



EXTENSION CONNECTIONS

MARCH 2025

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

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



**Food
Connects Us**

2025 NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH
A Campaign by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



National Nutrition Month: Food Connects Us

Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator

March is National Nutrition Month, a time to celebrate the vital role that food plays in our lives. This year's theme, "Food Connects Us," emphasizes how food is more than just sustenance; it's a powerful connector of cultures, traditions, and relationships.

Exploring the Connection Between Food and Culture

Food is a reflection of our history, traditions, and relationships. It tells the story of our heritage and brings people together in meaningful ways. This National Nutrition Month, we encourage you to explore the rich connections between food and culture.

Experiment with Global Recipes

One way to celebrate this connection is by experimenting with recipes from different cultures. Trying new ingredients or cooking techniques can open your taste buds to exciting global flavors. Whether it's preparing a classic Italian pasta dish, a vibrant Indian curry, or a flavorful Mexican taco, each recipe tells a story of heritage and tradition.

Celebrate Diversity in Your Meals

Incorporating your favorite cultural foods into everyday meals not only celebrates diversity but also enriches your own food traditions. You can even try blending different cultural flavors for a fusion twist. This approach not only adds variety to your diet but also honors the diverse culinary traditions that make our world so vibrant.

Food Brings People Together

Sharing meals with family and friends enhances the connection that food fosters. Whether you're gathering for a special occasion or a casual meal, eating together strengthens bonds and creates lasting memories. This National Nutrition Month, let food be your bridge to a world of flavor and connection.

Plan a Global Potluck

This week, consider planning a Global Potluck! Invite friends or family to bring a dish that represents their cultural background or a country they'd love to explore through food. Not only does it celebrate diversity, but it also creates an opportunity to bond, share stories, and create new traditions. Plus, you'll be introduced to new ingredients, cooking techniques, and perhaps discover some new favorites.

Let's embrace the theme of "Food Connects Us" this National Nutrition Month by celebrating the diverse and delicious ways that food brings us together.

Potato Soup Recipe



As we celebrate National Nutrition Month and honor Irish heritage in March, enjoy this comforting and traditional Irish Potato Soup recipe that brings a taste of Ireland to your table. From **Eat.Move.Save.**

Ingredients

3 medium potatoes
4 cup reduced sodium chicken broth
1/2 cup cooked ham, chopped
1 cup nonfat dry milk powder (see notes)
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/2 cup corn

Preparation

Wash potatoes and peel.
Cut potatoes into 1-inch cubes.
Place cubed potatoes in a large pot.
Add broth to pot with potatoes and bring to a boil. Partially cover pot with lid and simmer 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender but not mushy.
Add ham, dry milk powder, onion, and corn to the pot.
Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve hot.
Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours

Note: If you don't have dry milk powder, fluid milk can be used instead. Reduce broth to 3 cups and use 1 cup fluid milk in place of dry milk powder.

Nutrition facts (calculated using dry milk powder.) Calories 250, Total Fat 2.5 g, Sodium 550 mg, Total Carbs 39 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 17 g.

SPRING SERIES OF HOME HORTICULTURE

MONDAYS, APRIL 14, 21 & 28, 6 - 8 PM,
HOLIDAY INN, ROCK ISLAND, IL

Join IL Extension to explore a variety of interesting topics from local horticulture and environmental experts. The cost is \$15/night, \$40/series. Includes hors d'oeuvres. Register at: go.illinois.edu/SpringSeries25



Monday, April 14, 6 - 8 PM

Farming and Foraging of Gourmet Mushrooms

Joshua McAtee, Owner of Wild Growth Gourmet Mushrooms

Discover the fascinating world of gourmet mushrooms. Learn how they are grown commercially and explore the exotic species native to our region.

The Backyard Battle: Identifying and Managing Invasive Species

Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator

Gain insights into managing invasive species in your home landscape. Learn identification techniques and strategies to reclaim your garden from these uninvited guests.

