

VOL.1 ISSUE 4. OCTOBER 2024

ILLINOIS GREEN CONNECTIONS

Extension Master Volunteers Newsletter
Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell Counties



Welcome to Fall

BY NICOLE FLOWERS-KIMMERLE



We have officially moved from summer to fall. With cooler temperatures and shorter days, plants are starting to prepare for winter. We see these signs everywhere, from bright flowers turning into fluffy seedheads, green leaves changing to orange, red or yellow, to leaves falling. It is a beautiful time of year. We are seeing the fruitfulness of all of the summer work that was done. As we celebrate the harvest and work well done, we also prepare for gardens and wildlife to go through a season of rest as temperatures drop. Fall blooming flowers, seed heads and nutritious nuts and berries help both migrating and overwintering animals. Smart fall garden cleanup is one way we can provide habitat and resources for all types of garden wildlife friends.



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Photo by Anita Wilkinson

Start Saving your Seeds Today

BY NICOLE FLOWERS-KIMMERLE, ILRIVERHORT BLOG

If you find the perfect tasting tomato, harvesting and saving the seed will ensure you can have that tomato again next season. The seed stores the genetic information for a new plant. With a bit of practice and patience, you can have the seeds of your favorite vegetables ready for next year's garden.

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Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Healthy plants produce the best seeds. Avoid stressing plants by planting in good soil, proper watering, and reducing pest problems.

NICOLE FLOWERS-KIMMERLE

Eco Friendly De-Icing Practices

BY JENNIFER BASS, EMG, EMN, C@H, ILRIVERHORT BLOG

It will not be long until we are in the Holiday Season and then welcoming a new year. With winter we experience a new set of weather patterns from rain, to sleet, ice, and snow. Rain is manageable, snow can be shoveled but sleet and ice are probably the most difficult of winter weather to cope with. Often our remedy is to broadcast salt or an ice melt which has advantages because it does make walking and driving much safer and easier. However, long term, continual use of these products has an adverse effect on our driveways, gardens and environment.

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Successfully Overwintering Hostas in Pots

BY SUSAN MCCABE, EMG, [ILRIVERHORT BLOG](#)

I used to dislike Hosta very much. I thought, "They are just green!" But I finally began to see their beauty over the years of growing flowers. Now, I love the definitions of color, the shades of color, and their steadfastness.

I soon outgrew the area where I had to plant them, which led me to plant them in pots. First, I planted a few pots to elevate above others in my Hosta garden. Then, I planted the pots on the steps leading up to my deck.

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Photo by Susan McCabe

When Is A Garden Not A Garden

BY ELLEN DENLER, EMG & C@H, [ILRIVERHORT BLOG](#)

The dictionary definition of garden is “a space where plants are displayed, cultivated, and enjoyed.” In recent years that definition has changed a great deal. With the increased use of native plants, gardens have become more—well---wild. The addition of these plants to our yards has sometimes brought rude comments from casual observers.

Daylilies, hostas, and daisies are recognized by these individuals, but Joe Pye, rattlesnake master, and cup plants are not. In most cases “to be known is to be loved.” If someone doesn’t recognize a plant it is too often called-----gasp-----a “weed.”

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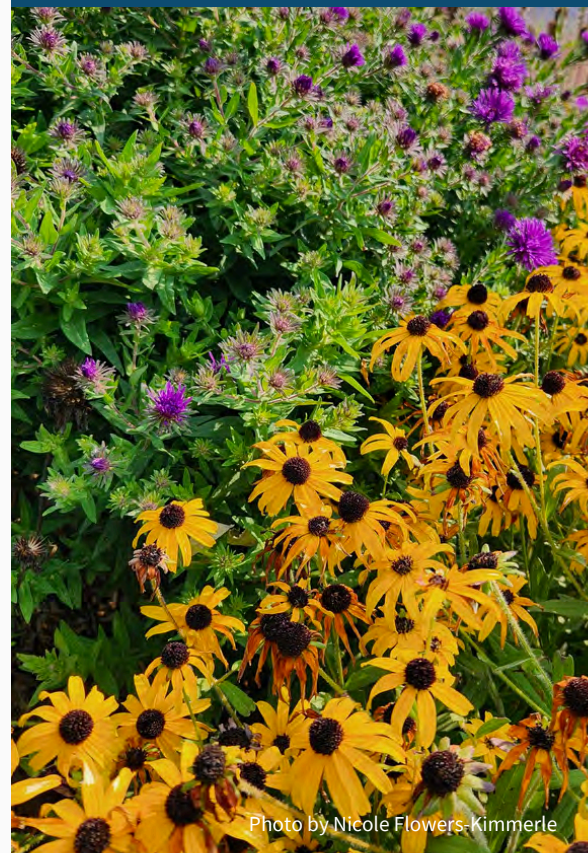


Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

“Look at nature—there is order and design—not forgetfulness.”

