast Station, and Silent Auction open

9 am: Welcome Message

9:15 am to 10:15 am: Keynote Speaker- **May Berenbaum, Head and Professor, Entomology; Swanlund Endowed Chair; Director, Center for Advanced Study**

10:30 am to 11:30 am: Breakout Session 1

1. Soil lead: Cause for Concern? Evidence from Chicago backyard gardens- Andrew Margenot, Associate Professor of Soil Science

Suburban and urban soils can harbor elevated concentrations of trace metal elements, in particular lead (Pb), that present potentially severe risks to human health. Identifying the distribution of soil total Pb in urban areas can serve to quantify the location and magnitude of health risks to urbanites, and thereby inform urban land use and Pb mitigation policies. Join Andrew Margenot for a review of the research he has completed on soil lead levels in the Chicago area and how it impacts growing vegetables.

2. The What and Why of Urban Tree Diversity: Emily Swihart, Extension Horticulture Educator

Trees are major components of our landscape on both a physical scale and a temporal scale. As we seek to implement best practices planting and managing our urban forest, we must begin with the most basic of questions which is “What to plant?”. Join Emily as we will delve into the benefits and challenges of planting a diverse urban forest and explore a variety of species that can help add variety to our landscape.

3. Growing Microgreens and Sprouts at Home- Jennifer Schultz Nelson, Adjunct Instructor

Microgreens and sprouts include any of a wide variety of vegetable and herb plants eaten at the seedling stage. In this class, learn about the key differences between microgreens and sprouts, why eating these young plants are nutritious food choice, and how you can safely grow them yourself at home. Participants will receive supplies to grow both microgreens and sprouts at home after the class concludes.

11:30 am to 12:30 pm: Vendors, Silent Auction, and Lunch (buffet)

12:30 pm to 1:30 pm: Awards Ceremony

1:30 pm: Silent Auction closes

1:45 pm to 2:45 pm: Breakout Session 2

1. This isn't Your Grandparents' Gardening Weather- Duane Friend, State Master Naturalist and Climate Change Specialist

Duane will discuss weather trends, projections, and ways for gardeners to adapt to these changes.

2. Is this Apple Organic? A Primer on Organic Production Practices- Kacie Athey, Specialty Crops Entomologist and Extension Specialist

This presentation will highlight practices that are acceptable in organic production and how they differ from conventional production where applicable.

3. Landscaping: Fact or Fiction- Chris Enroth, Extension Horticulture Educator

With our ever-expanding technology and connectedness, we have more information readily available than any human society in history. In our swirling whirlpool of digital communications, it can be hard to tell what is fact and what is fiction. Join University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator, Chris Enroth, as we dispel landscaping myths of products, trends, and management strategies and get to the science of gardening.

3 pm to 4 pm: Breakout Session 3

1. Planting perennials for native insects or for humans? Designing a planting where everyone wins- Andrea Faber Taylor, Teaching Assistant Professor

Learn about the importance of incorporating herbaceous perennials, especially native species, into your home and community landscapes to support native insects and increase biodiversity. University of Illinois Horticulture professor, Dr. Andrea Faber Taylor, will present a variety of perennials, exploring their strengths and weaknesses as a landscape plant. She will also discuss planting design techniques that ensure a successful planting – supporting both our native insects’ habitat needs and humans’ aesthetic preferences.

2. Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts Training- Camaya Wallace Bechard, Assistant Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

This training/workshop will explore communication skills for promoting inclusion and respect in the workplace and volunteer spaces. Participants will:

- Understand the impact of stereotypes and biased statements, even when casually said
- Identify the most common reasons people sit silent in the face of bias and stereotypes
- Enhance skills for speaking up against stereotypes without blame or guilt

3. Does Local Matter? Embracing Horticultural Food Systems of Illinois- Jack McCoy, Lecturer of Horticulture

Regional/local food systems involve a complex, interconnected web of stakeholders that play an essential role in the health of our environment, economy, and communities. In this session, Jack will walk you through important features of the horticultural crop industry in the state of Illinois, how we interact with it, and major challenges and

opportunities for creating sustainable local food systems.

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm: Silent Auction Pay/Pick Up