

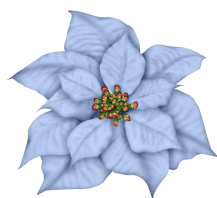


# NEWSLETTER

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Find us on  
Facebook!

**DECEMBER 2020**

**HELPING OTHER LEARN TO GROW**

This has been a unique year for all of us. I appreciate the fact that so many of you have stayed engaged in the Master Gardener program, and hope that we can resume normal activities at some point in the coming year. Remember that no volunteer hour requirement is in place for 2020, and I am sure that 2021 will be adjusted as well. I hope you will continue to find continuing education offerings throughout the winter months. A few are included in this newsletter.

This fall, we held a unit-wide Master Gardener training in the “flipped classroom” style, using videos, websites, articles and short presentations by Extension Educators. Four newly minted Master Gardener Interns have joined the Winnebago County group. If all goes as planned, the training will be held in Winnebago County in the fall.

Our horticulture helpline was open and busy throughout the growing season, and after making some adjustments, a small group of volunteers worked with residents (and Tammy) to make sure their questions were answered. I am going to plan a meeting (unit-wide) this winter to go over the questions asked and provide some additional training about the helpline and I hope that we can recruit a few more to help for the upcoming growing season.

Our face to face programming is on hold for the winter and spring. We will not be holding Gardening for Food, Flowers and Fun this March.

(continued on next page)



# NEWSLETTER

As a unit, we will be holding some online programming in horticulture and hope to remain in contact with our usual audience through those opportunities. Please remember to refer to our website for up to date programming information. I am hoping I can plan for a Master Gardener training in Winnebago County for the fall.

In January, we will be working to put together a directory of Master Gardeners, as requested at the meetings a couple weeks ago. We will also be updating the Winnebago County Master Gardener Project List to share with everyone, especially our new interns. A small group will be meeting in January to begin discussions to plan to update the garden behind the Extension Office. We hope to see it used to provide educational programming for youth as well as to grow fresh produce to donate. If you are interested in helping, please let Tammy know.

I wish you all a very wonderful holiday season. Today, the sun will be out a little later than yesterday and I know we will be looking forward to spring fiercely. Stay in touch with us and call with questions or concerns. We are here to help. Your involvement with the program is very much appreciated and the impact made on the community is something I share each spring as I seek continued funding from the Winnebago County Board.

Be well,  
Margaret



# NEWSLETTER

## **VOLUNTEER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS**

Please continue to enter your hours in VCMS at:

<https://volunteer.extension.illinois.edu>.

If you have any trouble entering hours please let Tammy know and she will help you. If you would like help entering your hours, Tammy is more than happy to enter them for you.

## **ANNUAL AGREEMENT**

Every year Master Gardener's and Master Naturalist's are required to read, sign and date an annual agreement. This form will be emailed to you. Please print it, read it, and email it back to Tammy at [tbene@illinois.edu](mailto:tbene@illinois.edu) or regular mail to: 1040 N. 2nd St. Rockford 61107.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All volunteers are required to have background checks done every five years. We want to make you aware of a new company that is handling our background checks. The new company is Sterling Volunteers. When it is time for your recheck, you will receive an email from Sterling Volunteers inviting you to complete your profile. Please click on the link provided in the email. Tammy will email you beforehand to let you know to expect an email from Sterling Volunteers.



# NEWSLETTER


## WEBINARS, PODCASTS, AND VIDEOS

- ♦ Horticulture: Christmas Trees and their Required Care
- ♦ Horticulture: How to make a holiday wreath
- ♦ Horticulture: Fun with Evergreen Foliage Good Growing Webinar
- ♦ Horticulture: Good Growing Gifts for Gardeners
- ♦ Horticulture: How to Make an evergreen gnome Using a tomato cage
- ♦ Horticulture: How to make kissing balls
- ♦ Horticulture: How to make twig ornaments
- ♦ Horticulture: Making Christmas tree toppers
- ♦ Horticulture: Making terrarium ornaments with moss, succulents
- ♦ Horticulture: Good Growing holiday wreaths
- ♦ Horticulture History of Forest Pests

**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION



*Planting, nurturing  
and preserving urban trees  
for a better tomorrow*



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**URBAN TREE CONFERENCE**



**JANUARY 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 2021**

Trees are a valuable asset to nature, but they are often overlooked in urban settings. Trees cool buildings with their shade and clean the air and water through filtration. However, urban trees must withstand pollution, poor soils, limited legroom for roots, and pressure from insects and disease, and their health and cultural requirements are not considered or monitored.

Bring nature back to your urban area with the help of the University of Illinois Urban Tree Conference. The six-day, 18 session virtual conference will cover all aspects of urban tree planning, implementation and management.

**REGISTER:** [go.illinois.edu/UrbanTreeRegistration](https://go.illinois.edu/UrbanTreeRegistration)

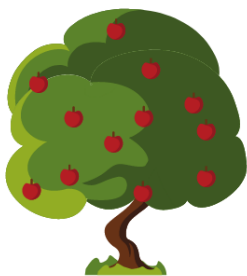
**COST:** \$10 per day, \$50 for the entire program.

**TIME:** 9 AM - 12:15 PM

**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION



**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## **Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning:**

**From the “Old & Neglected” to the “Just Planted” Fruit Trees**

**Presented by Grant McCarty,  
Illinois Extension Local Foods and Small Farms Educator**

**Offered 3 different times via Zoom on-line meetings**

**Thursday, December 17, 2020**

**Noon to 1:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, January 20, 2021**

**Noon to 1:30 p.m.**

**Tuesday, January 26, 2021**

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION

## FRUIT ON FRIDAYS

Some of the most common questions received at the University of Illinois Extension office throughout the year are related to growing fruit in the backyard. As many growers are looking to move beyond the vegetable garden, adding fruit can be a wonderful addition. However, due to our planting zone and seasonal needs, there can be some challenges with selecting, growing, and managing these fruits.

University of Illinois Extension is pleased to announce a series of webinars called ***Fruits on Friday*** that will focus on the basics of fruit production for some of the most common fruits that growers in Northern Illinois plant and grow. Each week, a different fruit will be discussed and give you the information you need to determine if it's right for you, general practices you may need to be doing before and during the growing season, and suggestions of seasonal management and variety selection. These webinars are designed for those who want to plant in the 2021 growing season and those who have been growing for some years.

***Fruits on Friday*** will be held from **Noon-1:00PM**. The schedule and topics are as follows:

**January 15:** Apple and Pear

**January 22:** Stone Fruits (Peach, Cherry) and others

**January 29:** Grapes

**February 5:** Strawberry.

To register for ***Fruits on Friday***, visit us on-line on at [go.illinois.edu/jsw](https://go.illinois.edu/jsw) or call (815) 986-4357. Registration is \$5 per webinar or the entire series for \$15.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION

## HOME ENERGY CHECKUP WEBINAR

With winter setting in once again, we all have that feeling of dread when the electric bill arrives each month: How high will it be this time? We used how much electricity? Maybe it is time to gain a better understanding of how you use energy in your home and look at some simple changes to help reduce that bill. With understanding of where the energy is used, you can make informed decisions about low and no-cost management improvements in your home energy efficiency.

Plan to join Extension Educator Jay Solomon for “Home Energy Checkup with a northern Illinois perspective” an interactive webinar to learn some easy ways to approach identifying energy saving/ cost saving opportunities in your home.

“Every home and family have a unique energy use pattern. Understanding where energy is used in your home is the best way to find cost and energy saving opportunities.” Solomon suggests. “There are often groups of small changes and modification that can add up to big savings, without a lot of expense to home or appliances.”

**WHEN:** Tuesday, January 12

**TIME:** 6PM– 7PM

**REGISTRATION:** <https://extension.illinois.edu/jsw>.



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN





# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION



We are pleased to announce another series of Gardening in the Air Virtual Gardening Saturdays taking place from 9 am - Noon on January 30 and February 6, 2021.

Join horticulture experts from University of Illinois Extension and Iowa State Extension and Outreach for a wide range of topics. You can pick and choose, do one session or all, it's up to you! Select the registration link for class descriptions and to sign up. Here's what's in store:

## Saturday, January 30

### Winter Gardening Activities:

- 9 am - Gardening is Good for You
- 10:15 am - Intro to Fruit Pruning
- 11:30 am - Purchasing Seeds and Plants

### Wildlife:

- 9 am - Native Plant with Winter Wildlife Interest
- 10:15 am - Backing Backyard Birds in Yards and Landscapes
- 11:30 am - When Your Nearest Neighbors Aren't Human