ELLEN DENLER

Morton Public Library Tree Walk

[ILLRIVERHORT BLOG](#)

The [Morton Public Library](#) has a diverse collection of trees planted on the library property.

Extension Master Gardeners have identified twenty-six trees to illustrate that diversity and provide a sampling of species one might find in Illinois. Both the common and scientific names of each tree are listed, along with identifying characteristics, so that patrons may walk the property and familiarize themselves with each tree.

[READ MORE](#)



Beyond maples: Trees for fall color

BY KEN JOHNSON, [GOOD GROWING](#)

With the arrival of color temperatures and shorter days, plants have begun the process of preparing themselves for the coming winter. One of the most notable ways this happens is the [changing colors of our trees](#). From yellows, golds, oranges, reds, and purples, our landscapes will soon be, or perhaps already are, awash in colorful foliage.

[READ MORE](#)

Descriptions include key characteristics for identifying tree species, such as leaf shape, attachment, tree shape, height, bark, fruit, and buds.



Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Book Study Wrap-Up Discussion

NOVEMBER 13, 1:30 PM ON ZOOM

Whether you have read one book or all of the books on the Tree Book Study List we would love hear what you would like to share in this end of the year zoom meeting. For details about the book study list visit ILRiverHort, [Branching Out: Launch your book journey into the world of trees.](#)

ZOOM LINK

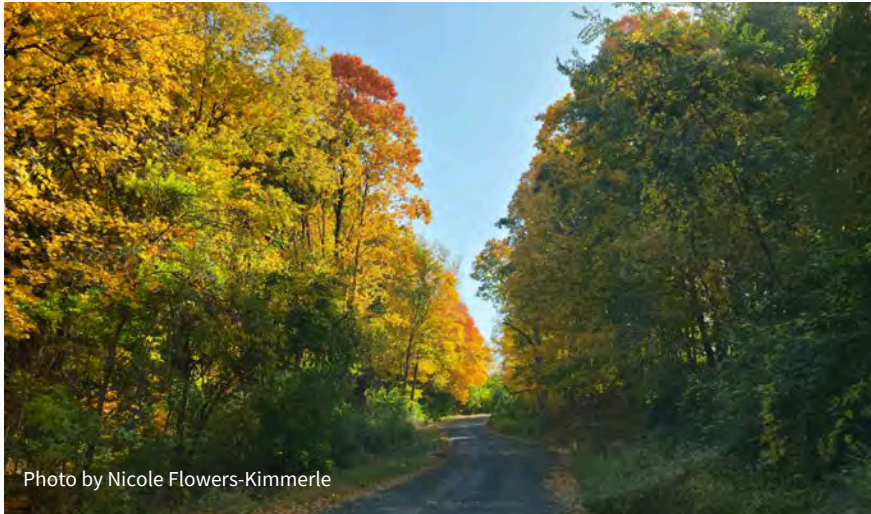


Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle

Update Impacts by October 28

As we look to the end of 2024, we are eager to share about the work you have done throughout this year. Please update your impact and continuing education hours in Give Pulse by Monday, October 28, 2024. We want to share about the positive impacts you have had on local communities in 2024, and this helps us to tell that story.

After that update, keep recording until December 15th. It would be helpful to have all 2024 impacts in by that date as we share that information with the state Illinois Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs at that time.

If you need assistance in recording impacts in Give Pulse, contact Karen Weigelt at kweigelt@illinois.edu or 309-685-3140.

Follow us on social media for more information and connect with other participants:

- [Illinois Extension Fulton, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell Book Study Facebook group](#)
- [University of Illinois Extension Book Study Group on the Book Club website](#)

