

SEPTEMBER 2020

EXTENSION CONNECTIONS

University of Illinois Extension

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Mercer County, 910 13th St. Viola, IL (309) 871-5032
Website: extension.illinois.edu/hmrs

Offices are currently closed due to COVID-19. Staff are working remotely. Visit our website for contact information or call your county office, leave a message and we will get back to you ASAP. Thank you!

University of Illinois Extension experts are here to help families, businesses, and communities solve problems and learn new skills with research-based webinars, virtual meetings, videos, and more. We hope you enjoy your copy of this new 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)

Sincerely,
Jenny Garner
County Director

Join in our Healthy Trails Contest
See how you can Walk, Read, Win!

September is Fruits & Veggies- More Matters Month

by Kristin Bogdonas, IL Extension nutrition and wellness educator

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults consume 1.5–2 cups of fruits and 2–3 cups of vegetables per day. Despite these recommendations, only 1 in 10 US adults eat the recommended amount of fruits or vegetables each day. This number is even lower among American youth.

Most people know that eating fruits and vegetables is important for good health, but most of us still aren't getting enough. This September, let's all make an effort to include more of these nutritional powerhouses into our diets.

Eating a healthy diet with plenty of vegetables and fruits can help you:

- Lower your risk for heart disease and some types of cancer
- Maintain or reach a healthy weight
- Keep your body strong and active
- Keep you feeling full with fiber
- Add color and important phytochemicals to your meal



To help you and your family fit more fruits and vegetables into your day:

Plan and cook smart- Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.

Make it convenient- Keep a bowl of fruit handy where the whole family can see it. Research shows that the food on your counter can predict your weight. It boils down to the "See-Food Diet" – you eat what you see! Cut up fruits and veggies ahead of time so they're ready for quick, healthy snacks.

Celebrate the season- Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.

Try canned and frozen options- Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added".



Healthy Trails Campaign! Walk, Read, Win!

Being physically active is one of the most important actions that people of all ages can take to improve their health.

To help you MOVE MORE, and learn healthy living tips, University of Illinois Extension has developed a Healthy Trails contest.

During the month of September we will be posting healthy living signs along popular walking paths. Visit one of these locations to read our signs, and then take an online health quiz to be entered into our prize drawings!

Adult winners can choose between a pressure cooker, a blender or an air fryer to assist in the creation of healthy meals!

Youth winners will receive a fitness tracker to encourage their active lifestyle. Winners will be notified by the end of the day October 9th. Good luck and have fun!

Visit our Healthy Trails to participate:

- Sept 3 - 7: Hennepin Canal, Milan/ Big Island at Lock 31
Visit our pollinator garden there too!
- Sept. 8- 13: Ben Butterworth Parkway, Moline, IL Across from WIU
- Sept. 14 - 20: Aledo Bicycle Path, Aledo, IL near McDonalds
- Sept. 21 -27: Galva Park District, SE 6th Street, Galva, IL
- Sept. 28 - Oct. 4: Sunset Marina, Rock Island, IL Near the 18th Ave entrance

For more information, visit go.illinois.edu/HealthyTrails

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& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Fighting social isolation

Cheri Bercham, IL Extension Family Life educator

Social isolation and loneliness are serious health risks that affect a large portion of the older population. Approximately one quarter of community dwelling older adults are socially isolated and 43% report feeling lonely – and this was data collected BEFORE this current pandemic.

There is increasing evidence that social isolation has been linked to an increase in many physical and mental conditions like heart disease, obesity, depression, Alzheimer's disease and even mortality (Wu, 2020). According to a recent article in The Conversation, Marcia G. Ory and Matthew Lee Smith from Texas A&M University gave some great suggestions for older adults to stay active and engaged especially during the pandemic:

- **Plan your day and keep a routine.** While the days may seem to be an endless blur, keep up with daily routines like getting out of bed, getting dressed and being engaged with small activities. Planning time for online classes, calls with friends, reading, puzzles, cooking, gardening or home repairs can give meaning to the days. | *Check out Extension's Healthy Aging Online Classes* →
- **Stay physically active.** Find exercises that can be done at home or in the immediate neighborhood, like walking. Many virtual and online physical activity and health promotion programs are available, which can remotely foster engagement and connection to others.
- **Know your risk for social isolation.** Take the AARP Foundation's Connect2Affect tool online to assess your risk for being socially isolated, and refer to the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 or online for support services you might need.
- **Don't be afraid to leave home, but do so wisely.** New CDC guidelines emphasize what older adults can do to stay safe when leaving home. For example, when going outside, practice everyday preventive actions: Carry a cloth face covering, tissues and hand sanitizer; encourage others to wear cloth face coverings when out in public; and avoid close contact with others who are not wearing face masks to the extent possible.
- **Think of others.** Regularly reach out to others who may need to hear a friendly voice on the phone. Volunteering has been shown to have many positive health benefits, and there are online opportunities for doing so.
- **Accept help from others.** Many individuals and organizations are working hard to keep seniors socially connected. Remain open to accepting the kindness and support from family members, friends, health care providers and social service agencies.

Let's continue to be careful and stay healthy until we can be safely together again, but with new appreciation and gratitude for each other.



Join our free online **Discover Healthy Aging Series!** Register at go.illinois.edu/HealthyAging

Looking for the Funny Side of Life | September 10, 10 AM

When is the last time you laughed a hearty, sidesplitting belly laugh? According to the Mayo Clinic, humor has both physical and psychological health benefits. Family Life Educators Tessa Hobbs Curley and Chelsey Byers will demonstrate ways to use humor to cope with stress and changes in life.

Finding Your Get UP and Go | September 17, 10 AM

Most everyone has days, or seasons of life, where it's hard to find motivation to accomplish tasks. Family Life Educators Karla Belzer and Molly Hofer will help listeners hone in on what causes those motivational ups and downs, and give ideas on how to boost enthusiasm and increase productivity.

Live Your Bucket List | September 24, 10 AM

A bucket list is simply a list of things you'd like to do in your lifetime. Simple in theory, but the point is often missed. Family Life Educators Chelsey Byers and Karla Belzer challenge you to actually put those big goals and dreams down on paper and actively pursue your interests to live your life to the fullest, one bucket list item at a time.

Free Online Gardening Classes

Hardscaping Basics for Patios & Retaining Walls | Tue Sept 15 | 1:30 PM

Do you have a vision of a retaining wall or patio in your yard, but aren't quite sure where to start? Join IL Extension Horticulture Educator, Chris Enroth to learn the basics of modular patio paver and retaining wall installation.

Register at go.illinois.edu/4seasons_webinars



Creating a Bottle Terrarium | Tue Oct 13 | 1:30 PM

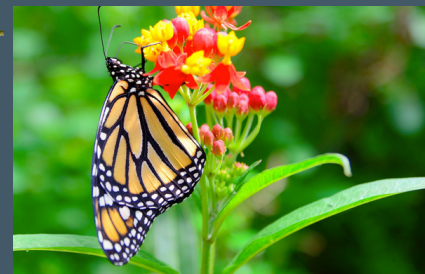
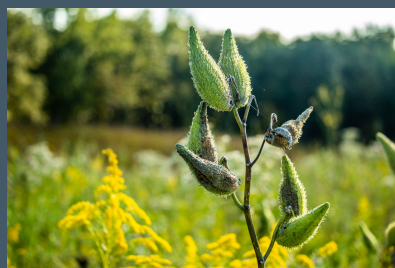
Explore the enclosed world of bottle terrariums, self-contained plant environments within glass. Join IL Extension Horticulture Educator Bruce J. Black to explore terrariums, their needs and how to create a bottle version of a terrarium. Register at go.illinois.edu/4seasons_webinars

Get your gardening questions answered by Illinois Extension Master Gardeners!

Call 217-300-9390 or online
@go.illinois.edu/AsktheMasterGardener

Harvest milkweed pods; plant Monarch butterfly garden

Source: Kelly Allsup, IL Extension horticulture educator



Illinois needs to plant milkweed, and a lot of it, over the next 18 years to ensure the state's official insects, monarch butterflies, survive.

The prairie state, as its name suggests, was once covered in grasses and flowers that were habitat and food for migrating butterflies. Development has reduced the availability of milkweeds, which is the only food source for monarch caterpillars. Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) will be considered for inclusion on the Endangered Species list in December 2020.

Harvesting & germinating milkweed seeds

Do your part and plant milkweed to feed the monarchs. With permission from landowners, you can pick milkweed seed pods this fall rather than buying seeds or purchasing plants. Each pollinated milkweed flower forms one to two large teardrop-shaped green pods that turn brown or maroon as they mature.

Pick pods when they are dry and just starting to split open. Seeds can't germinate if they have not been allowed enough time to mature on the plant.

After harvesting the seeds, you can plant them this fall*

- Allow pods to dry out, then pry them open and separate the seeds by holding one end and stripping the seeds away from the white fluff known as floss.
- You can sow milkweed seeds by scattering them on the soil surface 1/4-1/2 inch apart,
- Cover them with about 1/4 inch of additional soil.
- Water the area frequently after planting until plants become established.

*Fall planting advice from Monarch Joint Venture
<https://monarchjointventure.org/resources/faq/grow-wing-milkweed-from-seed>

Sign up for "Get Savvy" and Learn Tips to create good financial habits



The earlier you start smart money management habits, the sooner you'll be on your way to a solid financial future. Learn techniques for smart spending, investing, securing loans, and money management in a 7-part series. Our experts break down these financial topics into easy-to-understand practices to get you started. All webinars are free and open to the public. Register online at go.illinois.edu/GetSavvy2020

- Sept. 23: Financial Tools for Uncertain Times, practical financial tips for the school year during these extraordinary times.
- Oct. 21: Learn to identify budget busters and take control of your money in Budget Hacks
- Nov. 11: Debunk credit myths and build a positive credit history in Conscious Credit
- Jan. 27: Gain an overview of tax basics and free resources for filing taxes with Tackling Taxes
- Feb. 24: Find out tricks to eat well for less in Save on Food Costs
- March 10: Learn how to begin investing for wealth over time in Investing Basics
- April 14: Build a student loan pay-off plan that fits your situation during Student Loan Repayment.



feedingmybaby.extension.illinois.edu

This University of Illinois Extension website provides expert information to put you at ease when feeding your baby. Get advice from experts on when is the best time to start feeding your baby solid foods. Learn how to make homemade baby food. Discover how to tell if your baby is hungry or full. Learn about baby-led weaning and more!

**EAT.
MOVE.
SAVE.**

Illinois Extension's **Eat.Move.Save** website is dedicated to helping you make healthier choices on a budget with fitness activities and recipes <https://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu/>

APPLE TUNA SALAD

Ingredients

1 can (12 ounces) water packed tuna, drained
1 cup apples*, unpeeled, diced
1/2 cup celery, chopped
1/4 cup nuts, chopped
1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise or plain yogurt



Preparation

Wash hands with soap and water.
Gently rub produce under cool running water.
Combine all ingredients and chill. Serve on lettuce or in a sandwich.
Note: You can also try this recipe with canned chicken instead of tuna.
**We recommend using a snacking variety of apple such as Honeycrisp, Gala, Granny Smith, Fuji, or Pink Lady*

We are here to help you find your healthy eating style today.

Get a free monthly e-newsletter!
Sign-up at: go.illinois.edu/EatMoveSave

Sign up for the Healthy Text Program
Get text's sent to your cell phone to inspire healthy living at
go.illinois.edu/HealthyText



I Didn't Know That!

September 29 is National Coffee Day!
Like baseball and apple pie - coffee is a big part of American culture. It can be found at almost any restaurant, gas station and many homes. Die-hard coffee drinkers feel they can't function without their daily cup (or pot) of joe!

Coffee beans grow on the coffee tree and are produced from a flowering blossom. It takes nearly a year for the bean (or cherry) to mature. When dried, roasted and ground, it's used to brew coffee. In the past, coffee has received negative reviews for being considered bad for you. Today, research is showing that coffee has beneficial properties to our health. Get the "scoop" on coffee at this upcoming free online class!

Coffee Talk, September 24, 9 - 9:30 AM
Join IL Extension nutrition and wellness educator Kristin Bogdonas, and Hy-Vee registered dietitian Nina Struss to learn more about the history of coffee and its health benefits. They will demo recipes and lead a fun discussion in this free online ZOOM class. Plan to pour yourself a cup of coffee and join them! Register at go.illinois.edu/coffeetalk



Find Food Illinois: new community map locates food assistance sites

Over 2 million Illinois residents rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for food assistance according to May totals from Illinois Department of Human Services. That number increased 14.4% from January as the effects of COVID-19 impacted the financial stability and food security of individuals and households across the state. To help Illinois residents and families meet their basic food needs, University of Illinois Extension launched a new Illinois community food map in early August that allows individuals to search by Illinois zip code for all food resources in that area.

Visit the site at: go.illinois.edu/ILFoodMap