Monday, April 21, 6 - 8 PM

Backyard Bird Cousins

Jimmy Wiebler, Naturalist and Research Coordinator at Nahant Marsh

Explore the diverse world of bird species related to common backyard birds like cardinals and chickadees. Discover the unique characteristics of these bird "cousins."

Forest Bathing: The Japanese Art and Science of Shinrin-Yoku

Leslie O'Ryan, Professor in the Counselor Education Department at Western Illinois University

Experience the benefits of nature through the practice of Forest Bathing. Learn how this Japanese art can help reduce stress and improve mental clarity.

Monday, April 28, 6 - 8 PM

Preserve Like a Pro

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension Nutrition and Wellness Educator

Learn the pros and cons of various food preservation methods. Get expert tips on canning, freezing, drying, and fermenting your garden's bounty..

Veggie Visions: Unveiling New Flavors in 2025

Bruce Black, Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator

Embark on a culinary adventure with the latest vegetable gardening trends. Discover new vegetables for the 2025 season and learn how to grow and use them in your kitchen.

Support for this program is provided by Mel McKay Charitable Trust

Visit Illinois Extension at the Flower & Garden Show March 21 - 23, QCCA Expo Center, Rock Island, IL

Hours: Fri & Sat 10 - 6, Sun, 10 - 3. **Cost:** Adults: \$8 (\$6 in advance) Kids 6-15: \$1

Dive into spring at the Flower and Garden Show offering festive garden designs. Check out the Master Gardener's display, which highlights our extensive plant and gardening resources. Our knowledgeable Master Gardeners will be at the information booth, ready to answer your gardening questions. We also have horticulture presentations lined up for you:

Friday, March 21:

- 12:30 pm: **English Tea Gardens** with Jane Arensdorf, Illinois Master Gardener
- 2:30 pm: **Trees** with Terry Bates, City of Moline arborist
- 4:00 pm: **Native Plants** with Cindy Lenger, Illinois Master Gardener

Saturday, March 22:

- 12:00 pm: **Trees** with Terry Bates, City of Moline arborist
- 1:30 pm: **Lil Green Thumbs** with Heather Bonsell, Illinois Master Gardener

Sunday, March 23:

- 4:00 pm: **Native Plants** with Cindy Lenger, Illinois Master Gardener



VEGETABLE GARDENING SERIES MONDAYS 11 AM - 12:30 PM MARCH 10, 24 & APRIL 7, 21 ROCK ISLAND LIBRARY WATTS-BRANCH

Want to start a garden, but not sure where to start? Emily Swhihart, horticulture educator, leads a Vegetable Gardening Series this spring, presented in partnership with the Rock Island Public library.

Each class meets at 11 am at the Watts Branch. Topics:

- March 10: Seed & Plant Choices, Soils & Fertilizers
- March 24: Cool Season Vegetables
- April 7: Warm Season Vegetables
- April 21: Insects and Diseases

Registration taken by the library at go.illinois.edu/VeggieGardenSeries or by phone: 309-732-7341



COMMUNITY TREE CARE SERIES CONTINUES

Join Illinois Extension to learn more about tree care. Each webinar covers two main topics. The cost is \$10 for general access and \$50 for Continued Education Units. Attendees can join any or all sessions. Register at go.illinois.edu/TreeCareSeries. or call our office at (309) 756-9978.

BENEFITS OF TREES & PRUNING METHODS WEBINAR | WED, MARCH 12, 9 AM

Explore how trees benefit our lives and communities by improving air quality, reducing energy costs, supporting wildlife, and boosting mental health. In part two, discover why pruning is crucial for landscape maintenance and get practical tree pruning tips.

DIVERSITY & ADVOCACY AND CHOOSING NURSERY STOCK WEBINAR WED, MARCH 26, 9 AM

Join this session to empower tree advocates in protecting and expanding community trees. Learn to engage stakeholders, promote tree-planting, and influence green space policies. Discover the ecological, social, and economic benefits of urban forests, and get tips on selecting healthy nursery stock.

