

Madison County Promotes Benefits of Planting Gardens

March 31 2022 10:35 AM



EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County is promoting the benefits in planting vegetable gardens.

April is both National Garden Month and Stress Awareness Month and officials say what better way is there to promote both growing nourishment for your body and your mind.

“Planting a vegetable garden is both rewarding and relaxing,” Chairman Kurt Prenzler said. “Although the goal is to produce plants and eat healthier, it also reduces stress.”

Prenzler said it does not matter if someone lives on one acre of land or keeps a few pots on a patio.

“It shouldn’t matter where you dig in the dirt,” he said. “Just dig! You can work in a garden by yourself or with others in a community garden.

“No matter what, nothing tastes better than something you’ve grown yourself.”

Prenzler said the county contributes \$50,000 in annual funding to the University of Illinois Extension office, which serves Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties and offers a variety of programs.

“U of I Extension offers programs that include everything from 4-H youth development, master gardening to nutrition and wellness,” he said.

Sarah Ruth, U of I Extension program coordinator for horticulture and natural resources, said the extension office offers a variety of information on gardening for the beginner to the advanced. She said the public could get everything from soil analysis, plant recommendations to tackling pest problems.

“We even have a horticulture hotline where someone can call in and a master gardener volunteer will answer their gardening questions,” Ruth said.

Call (618) 344-4230 to get advice on gardening or visit <https://extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture> for more information.

Ruth said there are approximately 75 master gardeners located in Madison County and

The U of I extension offers different events, online and in-person, throughout the year. On April 9, there will be a Garden Workshop from 10 a.m. to noon at Jones Park Greenhouse in East St. Louis. Visit <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=25152> to register.

The public can also ask a master gardener questions in person on Wednesday at the U of I Extension Master Gardener Village Gardens in Godfrey. The demonstration garden, located behind Godfrey Village Hall, is open from 9 a.m. to noon.

The garden will hold a plant sale from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, April 30. Master gardeners will be selling plants such as tomatoes and peppers.

“We know rising gas prices are causing costs to increase,” Prenzler said. “Growing a garden is a way to cut down on some of those costs, and shopping at local produce farms and farmers markets is too.”

Prenzler praised many local farmers and growers. He said April officially marks the start of Farmer’s Market season in Madison County.

“Local farmers do a great job of producing crops for our communities,” Prenzler said. “Plus, it’s supporting small business at its best.”

East Alton is set to host its first farmer’s market from 3 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 19, in the parking lot of Eastgate Plaza, 625 Eastgate Shopping Center. Peterson’s Family Farms is coordinating the event. It also marks the county’s first market to open for the season.

Visit the National Farmer’s Market Directory at <https://nfmd.org/il/> for a list of where other farmer’s markets can be found in Madison County.

“Gardening is an activity that provides a lot of benefits,” Prenzler said. “Not only do you know where your food comes from, but it also improves overall mental health.”