



Our unit's offices will re-open on these days starting April 5. Regular hours will return June 1.

Rock Island County

321 W 2nd Ave. Milan, IL
(309) 756-9978

Mon, Tues, Wed, 8 am-4:30 pm
& Thurs 8:30 to 11:30 am
(closed 12 - 1 pm)

Henry/Stark Counties

358 Front St. Galva, IL
(309) 932-3447

Mon 8 am-4 pm
(closed 12 - 12:30 pm)

Mercer County

910 13th St. Viola, IL
(309) 871-5032

Tue & Wed, 8 am-4 pm
(closed 12 - 12:30 pm)

We hope you enjoy your copy of this free monthly resource which highlights upcoming programs and topics for better living. To stay up to date on all of our programs, visit our web page: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs and follow us on Facebook @[uiextensionhmrs](https://www.facebook.com/uiextensionhmrs)

Illinois Extension's Spring Guide has helpful resources on gardening, health, safety, nutrition, youth activities and more!



At University of Illinois Extension, we've heard it all.

- How can I keep weeds out of my lawn?
- What kind of snake / bug / weed is this?
- When do hard-boiled eggs expire?
- What can I do to cut down on my grocery bill?

Our new spring resource guide has answers to these questions and more!

Get your answers at go.illinois.edu/Spring2021

Build your best life this spring. Our network of statewide experts are here to help Illinois families, businesses, and communities solve problems and learn new skills with research-based programs and resources covering the topics that matter to you in person and in your county.

Here is a sample of some of the answers



When to plant in Illinois:

Planting dates are determined by two things: the first and last frost dates where you grow, and how much time it takes for a crop to mature. Always check the plant tag or seed packet for the recommended date.

- **Cool-Season Vegetables:** These crops grow and develop best in the temperatures of early spring or fall. Some of these cool-season crops can withstand a frost without being damaged, and some are even improved by experiencing a light frost. Examples: carrots, kale, turnips, and radishes.
- **Warm-Season Vegetables:** These crops do not grow well in lower temperatures and must be planted well after the average last frost date. Examples: tomatoes, squash, and peppers.

Central Illinois spans zones 5b and 6a.

- Frost-free date: April 11-30. First frost: October 11-20.

Read more at go.illinois.edu/WhenToPlant

How to deal with clutter:

Getting rid of your clutter means throwing it away, recycling it, donating it, or selling it. Try this strategy to tackle a junky room, garage, attic, closet, or basement and sort its contents.

Arm yourself with four large containers (boxes or large garbage bags) - plus one laundry basket for:

1. Garbage
2. Recycling
3. Give-aways or donations
4. Yard sale or resale/consignment shop (If you're not planning to sell anything, you'll only need three containers.)



Items that you intend to keep but need to return to their correct places in other rooms should go in the laundry basket. It's easy to carry, and you can easily see the things in it.

Choose your point of attack—the first item to your left as you enter the room, one corner of the basement, or the floor of a closet, for example. As quickly as possible, pick up items one by one and decide which container they go in.

Give yourself a time limit before you start. When your time is up, pat yourself on the back, toss out the garbage, and make one tour around the house with the laundry basket to return misplaced items to their proper homes. Plan when you will stage your next attack on the clutter in that area, or another one.

Read more at: web.extension.illinois.edu/clutter/clearing.html

Tips for reducing food waste at home



April is Earth Month and a great time to take a closer look at the food waste generated at home. What can you do to keep valuable food out of the landfills and more money in your pocket?

With more people preparing food at home it's a good reminder to keep an eye on how much of that food is ending up in the trash. Research shows that food waste increases as home-cooked meals and use of fresh produce increase. Small amounts of waste may go unnoticed over time which is why consumers are encouraged to track their waste and reevaluate their habits at home and when dining out.

North American consumers lead the world in food waste. The average person tosses about one pound of food per day. For a family of four this could mean a loss of \$1,500 or more each year.

Reducing food waste is a shared responsibility and we can all play a part in reaching the national food waste reduction goal – to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. Changing a few habits in our meal planning, preparation and storage can help reduce food waste at home, save money, and protect the environment.

Planning Tips

- Habits take time to build, including checking your kitchen food inventory before going shopping. Shop your refrigerator first to avoid unwanted waste and make a shopping list based on your weekly meal plan.
- Notice how much food gets discarded during holidays and life events. Serve less food, try a no-food event, or send leftovers home with guests.
- Restaurants serve large portions that could easily be shared. Avoid waste when ordering food by sharing meals or selecting items from the lunch or à la carte menus.

Preparation Tips

- Make meal prep work for you. Portion out just enough to eat and freeze the rest in portion containers for quick weeknight meals another day.
- Finish leftovers before making something new. Resist the urge to make something new for dinner if you already have something to eat from a previous meal.
- Use the fresh ingredients first. Nearly half of all fruits and vegetables go to waste so make it a point to use these items quickly before they end up in the trash.



Storage Tips

- One way to extend the life of food beyond its date is to freeze it. It's like pushing the pause button on your food. Freezing food flat also greatly cuts down on defrosting time.
- Get organized. When putting foods away, move them around so foods that are closer to "best-by" dates are in front. This way you are more likely to use them first.
- Keep foods fresh longer by using proper storage techniques. Store your vegetables in the crisper drawer and away from fruits (like apples) that produce ethylene gas, which speeds up the ripening process.

Source: Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator

Sign up for these helpful apps and take charge of your health!

Start Simple with MyPlate App

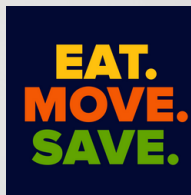
Meet healthy eating goals one at a time! Use the Start Simple with MyPlate app to pick simple daily food goals, see real-time progress, and earn badges along the way. This easy-to-use app can help you make positive changes. Healthy eating can help you achieve a healthier life overall. Get started with Start Simple with MyPlate!



Download the Start Simple with MyPlate app today at www.myplate.gov/resources/tools/startsimple-myplate-app

Sign-Up for the EAT.MOVE.SAVE. Healthy Text Program!

Choose ONE of three ways to sign up to get 1-2 text messages per week! Text message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to unsubscribe at any time.



Use a smartphone camera to scan and sign-up with an online form.

OR

If you live in Rock Island or Mercer County:
Text "rockisland7" to (833) 369-2916

If you live in Henry or Stark Counties
Text "henry7" to (833) 369-2916

GETTING THROUGH TOUGH FINANCIAL TIMES

Many American families are experiencing stress because of the current economic situation. It is hard to imagine a time when uncertainty has been greater and the need for sound advice more important.

Whether you have lost your home or job or are concerned with the decreasing value of your assets, you must rethink your money management strategies to minimize the impact of the current financial situation.

Illinois Extension's website Getting Through Tough Financial Times is designed to help you make good decisions with advice on:

- Managing Your Finances
- Taking Control of Spending
- Helping Families Cope
- Spend Smart/Save Smart Tips

Learn strategies to help you better manage with the advice of Illinois Extension financial experts at web.extension.illinois.edu/toughtimes



\$1000 to Spend: Simulation Event May 18, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Poverty does not look the same for everyone and each individual's personal experience shapes their story of poverty. Join us to learn how it feels when faced with more bills than money—for the long term. What choices do you have and which will you make?

Walk a month in another person's shoes on May 18 during this online simulation. Brought to you free of charge by a collaboration of University of Illinois Extension, The Moline Foundation, Child Abuse Council/AOK Network, and the Moline Public Library.

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/SpendSimulation



ASPARAGUS: A SPRING DELICACY

During spring, asparagus is everywhere!

You may notice it is on sale at the grocery store, or it may even be popping up in your own garden at home. Asparagus is a spring crop that is easy to grow and very cheap in the spring, which may leave you with a surplus of the vegetable in your kitchen!

It can easily be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator either wrapped in a damp paper towel or in an upright container (like a mason jar) in an inch of water for up to three days before use.

Asparagus has a bad reputation for making urine have a pungent smell. The odor is completely normal and is caused by a chemical component that is created when our bodies break down the vegetable's sulfurous amino acids. Although this may be considered downfall of eating asparagus, the benefits of this spring delicacy certainly outweigh this temporary con!

Asparagus is packed full of nutrients and very low in calories. It can be prepared in a variety of ways like being blanched and chopped into salads, oven-roasted with some olive oil and seasonings, grilled, added to your favorite stir-fry, or even pickled! This veggie's versatility makes it a great side dish for your weekend BBQ!

Pesto Pasta with Asparagus

- 1 lb. asparagus (2 cups chopped into 1-inch pieces)
- 8 oz. whole wheat rotini pasta
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- Pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup basil pesto
- 1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, julienne cut
- 1/3 cup feta cheese

1. Prep: Preheat oven to 425 F. Wash asparagus and trim off hard ends. While the oven is preheating, bring a pot of water to boil on the stove. Boil the pasta until tender. Rinse pasta with cool water, drain well and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, garlic powder, and pepper. Drizzle mixture over asparagus and toss to coat evenly. Arrange asparagus in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast for 8-12 minutes or until tender. Once asparagus is roasted and cooled, cut into one-inch bite-size pieces.
3. Place tomatoes in a microwave-safe bowl, cover with water and heat for 1-2 minutes until rehydrated. In a large bowl, combine pasta, asparagus, pesto, sun-dried tomatoes, and feta cheese. Serve warm or cold.

Yield: 9 servings

Nutrition Facts (per serving): 190 calories, 9 grams fat, 235 milligrams sodium, 21 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 7 grams protein



University of Illinois Extension and Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute will present a variety of health topics. **All sessions begin at noon on Wednesdays.** Register at: go.illinois.edu/springtimescience

April 14: Myths and Misconceptions of Metabolism
Can specific foods truly boost your metabolism? Does aging inevitably slow it down? In this presentation, learn the most common misconceptions and important factors that affect your metabolism. Presenter: Jonathan Cerna

April 21: Get to Know your Brain: What We Know About Alzheimer's Disease
Did you know that symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease include more than just memory loss? Learn the symptoms of the disease and the latest research on causes and treatments. The webinar will highlight what research says about reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease. Presenters: Mickeal Key

April 28: Food for Thought: Exploring the Gut-Brain Axis
Have you ever wondered how what you eat can impact your brain? Learn how our gut microbiome could be impacting our brain. Presenter: Corinne Cannavale

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in these programs, please contact Chelsey Byers at cbyers@illinois.edu. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.



Keys for Embracing Aging

What you do today influences your future. Learn how to take care of yourself now to embrace aging and grow gracefully, successfully, and with increased longevity. Keys for Embracing Aging is a free series designed to help aging adults develop strategies for taking care of themselves through the years.

Register at: go.illinois.edu/keysforaging
Each session is 10-11:00 a.m. CST via Zoom.

April 15 | Brain Activity
A healthy brain is crucial to survival, growth, and everyday successes. Similar to the rest of the body, the brain needs exercise and maintenance to optimize and protect its current and future health. In particular, the brain needs socialization, mental stimulation, physical activity, nutrition, and sleep.

April 22 | Social Activity
Engaged people are often healthier, happier, less depressed, and demonstrate enhanced brain vitality. Social activity also improves academic performance, inspires a positive attitude, enhances self-esteem, connects you to family and peers, and reduces the risk of illnesses and disease.

April 29 | Tuning in to the Times
Staying in tune with the times throughout life promotes lifelong learning, which increases knowledge, problem-solving skills, and decision-making.

Four Seasons of Gardening: What's That Bug? How to Identify Insects, April 27, 1:30 p.m.

Have you ever spotted an insect and wondered what type it was? Insects are all around us and play important roles in our ecosystems. Explore how to identify different groups of insects commonly found in Illinois. Join Illinois Extension horticulture educator Ken Johnson for this free webinar. Register at go.illinois.edu/fourseasons



Eat Fresh, Eat Local Series: Eating Local with CSAs April 21, Noon

CSA, short for Community Supported Agriculture, is a subscription-based service for buying from local farmers. Learn about different styles of CSA, produce availability, and tips for eating local with your CSA share. Join Extension nutrition and wellness educator Caitlin Mellendorf to explore this topic. Register at go.illinois.edu/eatfresheatlocal