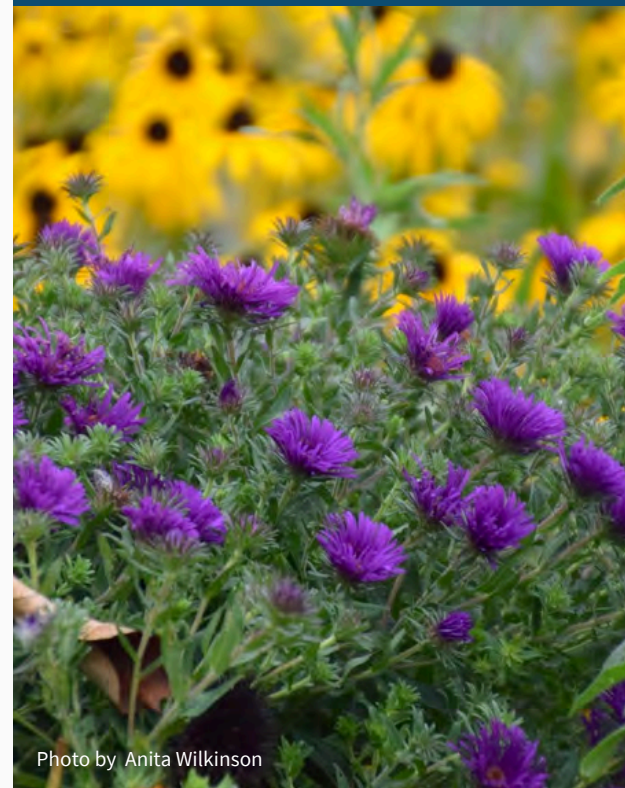


Photo by Anita Wilkinson

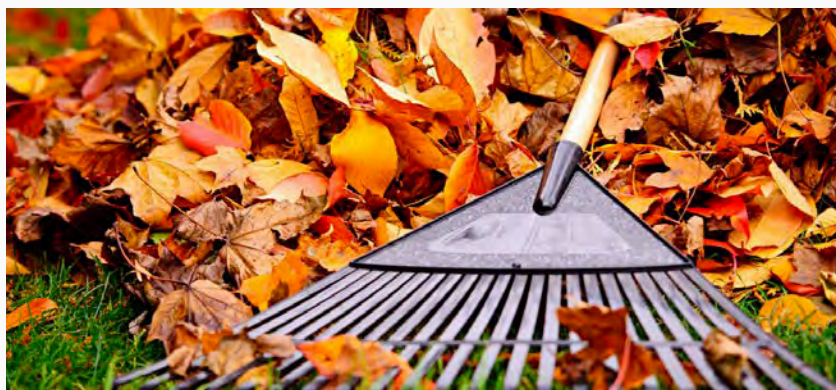


Consider pollinators during fall garden cleanup

BY GEMINI BHALSOD

Global pollinator decline, fueled by habitat loss and climate change, is affecting local ecosystems, native plants, and the birds and animals that eat insects as a part of the food web. Luckily, there is something that everyone can do this fall to preserve the overwintering habitat of insect pollinators. During the fall cleanup of your flower and vegetable garden, consider incorporating a few simple strategies into your garden routine.

[READ MORE](#)



Plant spring bulbs now for early spring beauty

BY BRITTNAY HAAG, [FRUITS, FLOWERS, & FRASS BLOG](#)

With outside temperatures cooling, many gardeners are ready to give their tools (and their body) a rest. Although your gardening enthusiasm may be fading, preparation has just begun for another season of color: planting spring bulbs. After a cold snowy winter, you will be glad you planted these botanical beauties, as they flood a barren landscape with color. Plant spring bulbs in late September through October to support strong root development before winter. Depending on the location, the first blooms (snowdrops) arrive in February followed by a parade of blooms through late June (alliums).

[READ MORE](#)

email: uiemg-peoria@illinois.edu

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| | |
|----------|--------------|
| Fulton | 309-547-3711 |
| Mason | 309-543-3308 |
| Peoria | 309-685-3140 |
| Tazewell | 309-347-6614 |





Leave grasses intact in the garden through fall and winter

BY ERIN GARRETT, [GRASSES AT A GLANCE](#)

You may have heard the phrase “leave the leaves” when it comes to deciding what to do with your trees’ fallen leaves in autumn. But what about the herbaceous plants and grasses in your home landscape? Should you leave them standing over the winter or cut them down? Let’s take a closer look at the role that native grasses play in your garden.

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Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **October 1, 10 am:** ACORN: Accessible Nature Exploration in Central Illinois, [Gateway Building](#)
- **October 2, 9 am to noon:** [Spring Creek Preserve main parking lot on Spring Creek Road](#), Hike in beautiful Spring Creek Preserve where we will be learning about how to identify some of the many species of trees that grow there. [Register](#)
- **October 7-11, 9 am to 3 pm:** [Extension Core Horticulture Education](#). Join us for the Welcome picnic at [Luthy Botanical Garden](#) on October 9, bring a dish to share and meet the Core Horticulture Education participants.
- **October 16, 1:30 pm:** Seed Saving Panel, [Illinois Extension office, Peoria](#). Panelist share their experience with seed saving.
- **October 28, 5:30 pm:** Potluck and Seed Share. [Illinois Extension Office](#), Pekin. Bring a dish and seeds to share as we reflect on our year in the garden.
- **November 13 at 1:30 pm:** 2024 Tree Book Study zoom meeting. [Event Details](#)
- **November 20 at 1 pm:** End of year potluck and share, [Illinois Extension office, Peoria](#)
- **December 10 at 5:30 pm:** **Wallace Park**. End of the Year Gathering. A time to enjoy each other’s company and celebrate all of the accomplishments and experiences of 2024.
- **April 5, 2025 8:30 am to 12:30 pm:** Gardener’s Big Day, [Spoon River College](#), Canton