### Food & Nutrition

- 9 am - Funkalicious! (Fermenting)
- 10:15 am - Flying Knives: Vegetable & Fruit Preparation Tips
- 11:30 am - Preserve the Taste of Summer

Register for January 30 sessions at  
[go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAirJan30](https://go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAirJan30)

## Saturday, February 6

### Design:

- 9 am - Ornamental Grasses with Winter Interest
- 10:15 am - Introduction to Sustainable Landscapes
- 11:30 am - How to Create an Out-of-the-Ordinary Theme Garden

### Vegetables/Fruits/Herbs Sessions:

- 9 am - Growing Herbs and Microgreens Indoors
- 10:15 am - Straw Bale Gardening
- 11:30 am - Starting Seeds for the Garden Indoors

### Houseplants Sessions

- 9 am - Growing Blooming Houseplants
- 10:15 am - What is wrong with my houseplant?
- 11:30 am - Succulent Wreaths

Register for February 6 sessions at  
[go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAirFeb6](https://go.illinois.edu/GardeningintheAirFeb6)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION

**NEW**

# HOUSEPLANTS

online course

- SELF-PACED, YEAR-LONG ACCESS
- LEARN ABOUT SCIENCE-BASED, BEST PRACTICES
- LIGHT, WATER, FERTILIZING & GENERAL CARE
- INCLUDES VARIETIES & SPECIFIC PLANT NEEDS

**\$10 OFF**  
UNTIL 12-31-20.  
ENTER CODE:  
PLANT10

CERTIFIEDGARDENERCSU.COM

**Course description:** This course explores the history and benefits of houseplants while going more in-depth to understanding the ideal conditions for successfully growing plants indoors including light, temperature, humidity, water and fertilizer. The course provides an overview of common houseplants to better identify and select plants based on indoor conditions and required maintenance. Common houseplants pests and diseases are also covered. **Note:** This course is applicable to all locations and is not state specific.

**How does this class work?** This class uses a self-paced, dynamic curriculum including videos, activities and knowledge checks – you can come and go as needed and have access for a full year from the time of registration. The course will take ~ 3 hours to complete in one sitting.

**Cost:** \$60

**Discount Code:** Use 'PLANT10' for \$10 off registration through 12-31-20

[Register & Learn more](#)

*Feel free to share with volunteers, colleagues, family and friends.*

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT EXTENSION

## 2021 DRIFTLESS REGION BEEF CONFERENCE

### **LEAD OFF SPEAKER: Dr. Frank Mitloehner, Livestock and Climate Change**

The upcoming virtual Driftless Region Beef Conference will feature Dr. Frank Mitloehner, a professor and air quality specialist at UC-Davis, as the leadoff speaker. Dr. Mitloehner will discuss greenhouse gases and the sustainability of beef cattle production. His presentation will explain factors of climate change, livestock impacts, and the importance of ruminant livestock in the midst of growing pressures from environmental groups.

Understanding the facts and fiction behind livestock production and emissions is the first step in debunking the myths of livestock and climate change. "Attending Dr. Mitlowhner's presentation via webinar format will give producers an opportunity to learn and equip themselves to engage in a positive discussion of livestock and climate change," said Jay Solomon, Energy and Environmental Stewardship Educator, University of Illinois Extension.

The conference will have two presenters each evening of Jan. 26-28. All three sessions will run from 7 to 8:30pm. Other speakers include Dr. Kevin Bernhardt, UW Madison Division of Extension, who will discuss Building Farm Resiliency for Surviving Volatile Times; and Shawn Darcy, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, addressing What Consumers Say They Need and Want; and Dr. Paul Plummer, Iowa State University, discussing Antibiotic Resistance in the Beef Industry; and Dr. Danelle Bickett-Weddle, Iowa State University, shares Being Prepared for a Beef Cattle Pandemic/Secure Beef (both cow-calf and feedlot); and Dr. Brenda Boetel, UW Madison Division of Extension, with a 2021 Market Outlook.

Driftless Region Beef Conference sponsors are Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, University of Illinois Extension, and University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. For more information or to receive a brochure, contact Denise Schwab, Beef Specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach, at 319-472-4739

**WHEN:** January 26-28. **TIME:** 7PM—8:30PM. **COST:** \$15

**REGISTRATION:** [www.aep.iastate.edu/beef/](http://www.aep.iastate.edu/beef/).