



Illinois Extension

MARCH 2023

Connections Newsletter

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

Fuel for the Future

Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator

March is National Nutrition Month®, which is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It invites everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

2023 will be its 50th anniversary, and the theme for this year is Fuel for the Future. One way we can fuel for the future is to eat with the environment in mind. Buying foods in season and shopping locally, when possible, not only benefits the planet, but it also may help you keep food costs down. Enjoying more plant-based meals and snacks is another option. **Try more meatless meals or substituting some or all of the meat in recipes with plant-based proteins.**

Beans and Lentils



These plant proteins are often overlooked. Beans and lentils are versatile and can be added to many dishes. Beans provide about 20 grams of protein per ½ cup, and lentils provide 9 grams per ½ cup. Beans and lentils are also an excellent source of fiber. Just ½ cup will provide 7-8 grams of fiber. Aim for 25 grams of fiber per day.

Cooking with Lentils

Lentils do not require soaking like other pulses, such as beans, peas, and chickpeas.

- Rinse your lentils with fresh water before boiling to remove any dust or debris.
- Cook on stovetop, using 3 cups of liquid (water, stock, etc.) to 1 cup of dry lentils.
- Bring to a boil, cover tightly, reduce heat and simmer until they are tender. Whole lentils (green) take 15-20 minutes and split lentils (red) will take just 5-7 minutes to cook.
- Cooked lentils can be refrigerated for up to one week, or frozen for up to three months.

Health Benefits

Beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas (pulses) are all high in fiber and protein, as well as a significant source of vitamins and minerals such as iron, potassium, zinc, folate and magnesium. They also contain phytochemicals which possess antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic effects.

Pulses have been shown to reduce cholesterol, blood pressure, and inflammation which is an indication that they have the potential to reduce the risk for several chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. **Including only ½ cup of these per day can greatly enhance diet quality!**



Sweet Potato & Lentil Dip



Ingredients:

- 2 cups peeled and cubed sweet potato
 - 1 Tablespoon oil for roasting sweet potatoes
 - ½ cup cooked red lentils
 - 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 Tablespoon tahini
 - 1 garlic clove, minced or chopped
 - Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional garnish: red pepper flakes or sumac

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Wash hands. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In large bowl, toss together sweet potato, oil, salt, and pepper. Dump onto the prepared baking sheet, arrange in a single layer, and bake for 30-35 minutes. Stir occasionally.
3. The sweet potatoes will be golden and tender when done. Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature.
4. Place sweet potatoes, lentils, lemon juice, oil, tahini, and garlic into the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth. Adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper, if needed.
5. Scrape the dip into a bowl. Drizzle with more oil, and sprinkle with red pepper flakes or sumac. Serve at room temperature.

To reduce cooking time, pressure cook sweet potatoes instead of roasting

SERVING SIZE 1/4 cup (60 mL)

NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS

Calories 90, Total Fat 5 g, Saturated Fat 0.5 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Carbohydrates 10 g, Fibre 2 g, Sugar 2 g, Protein 2 g, Sodium 90 mg, Potassium 171 mg, Folate 28 mcg

- Recipe adapted from www.pulses.org
- Get details on breakfast hacks at: bit.ly/HealthyBreakfastHabits
- Get easy breakfast recipe ideas at go.illinois.edu/EasyBreakfastIdeas

SPRING SERIES OF HOME HORTICULTURE

MONDAYS, APRIL 10, 17 & 24, 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 \$10/night, \$25/series. Includes hors d'oeuvres. Register at: go.illinois.edu/SpringSeries23

Monday, April 10, 6 - 8 PM

Going to Bat for Bats!

Jill Schmidt Naturalist, Clinton County Conservation

These natural insect controllers are a vital component of a healthy environment, and many bats are struggling to survive. Jill will discuss what you can do at your home and in your garden to ensure their survival.

The Why and How of Tree Diversity

Emily Swihart, IL Extension Horticulture Educator

Trees are major components of our landscape on both a physical scale and a temporal scale. As we seek to implement best practices planting and managing our urban forest, we must begin with the most basic of questions which is what to plant. We will delve into the benefits and challenges of planting a diverse urban forest and explore a range of species that can help add variety to our landscape.

Monday, April 17, 6 - 8 PM

Landscaping for the Birds

Chris Enroth, IL Extension Horticulture Educator

Attracting birds to your backyard can go beyond setting out birdfeeders in order to provide the three things birds need: water, shelter, and food. Learn how to utilize native or well-adapted plants to start creating a landscape that welcomes birds by providing critical pieces of habitat.

Spring: A Time of Bird Transition

Jimmy Wiebler, Naturalist and Research Coordinator, Nahant Marsh Education Center

Migration is the big news of the season. As we changeover from winter to spring we are joined by a bunch of bright new colorful birds. Jimmy will share information on some of these Spring bird beauties.

Monday, April 24, 6 - 8 PM

Growing Plants Indoors

Perrine West, Gardener

Does your knowledge of this topic stop at how to overwinter a geranium? This experienced gardener will share the seven things you need to know about houseplants. She'll touch on herbs, succulents, begonias, edible flowers, wildflowers, and shade plants.

What's New for 2023

Matt Jones, Nursery Manager, and Ethan Leader, Greenhouse Manager at Corn Crib Nursery

Find out what to watch for in the upcoming year, from the greenhouse to the nursery. Matt and Ethan will share not only those tried and true plants, but ones that you might not be familiar with.

Visit and Learn from Illinois Extension at the Flower & Garden Show | March 24 - 26 | QCCA Expo Center, Rock Island, IL

While you're at the Flower & Garden Show, check out the Master Gardener's display focusing on sustainability, and visit their information booth to pick up gardening resources and get your questions answered. They've also put together a great schedule of horticulture presentations you can attend:

Fri March 24:

2 pm: How to Plant and Care for Trees

Emily Swihart, IL Extension horticulture educator

4 pm: Explore Riverside Rain Garden

Dick Potter, IL Master Gardener

6 pm: Energy Savings for the Homeowner

Jim Knorr, IL Master Gardener

Sat March 25

Noon: Bats, *Oliver Lincoln, US Fish and Wildlife*

2 pm: Native plant seed collection, processing and germination techniques *Paul Crosser, IL Master Gardener*

4 pm: Light Pollution, *Jody Zimmer, West High School*

6 pm: All about Monarchs, *Paige Burke, Monarch Rescue Team*

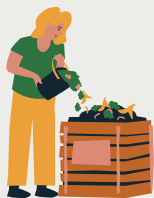
Sun March 26

Noon: Energy Savings for the Homeowner

Jim Knorr, IL Master Gardener

2 pm: The Future for Modern Sustainable Gardening

Dave Arensdorf, IL Master Gardener



BASICS OF HOME COMPOSTING FOUR SEASONS GARDENING TUES. MARCH 7, 1:30 PM

Home composting is a great way to support our environment by introducing a sustainable, gardening component that builds healthy soils while reducing the volume of waste going to landfills. Discover the fascinating ins and outs of the decomposition process and learn how to turn waste into valuable organic matter by starting a compost pile at home.

Presenter: Nancy Kreith, Extension Horticulture Educator

Register at go.illinois.edu/4SeasonsCompost or call our office at (309) 756-9978.

BACKYARD CHICKENS AND EGG PRODUCTION | WEBINAR TUES, MARCH 14, 5:30 PM



Chickens can be a wonderful addition to your farm or backyard, and with the sticker shock of egg and meat prices, many people are considering raising their own flock. Discover a diverse range of breeds for laying or meat production, how to select healthy chickens and chicks, nutrition, flock protection, and more.

Presenters: Katie Bell, Local Food Systems & Small Farms Educator & Jill Vonder Haar, Main Street Pastures

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

2023 FARM BILL, CLIMATE, AND AGRICULTURE POLICY | CLIMATE SERIES THURS, MARCH 23, 1 PM

Explore the key sections climate impacts, how the bill's prioritized agriculture areas are affected by climate decisions, and where these discussions may go. The Farm Bill affects farmers nationwide through regulations, future decision-making, and adaptation of agriculture practices.

Presenter: Jonathan Coppess, Clinical Assistant Professor of Law and Policy, IL Extension Specialist

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

TRICKY POLLINATOR Q & A EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT WEBINAR THURS. MARCH 9, 1 PM



- Are my annual plants “junk food” for bees?
- Can I help pollinators by not mowing my lawn?
- How can I help pollinators if I don't have a garden?

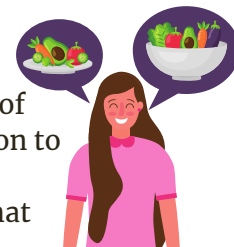
This presentation will explore pollinator questions that have nuanced, uncertain, or controversial answers. Learn what the latest science has to say about some of your most challenging questions. Looking for an answer about a pollinator-related topic? Submit your pollinator questions prior to the webinar to be included in the discussion.

Presenter: Brodie Dunn, IL Extension Specialist and State Pollinator Coordinator.