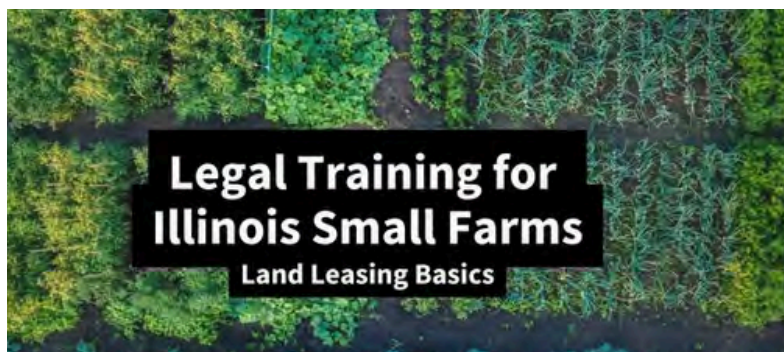
FOLLOW THE DROP: ILLINOIS WATER FROM SOURCE TO TAP EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT WEBINAR THURS. MARCH 13, 1 PM



Illinois is a diverse state when it comes to water resources, and where your water comes from depends on how much is available, the quality of a water source, and its contamination risk. Explore sources of drinking water in Illinois, get an understanding of what your community water or well water goes through from source to tap, and find out how geology or natural contaminants limit the availability of drinkable water.

Sign up for free at go.illinois.edu/sourcetotap

Presenter: Steve Wilson, Illinois State Water Survey groundwater hydrologist.



LAND LEASING BASICS: LEGAL TRAINING FOR ILLINOIS SMALL FARMS WEBINAR MON, MARCH 17, 7-8 PM

Leasing farmland is so commonplace that landowners, farmers, and ranchers may not think twice about the lease itself. Until things go wrong. Prevent problems with a strong lease while building a path to a resilient future. Leasing basics will help to understand what a lease should include and how to put it in writing. Get started with the tools, knowledge, and skills needed to create a strong document that works for individual needs, whether you are a landowner, or farmer.

Register at go.illinois.edu/LandLeasingBasics or call our office at (309) 756-9978.

The Economics of Conservation

Thurs. April 3, 1-3 pm, Cerno's Bar & Grill, Kewanee

Join Illinois Extension and Precision Conservation Management for a **farmer-led** discussion on **in-field nutrient loss reduction strategies** and **conservation practices**, with a focus on **economic impacts**. This event provides a platform for farmers and professionals to share insights, explore financial incentives, and discuss real-world applications of conservation practices.

What to Expect:

- Hear from **local farmers** about their experiences with cover crops and in-field practices
- Learn about **economic considerations** and **financial incentives**
- Engage in an **open discussion**—all perspectives welcome!
- **Connect** with farmers, conservation professionals, and ag experts
- **Appetizers** provided

Come share, learn, and connect!

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

Support provided by: Goldstar Cambridge, Big River Resources, River Valley Cooperative

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact nlh@illinois.edu



4-H WORKSHOPS

Memory Makers Scrapbooking Workshop

Saturday, April 5, 9 am - Noon, Milan



4-H Scrapbooking Workshop

Join the Rock Island County 4-H Teen Federation for a hands-on Scrapbooking workshop, Sat. April 5 from 9 am - noon at Extension office in Milan. Whether you're experienced or new to scrapbooking, this hands-on session offers inspiration, techniques, and supplies. Connect with others, share stories, and create meaningful layouts.

Cost: \$5 (includes a tape runner).

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

GLOBAL GOURMET VIRTUAL SPIN CLUB



4-H Cooking Workshop

Join Illinois Extension 4-H staff from the comfort of your home kitchen! This virtual club meets at 2 pm on Sundays to cook foods from Greece, Mexico, Italy, and Germany! Participants will get to test their skills in person on March 30 for a Global Gourmet Skillathon!

Dates: Sunday March 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 2 pm

Register at <http://4H.ZSuites.org/events>