

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

August 2024



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists share expertise through Speakers Bureau

It's been said that "The only reason to give a speech is to change the world."

Illinois Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) and Master Naturalists (EMN) are seeking to change their world one speaking engagement at a time through Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell [Speakers Bureau program](#).

The Speakers Bureau program pairs EMG and EMN volunteers who have undergone in-depth training with local audiences seeking expertise in horticulture and natural resources. Requesting organizations register online selecting from a wide range of topics, including vegetable gardening, landscaping, native plants, trees, indoor gardening, conservation, and pollinators and insects. Talks are free of charge, except when noted for workshop materials.

"This program is a great resource for community groups, such as local libraries and garden clubs, looking for educational presentations," explains Tara Heath, horticulture program coordinator.

"As local nonprofit organizations committed to educating and enriching our community, the [Peoria Public Library](#) and University of Illinois Extension have parallel missions that intersect beautifully through the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs," commented Jamie Jones Peoria Public Library, North Branch Manager. "Many Master Gardener and Naturalist speakers have shared their vast knowledge and experience with library patrons through free programming over the years, covering topics from tea gardens to beekeeping, composting, and much, much more! All have been excellent to work with."

Volunteers are equally as excited about sharing their knowledge and passion for the environment.

"Volunteering with the Speaker's Bureau allows me to go to new places and meet new people of various backgrounds and experiences," says Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteer May Bach. "Each presentation, no matter the topic, feels like a personal connection that directly provides the U of I Extension Master Gardener educational goal of helping others learn to grow. I'm thankful that applies to me too!"

Some of the most popular presentation topics requested this year include indoor edible gardens, hydroponics, native plants, native pollinators, cicadas, bird-friendly yards, recycling, composting, and control of invasive species.



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

A Little Patch of Prairie: Opening our Lawns to Nature is an option the general public can select when making a request for an Extension Master Volunteer Speakers Bureau. EMN volunteer Paul Resnick recently delivered this presentation on backyard prairies to an audience at Tazewell County Farm Bureau.

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