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

THE FUEL TO FIGHT CANCER | LESSONS FOR LIVING | TUES, MARCH 21, 2 PM

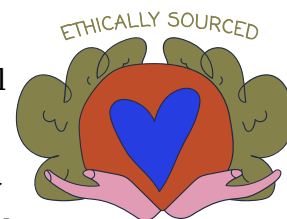
Food is one tool to support cancer prevention, treatment, and care. Learn how foods may reduce your risk of cancer and ways to incorporate nutrition to help manage side effects of treatment. You'll leave inspired to choose foods that reduce your cancer risk.



Register at go.illinois.edu/2023HCElessons or call our office at (309) 756-9978.

HOW YOUR SPENDING CAN CHANGE THE WORLD | WEBINAR | WED, MAR 29, 12 PM

Do you want to ensure that your spending is ethical and positively impacts the world? Is being mindful about where your money goes important to you? This webinar provides the tools to think critically about your consumption. Learn how to align your financial behaviors with your values and goals.



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

Soil Health & Your Farm | Lunch & Learn

Thurs. March 9, 11 am - 1 pm, Raelyns Pub & Eatery, Geneseo

Healthy soil is the key to productive, sustainable agriculture. By working with the land, you can not only reduce erosion, maximize water infiltration, and improve nutrient cycling, but you can also save money on inputs.

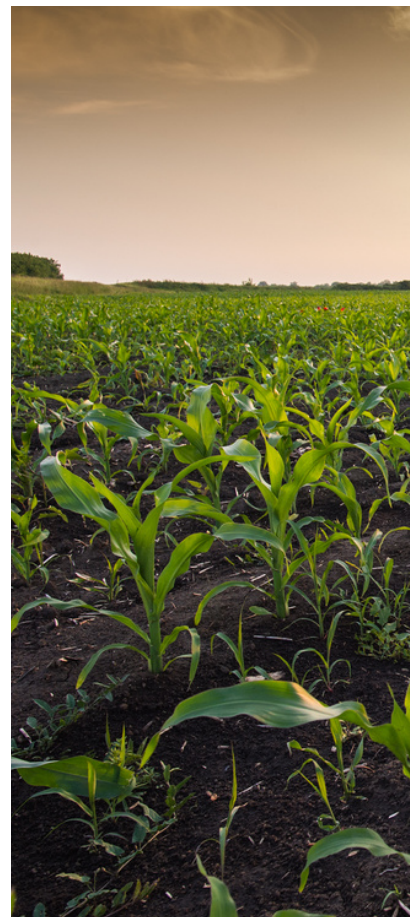
Learn more about the role of soil health and programs to help offset the cost of implementation at this lunch and learn event. Register to join us at Raelyn's in Geneseo, IL. Lunch will be served and discussion will follow presentations by these speakers:

- Soil health specialist Dr. Stacy Zuber who will discuss the keys to building soil health and the benefits you'll see as you adopt and implement practices.
- Henry County farmer Brian Corkill has adopted multiple conservation practices. He will share how those practices have impacted his fields.
- Nutrient Loss Reduction expert Rachel Curry from Illinois Extension will share field conservation practices that also support soil health while retaining nutrients.
- PCM specialist Lou Liva will discuss cost-share opportunities and how to assess the profitability and costs of in-field conservation practices while maximizing cost share opportunities.

Open to farmers and farm operators. Cost is \$5 and includes lunch.

RSVP to IL Extension at (309) 756-9978 or online at go.illinois.edu/SoilHealth

Support for this program is provided, in part, by Big River Resources



Here are some delicious ways you can support 4-H!

Help the Mercer County 4-H Teen Federation raise funds for the Mercer County Senior Center!

Drive-thru Spaghetti Luncheon Fundraiser



Sunday, April 2, 11 AM - 1 PM
Mercer County Senior Center
137 W Main St, Aledo, IL



Drive thru or, you can also pre-order by calling 309-373-3636 or 309-371-6158. All proceeds from meal donations will support building renovations at the Mercer County Senior Center.

Rock Island County Extension & 4-H Education Foundation's

Pork Chop Dinner

Drive-thru Fundraiser

Thurs, April 27 | 4 - 6:30 pm

Illinois Extension, 321 W 2nd Ave, Milan, IL



New Location!

Stop by our Drive-thru event at the IL Extension office in Milan to pick up a delicious meal to go and support Rock Island 4-H and Extension programs!

Prices: Pork Chop Meal \$10, Hot Dog Meal, \$5

Meals include: grilled pork chop sandwich, or hot dog, potato chips, baked beans, applesauce, dessert.

Take Home a Pie! We will have an assortment of pies made by our 4-H members and volunteers you can purchase at the drive through.