Details

Check online for more information about upcoming events

- [Illinois Extension FMPT Events](#)
- [U of I Extension ILRiverHort Facebook Page](#)





Volunteer Opportunities

- **Pekin Giving Garden:** Megan Steier
- **Morton Giving Garden:** Pam Scott, Monday & Thursday am.
- **Tazewell County Health Department Garden:** Trudy Yazujian, Tuesday & Friday, 8 am - noon.
- **4-H Learning Garden:** May Bach, Tuesday & Thursday 9 - 11 am.
- **Holy Family Church's St. Fiacre Gardens:** Bob Reading, Wednesday & Saturday, 9 am - noon.
- **Rt 150 Garden:** Polly Wagner, Tuesday from 7 - 9 am.
- **Kim St John Butterfly Habitat:** Randy Huber and Louise Bassett, Wednesday from 8:30 - 11:30 am.
- **ICC Demonstration Garden:** Jennifer Bass, Tuesday 9 - 11:30 am.
- **Morton Public Library:** Janine Donahue and Sarah Smith
- **Jubilee Butterfly Garden:** Patricia Melaik, Thursday 9 - noon.
- **Mission of Hope Community Garden:** Carol Cihla
- **St. Anne's Garden of Hope:** Mike Brooks, Please sign up on our [website](#).
- **Peoria Academy's Vegetable Garden:** Laura Hertz, Wednesday 9 - 11 am.
- **Peoria Zoo Pollinator Garden:** May Bach, Tuesday &/or Wednesday am.
- **Friendship House:** Kendra Belk
- **Lettuce Share Romain:** May Bach
- **Spring Creek Work Days:** Mike McGraw, 2nd Wednesday of the month.
- **Elwood Work Days:** Ed Coleman, 3rd Sunday & 3rd Wednesday of each month, 9 am - noon.
- **Donovan Park workday:** David Pittman, August 18 from 1-3 pm.
- **Rocky Glen Work Days:** Steve Maxwell
- **Gardening Helpline:** Larry Stratton or Holly Teig
- **Conservation@Home Evaluator:** Ellen Denler or Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle
- **Speaker's Bureau:** Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle and Chris Schmidt
- **Newsletters:** Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle and Jennifer Bass

Project Stoplight Video

LOCAL OPAL

"I just want people to spend more time outside," explained University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalist Julie Robinson.

This was the passion driving Robinson to build a website called Local OPAL, which stands for Outdoor Playing And Learning, www.localopal.org. She created an online resource that helps everyone easily find publicly accessible outdoor locations in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell, Marshall, and Woodford counties.

[WATCH](#)

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
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Work Days

Check with project lead about specific dates, work days can change due to conflicts and weather issues.



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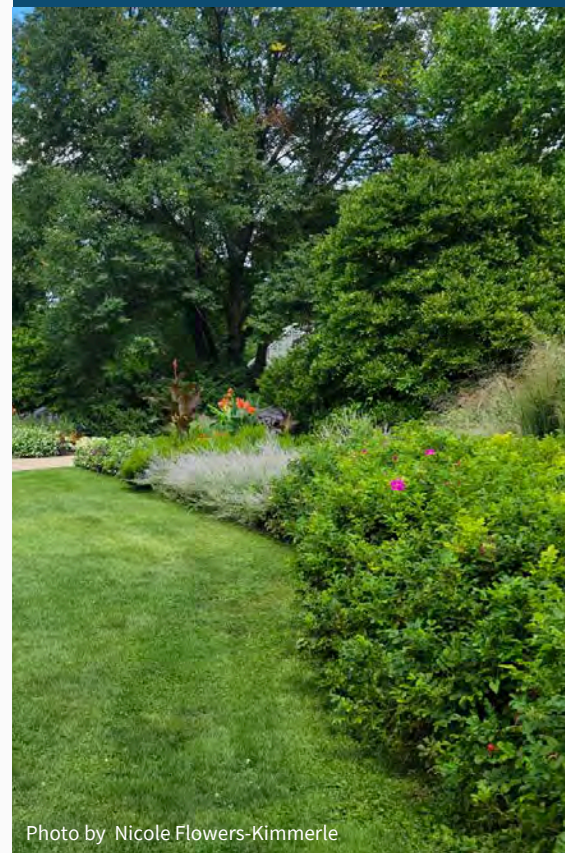


Photo by Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle