



EXTENSION
IN ACTION 

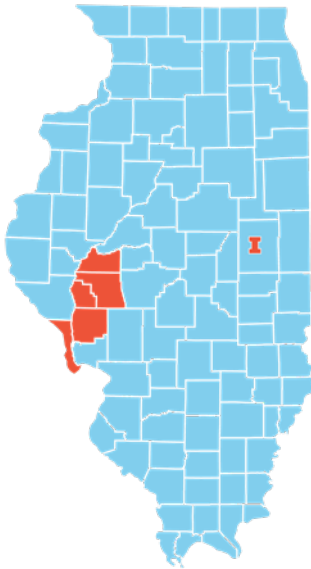
Serving Calhoun, Cass, Greene,
Morgan, and Scott Counties

ILLINOIS EXTENSION 2022





Aaron Dufelmeier
County Director



Celebrating each unique, unforgettable day

I am truly thankful to serve as the county Extension director for U of I Extension in Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Morgan, and Scott counties. I have been blessed to fulfill this leadership role for more than two decades, and it is just as exciting today as it was when I began.

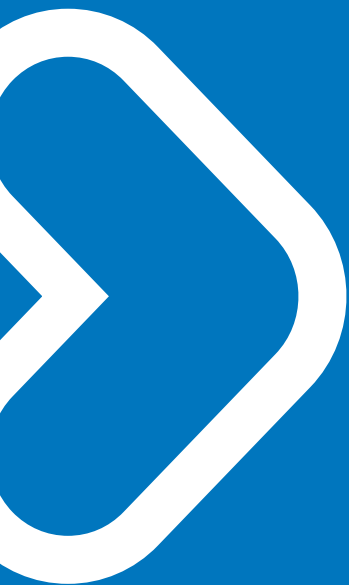
I have been asked what a typical day looks like for a county director. For me that answer is simple: “Each and every day is unique and different, often unpredictable, but never unforgettable.”

It is a privilege for me to provide the guidance and leadership to our staff and their programmatic areas. As you have the

opportunity to read through our report, it is my hope that you will see the scope and impact of our work as it pertains to agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, community and economic development, and family and consumer sciences.

We have an amazing talented team of professionals that work diligently each day to extend knowledge and bring the University to the people. I hope you can take a moment to enjoy a few of the highlights included from 2022 in our report.

Aaron Dufelmeier
County Extension Director



Illinois Extension Makes an Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's land grant mission thrives each day through Extension's programs, resources, knowledge, and dedicated staff that are responsive to five grand challenge themes:



Community:
Support Strong and Resilient Residents



Economy:
Grow a Prosperous Economy



Environment:
Sustain Natural Resources at Home and in Public Spaces



Food:
Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply



Health:
Maximize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

2022 Engagement

Extension leaders, staff, and stakeholders define priorities that create meaningful, mission-centered outcomes throughout the state:

643 Communities Served	720K+ Program Attendees	14.5M+ Webpage Views	22.9M+ Social Media Impressions	900K+ YouTube Views
488 Educational Sessions/Week (25K+ Annually)	95 Online Courses Accessed by 12K+ People	7,062 Local Government Education Webinar Reach	1,807 4-H Clubs	178,341 4-H Affiliations

Partnerships

Resource Generation

5,941 Program Volunteers	269 Community Gardens	1,030 School Partners	\$15,732,391 Value of Volunteer Contributions	\$223,639 Value of Donated Garden Produce
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Extension studies potential of ginger as rotational crop

Specialty crop growers in the United States have begun to consider ginger in their crop rotation due to client demand and as a way to break disease cycles. Fresh, locally grown ginger commands a higher price per pound and presents a far more sustainably grown product than conventional ginger produced on the other side of the planet.

As part of an Illinois specialty crop grant, University of Illinois Extension educators from Macomb, Jacksonville, Quincy, and Murphysboro are collaborating with project partners, including faculty of Western Illinois University and two specialty crop farmers from Galesburg, to better assess ginger's production potential for Illinois specialty growers.

Horticulture educators Ken Johnson and Chris Enroth, along with Master Gardeners, planted ginger in the caterpillar tunnel at the Lukeman Garden and Education Center in Jacksonville. Three 10-foot rows of ginger were planted. Additionally, a row of turmeric and a row of galangal, which grow similarly to ginger, were also planted.

The team is growing varieties of ginger using different growing methods suitable for Illinois, including high tunnels and caterpillar tunnels, to determine the best varieties and protected culture methods, with the goal of producing a ginger crop profile for Illinois growers.

Caterpillar tunnels and other season extension structures like low and high tunnels allow growers to extend the growing season. As a tropical plant, ginger cannot tolerate temperature extremes common in Illinois. Because ginger is not tolerant of temperature extremes, the caterpillar tunnel will allow the plants to be grown into the fall when it is normally too cold. Additionally, in the summer a shade cloth will be put on the tunnel to moderate hot temperatures.

Ginger, turmeric, and galangal were harvested in late October. In total, 71.2 pounds of ginger, turmeric, and galangal were harvested from the tunnel in Jacksonville, and nearly 280 pounds were harvested from all locations combined.

Caterpillar tunnel for ginger production

In April, horticulture educator Ken Johnson, horticulture educator Chris Enroth (Macomb), and local food systems and small farms educator Katie Parker (Quincy) built a caterpillar tunnel at the Lukeman Garden and Education Center in Jacksonville as part of a project looking into ginger production in Illinois.

While similar in appearance, there are a few differences between caterpillar and high tunnels. Caterpillar tunnels are held together by stakes (rebar) and ropes making them much more mobile and cheaper to construct. They use side-to-side crisscrossing nylon rope anchored to the base of each pole to secure its plastic covering.

High tunnels are more permanent structures. They are anchored by ground posts and utilize metal channels wire to secure plastic. They also have sidewalls that allow the sides of the tunnels to be rolled up and down to allow for ventilation.



Because ginger is not tolerant of temperature extremes, the caterpillar tunnel will allow the plants to be grown into the fall when it is normally too cold.







Growing Great Vegetables respond to needs of new gardeners

The last few years have seen a surge of gardeners taking up the trowel for the first time to try their hand at growing vegetables. To help new and beginning vegetables have a successful gardening season, unit horticulture educator Ken Johnson and four other extension educators in central Illinois offered a five-week webinar series covering the basics of vegetable gardening.

Sessions included:

- **Where Will You Garden?:** Speakers discussed different ways vegetables can be grown, such as traditional garden plots, raised beds, salad tables, container gardening, and growing vertically.
- **Seed and Plant Choices and Soils and Fertilizers:** Participants learned about hardiness zones, frost and freeze dates, selecting transplants, starting plants from seed, soil testing, soil amendments, watering, and weeding.
- **Cool Season Vegetables:** Information covered growing and harvesting cool-season vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, and carrots.
- **Warm Season Vegetables:** Instructors discussed how to grow warm-season crops, such as peppers, tomatoes, squash, and sweet corn.
- **Diseases and Disorders:** Participants learned about common insects, diseases, and wildlife pests and how to manage them.

One hundred seventy-five people from Illinois and eight additional states registered for the series. Participants indicated that they increased their knowledge on the different topics covered by attending the series.

Participants also indicated that they would make changes to their gardening practices such as:

- Try a different style of gardening
- Pay closer attention to frost dates
- Increase the number and types of vegetables they grow
- Follow integrated pest management practices.



Good Growing: Blogs, podcasts, and videos help gardeners

The popularity and interest in home gardening has kept the Good Growing team of educators busy developing blogs, videos, podcasts, and emails to provide education to the members of our communities.

The most popular 2022 posts included:

- Seed stratification: What seeds require cold treatment
- Baldfaced hornet: Dangerous bug or beneficial insect?
- How to grow sunflowers at home
- Sparks in the night: Fireflies and tips on conserving them

I find Good Growing to be so delightful because even though I feel like I have quite a bit of knowledge and experience behind me, there's always something to be learned and the staff always presents that information in a fun and non-judgmental way. I feel like it's accessible to everyone!



53
Blog posts



49
Podcasts



36
Videocasts



1,248
Subscribers to weekly email

With this being the first Good Growing webinar I have attended, I enjoyed that there were numerous presenters each with a specific holiday plant to present on rather than only one presenter for a one-hour webinar. Having multiple shorter presentations within a one-hour webinar keeps it engaging. Thank you so much for creating this webinar series!



687
Master Gardener Volunteer Hours



\$21,284
Value of Master Gardener Volunteer Work



112.25
Master Gardener Continuing Education Hours



524
Master Naturalist Volunteer Hours



\$21,284
Value of Master Naturalist Volunteer Work



62
Master Naturalist Continuing Education Hours

♥ McCully Heritage Project hosts nature exploration

Earth Day Field Day

In coordination with the Calhoun County Health Department, an Earth Day field trip day was held at the McCully Heritage Project. Every pre-K through sixth grade student in Calhoun County (Calhoun Elementary, Brussels Elementary, St. Norbert's and St. Mary's schools) attended the field day.

Presenters from the Calhoun County Health Department, Center for American Archeology, Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, TreeHouse Wildlife Center, Illinois DNR Fisheries, Sierra Club, and The Nature Institute participated in the field day, educating students about STEAM subjects, including rivers and floodplains, Illinois fish and wildlife, wetlands, and beaver habitat. The day included sessions on understanding people and archaeology through everyday trash.

Maple on the MAP

The partnership with the McCully Heritage Project continues. The McCully Heritage Project was one of three sites in Illinois participating in the three-year funded research project titled "Putting Maple on the MAP in the Lower Midwest," in collaboration with the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry.

This project was designed to "develop an understanding of the economics and production potential for maple syrup in the lower Midwest and grow awareness and presence of maple syrup production in the region with strengthened information exchange networks through a comprehensive Maple Awareness Program (MAP). An analysis of the region's maple resources and sugarmaking potential will involve biophysical and economic components, using information and assumptions from current producers and research sites." (Executive Summary, "Putting Maple on the MAP in the Lower Midwest.")

Data was collected throughout the maple syrup season on tree size, sap production and sugar content, and seasonal temperature and soil conditions. This data will be used to understand maple syrup production and economic feasibility in the lower Midwest.

Illinois Archeology

Michelle Berg presented a statewide Everyday Environment webinar in April titled, "Illinois Archeology and the Natural Resources." One-hundred and sixty-five people attended the

live webinar. A recording of the webinar was placed on the University of Illinois Extension YouTube channel and has been viewed 426 times.

Women's Woodland Stewardship

Berg served as a co-collaborator organizing the first Tri-State Women's Woodland Stewardship Field Day with Sarah Havens at the University of Missouri Extension and Julia Baker at Iowa State Extension. The women-centered event was held at Shimek State Forest in Farmington, Iowa, and covered topics from forest management, invasive species and management, equipment demonstration, and agroforestry. All presenters were female professionals in the field. Berg presented on shiitake mushroom production as part of woodlot management, and maple syruping – both are value-added non-timber products that can be part of a woodland operation.

EcoAdventurer's Day Camp

The McCully Heritage Project served as the site for EcoAdventurer's Day Camp. In partnership with the Center for American Archeology, this day camp was geared toward bringing STEAM-based programming through environmental and archaeological education to rural students who may not have these opportunities in the summer months. Camps were held for second through fourth graders and fifth through eighth graders.

Berg continued working on shiitake and other cultivated mushroom production as part of woodlot management and value-added non-timber product education. Workshops were held in March, teaching participants how to inoculate logs with mushroom spawn and how to produce mushrooms in a woodland setting.

Berg also participated in the Illinois Specialty Mushroom Focus Group lead by Nick Frillman, local food systems and small farms educator. This group was a collaboration between U of I Extension, private mushroom farmers, and representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health to develop a guide for both mushroom growers and local health department officials to understand existing regulations regarding mushroom farm operations and mushroom sales.

A statewide Master Naturalist field day was held at the McCully Heritage Project in November.



Local governments gain valuable insight from Extension webinars

Extension assists local government officials gain important information to help local residents. In 2022, more than 1,750 people attended local government webinars and another 2,000 people viewed recordings of the webinars. Topics included:

- Illinois Connected Communities Series: Broadband Adoption
- Broadband Build Out: Easements and Right of Ways
- Broadband Build Out: Illinois Railroads
- Federal Legislative Update
- State Legislative Update
- Illinois EPA Water Quality and Watershed Financial Assistance
- Financial Condition Analysis: State of Illinois and Public Organizations
- Clean Energy for Rural America
- Water Quality and Watershed Protection Series
- Assessing US EPA Clean School Bus Incentives
- Geothermal Community and District Scale Systems (Renewable Heating and Cooling)
- Getting Green \$ for Green Infrastructure
- Site Selection: A Review for Community Leaders
- Digital Inclusion in Your Community
- Rural Partners: Small Business Development in your Community
- Rural Partners: Corn Belt Ports Update
- Illinois Innovation Network: Driving Inclusive Economic Development
- SIU Fermentation Science Institute: Past Present and Future

Better Internet for Greene County plans to expand broadband access

With the support of University of Illinois Extension and the Benton Institute, Carrollton participated in a broadband webinar series. Early in the process, they committed to bringing better internet, not just to the city, but throughout the county.

They organized a Better Internet for Greene County committee, partnered with Greene County Economic Development Group, surveyed the community to understand internet speeds and access, conducted a social media campaign sharing results, provided data to numerous internet service providers, and are now working on a broadband fiber project to every home in Greene County totaling over \$93 million dollars.



Ribbon cutting at Little Mexico - Virginia

Little Mexico opens doors In Virginia

Little Mexico, a popular Mexican restaurant with locations in Jacksonville and Beardstown, opened a third location in Virginia in March 2022. Owners Hector Alvarado and Neri Hernandez contacted Virginia alderman Jason French regarding a location for this new restaurant. Jennifer Russell spoke with Hector on several occasions. The popular Depot Diner restaurant had recently closed, a casualty of the COVID pandemic. Russell was able to connect Hector with Kelly Cagle who owned and operated the Depot Diner. Hector and Kelly agreed to terms and the property changed hands. Hector and Neri renovated, repaired, and redecorated the building and have opened a beautiful new dining space in Virginia.

Extension aids Carrollton's downtown development projects

Extension was excited to learn that the city of Carrollton, along with partners from the Carrollton Square Initiative and Greene County, received \$1.9 million from the Rebuild Illinois Downtowns and Main Streets capital grant.

Extension educator Jennifer Russell received thanks and accolades from both the mayor of Carrollton and the Carrollton Square Initiative for her long-term commitment to downtown and regional planning. Her work on the development of the regional EDA CEDS Plan was vital for this grant opportunity. Extension continues to assist area businesses and non-profits with trainings and one-on-one support connecting them to research, grants, resources, and networking.

Over 400 contacts addressed the following issues during 2022:

- Rural grocery
- Broadband
- New business start-ups
- Downtown and regional planning
- Tourism development
- Staff trainings (teambuilding, customer service)



Best Pizza Winner is Benny's Pizza.



Hollywood's Café is a three-time winner!



Buy Local Campaign recognizes Cass County businesses

The annual “Best of Cass County” contest had its most successful year in 2022. The program, begun in 2019, has grown annually as changes have been made to increase interest and participation among the community. This year saw the largest voter participation, with over 1,200 votes cast to decide the winners.

Past changes have included the addition of online nominations, new categories added on an annual basis, and utilizing local networks to distribute the information regarding the contest. Use of the Qualtrics software has made the contest entirely digital, reducing the environmental footprint considerably from the early days of the contest.

This year’s contest, which recognizes the best of Cass County from 2021, saw several new winners and new categories. In addition, a partnership with the Beardstown Chamber of Commerce and Beardstown newspapers resulted in a very large increase in participation among the citizens of Cass County.

Each winner receives a certificate to display in their place of business. Some local restaurants win in more than one category, as several of the categories are food items. Hollywood’s Café in Chandlerville holds the record with three awards in a single year, and they have accomplished this feat each year of the contest! In addition to the certificate, there is typically a notation in the newspaper regarding the winners and information is sent to the local television provider, Cass Communications, to recognize the winners on its local “Hometown Happenings” channel.

This program is a successful way for local businesses to be recognized and appreciated by the local community. It is an annual tradition that local business owners look forward to.



Part Time Job Fair

With several businesses searching for workers, Illinois Extension held a series of part-time job fairs at the local schools to connect local businesses with the local labor force.

These fairs had the goal of helping local businesses find workers for their openings by exposing them directly to the people that are most likely to be able to work these part-time jobs. At Virginia High School job fair, employers set up tables and 25 students visited the fair.



Students sign up with Sunrise FS.



YQCA oversees care of animal production

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals training is a yearly 4-H requirement for youth enrolled in beef, sheep, swine, or goat 4-H projects. More than 300 local youth in the unit go through this process yearly.

The youth learn about three main components:

- Animal Well Being
- Food Safety
- Life Skills

Youth take what they learn back to their family farm and apply it to their everyday work with their animals to provide, not only safe handling and care of their animals, but solid production practices for our consumers.



Find your spark

In 4-H, there are many ways for members to explore their own personal interests through a wide variety of project areas. 4-H often sparks young people to develop friendships, discover a hidden talent, and create a career path through these passions.

One of the most exciting features of a 4-H project area is showcasing all the hard work at during show season.

4-H FAIRS: CALHOUN, CASS, GREENE, MORGAN, AND SCOTT COUNTIES



2,300
General Project Exhibits

1,500
Livestock Exhibits



126
Exhibitors Selected for
Illinois State Fair

90
Illinois State Fair
Exhibitors from Unit

Of the 90 attendees at the 2022 Illinois State Fair from Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Morgan, and Scott counties for the general project show, 29 exhibitors were selected either as grand champion, reserve champion or Inspire Award.



56
4-H Clubs



639
4-H Club Members



3,597
4-H Experiences



85
Community Volunteers



\$244,811
Value of Volunteer Hours





Master Naturalist creates pollinator habitat and free seed library



Penny Moore-Garner is dedicated to increasing the native plant habitat on her farm in Scott County and throughout the area. In recent years, the Master Naturalist turned her attention to Nichols Park. Working with site manager Adam Fletcher, they have created a pollinator garden on the east side of the lake near the pavilion.

Moore-Garner contacted the city parks department and they worked with her to transform a soggy area in the park into a prairie pollinator wetland, complete with a free prairie seed giveaway box that people could use.

The garden provides nourishment for the pollinators who are facing increasing risk from loss of natural habitat and pesticide use.

A seed library was added by Clyde VanHying, park staff member. The library, open to the public, includes pollinator seeds and information for planting.

In addition to the work at Nichols Park, Moore-Garner has established a butterfly garden at Scott County Nursing Home.

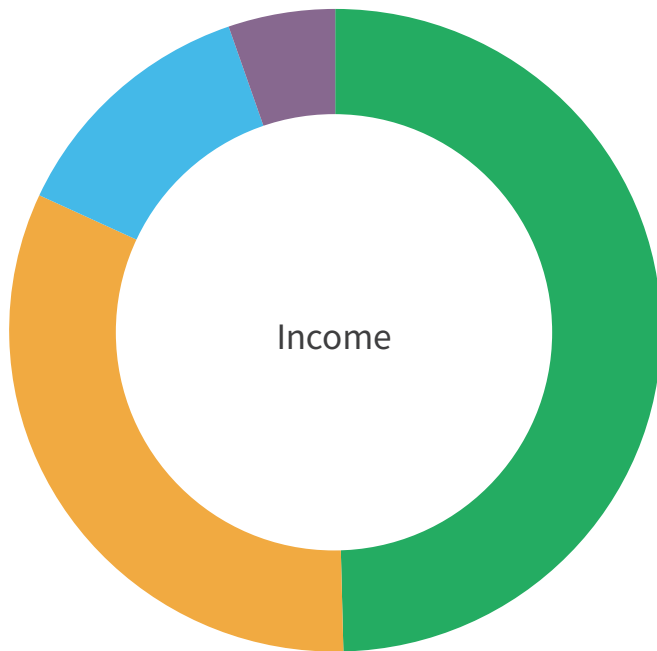


The free seed library offers prairie seeds and planting information.

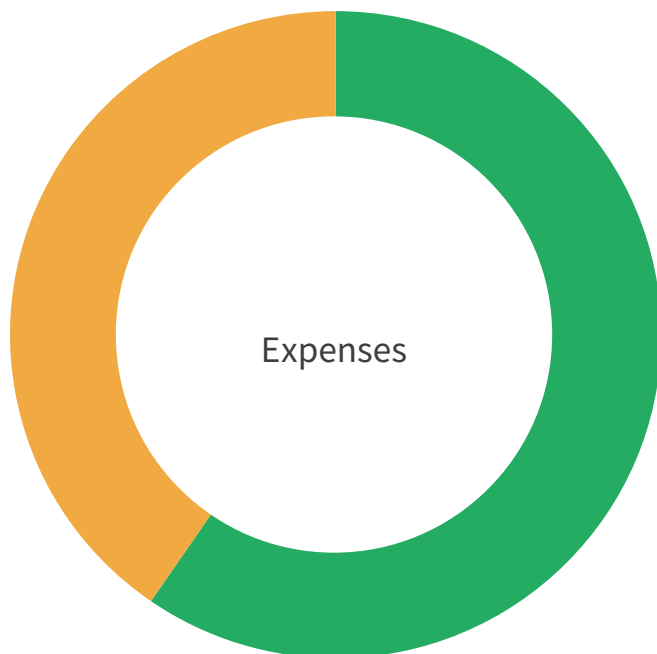


This is the land prior to the work on the pollinator garden at Nichols Park.

Total Budget: \$779,917



- 49.6% Local \$386,999.
- 32.3% State \$251,549.
- 12.8% Federal \$100,000.
- 5.3% Other \$41,369.



- 59.6% Personnel \$464,950.
- 40.4% Non-Personnel \$314,967.

Duane Friend provides leadership for new climate and weather resources



Duane Friend, climate specialist and state Master Naturalist coordinator, has produced 17 videos that are now featured on Extension’s new weather and climate websites. Those videos, 2 to 4 minutes in length, receive up to 20,000 views each month. The most popular video is How to Read a Weather Map.

Being prepared for severe and hazardous weather is essential for keeping you and your family safe. By staying informed on the weather in your area, you can always be prepared for what is to come. The site includes information on lightning, tornadoes, hail, and other types of weather. The site also features Duane’s biweekly blog which receives 2,000 hits a month.



Check out the new Weather website extension.illinois.edu/weather



Check out the new Climate website extension.illinois.edu/climate



Don’t miss out on Duane’s All About Weather blog extension.illinois.edu/blogs/all-about-weather

Programs bring nutrition to life for families and kids



Find Extension’s Eat.Move.Save information booth at the Beardstown Save-A-Lot every Friday. SNAP-Ed staff share recipes, nutrition handouts, and a small activity so participants can practice using new skills. Samples of the recipe are also provided.

Kindergarten through third grade students learn about serving sizes and nutritious foods from Tina Miller. The “Serving Up MyPlate” incorporates math, science, English language arts, and health into the nutrition education lessons.

CATCH Kids Club is a popular afterschool program to encourage healthier eating habits and physical activity for youth in grades kindergarten through fifth grade and is offer at Beardstown and the Virginia Teen Reach youth group.

Illinois Junior Chef cooking schools are provided to youth in Cass County throughout the summer.

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Closed Noon - 1 PM

Calhoun County

818 S. Park, P.O. Box 366
Hardin, IL 62047
618-576-2293
Fax: 618-576-8013
Tuesday, Thursday 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed Noon - 1 PM

Cass County

651 S. Job
Virginia, IL 62691
217-452-3211
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Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed Noon - 1 PM

Greene County

25 N US Hwy 67
Carrollton, IL 62016
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Monday, Wednesday 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed Noon - 1 PM

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401 N. Walnut
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Tuesday, Thursday 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed Noon - 1 PM

Cover photo: Pollinator garden at Nichols Park



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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