

MODERN HOMESTEADING

2024 CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 16-17, 2024



HOMEMADE & COMMUNITY GROWN



SPONSORS AND DONORS

The Modern Homesteading Conference is truly community grown. We would like to recognize and give thanks to local community members, businesses, and organizations that have provided monetary and in-kind donations to bring this conference to life.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Lisa Hickman
Kim Ross
Julie Gilliland
& many others!

Thank You

WELCOME

DEAR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our first Modern Homesteading Conference held at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center in Mattoon, IL. This conference came to life when I was talking to community members about what other programming opportunities the Douglas-Hart Foundation should offer in order to better serve our community. We discussed how modern homesteading is a huge movement, but many people don't know how to start this self-sufficient lifestyle. From that conversation, I was inspired to recreate a modern homesteading education series from Southern Illinois into a conference, and the rest is history - welcome to the 2024 Modern Homesteading Conference!

Of course, we would not be here if it wasn't for the generosity of fellow homesteaders and community members that are willing to share their knowledge and experience with us. I want to take a moment to thank each of these individuals for graciously volunteering their time and resources to attend and present at the conference. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of the Douglas-Hart Foundation and my co-workers for going along with my wild ideas and helping bring this conference to life. As mentioned before, this conference is truly community grown.

I hope you enjoy this experience and get something from it that you can take home to grow into a love of a self-sufficient and sustainable lifestyle. Remember, "Everything valuable takes time, there are no overnight successes." - Jack Canfield

THANK YOU,



Abby de Buhr
Education Director



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

LOCATION & PARKING

The conference is at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center (2204 Dewitt Ave E, Mattoon, IL 61938). There is a paved parking lot outside the center that is a short walk to the front entrance. We also have a circle drive for drop-off that is closer to the door.

CONFERENCE CHECK-IN

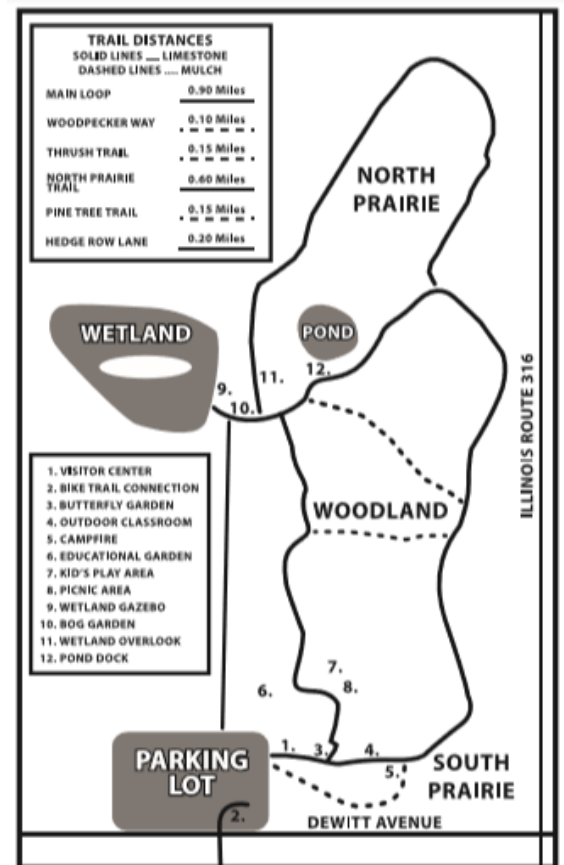
Upon arrival, please make your way inside the Douglas-Hart Nature Center. You will be greeted at the front desk by a staff member to check-in and get your name tag. No printed tickets are needed to check-in. Your registration will be under the name(s) you registered under. After receiving your nametag, another staff member will give you your swag bag with promo items (one per registrant)! Before the first presentation, you will be able to browse the nature center, use the restrooms, get refreshments, or participate in our raffle.

SESSIONS

All sessions will be held in the nature center classroom (down the hall past the library and discovery den). There will be one presentation during each time slot. Full schedule and speaker information can be found on pages 5-8. We will video record sessions to the best of our ability, and they will be posted for access at a later date. There will be 15 minutes between sessions for breaks. During this time, you may use the restroom, get refreshments, or even go on a short hike!

REFRESHMENTS & LUNCH

Throughout the conference, snacks and drinks will be available inside the classroom where the sessions are held that you can enjoy at anytime. Lunch will be at 11:45am-12:45pm both days and available inside the classroom. They will be box lunches provided by LIFT (Leaders Innovating for Tomorrow) culinary arts students and Jersey Mike's that can be eaten at a seat inside or outside. Unfortunately, we do not anticipate having enough space to have tables set-up for lunch. Refreshments and lunch are included in the cost of the conference. You are welcome to bring your own snacks/lunch, and we always encourage participants to bring their own reusable coffee cup and/or water bottle.



RAFFLE

In our Discovery Den play room, we will have a raffle available for conference attendees. Raffle tickets will be \$10/10 tickets or \$20/24 tickets. There will be several baskets for you to put in your tickets for a chance to win. Winners will be drawn on Saturday at the end of lunch. You do not need to be present to win. Pick up only, no shipping available.

SHARING IS CARING

Inside the visitor center, we will have a 'Sharing is Caring' table available for conference attendees to ask for advice on a Community Conversation board, as well as bring resources (magazines, books, business cards, seeds, sourdough starter, etc.) to share with others. Feel free to take advantage of this resource table.

LODGING

Here are recommendations for attendees looking for lodging nearby the nature center:

Hilton Garden Inn

100 Coles Centre Pkwy
Mattoon, IL 61938
(217) 961-0001



Holiday Inn Express & Suites

121 Swords Dr
Mattoon, IL 61938
(217) 235-2060



RESTAURANTS

Here are LOCAL recommendations for attendees looking for breakfast/dinner locations:

Stadium Grill

102 Dettro Dr
Mattoon, IL 61938



El Vaquero

200 Holiday Dr
Mattoon, IL 61938



Honey Bee Cafe

319 N Logan St,
Mattoon, IL 61938



Hunan Fine Asian Cuisine

116 S 17th St
Mattoon, IL 61938



La Luna Mexican

1412 Broadway Ave
Mattoon, IL 61938



Hubbart's Downtown Diner

1626 Broadway Ave
Mattoon, IL 61938



Milk & Honey

621 Charleston Ave
Mattoon, IL 61938



The Original Burger King

1508 Charleston Ave
Mattoon, IL 61938



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

SCHEDULE

7:30-8:00am	Check-In Check-in for the conference, get your swag bag, enjoy refreshments, and get ready for a day full of learning and networking!
8:15-9:15am	Getting Started Enjoy this 'day in the life' introduction to homesteading. With nearly 6 years of experience, Megan Martin will offer empathy and encouragement to those wanting to learn more about starting or continuing their homesteading journey.
9:30-10:30am	Illinois Cottage Food A cottage food operation is a home-based food business, which means there are guidelines that must be followed to ensure the safety of all. Kim Ross, Director of Environmental Health with the Coles County Health Department, will go through the ins and outs of Cottage Food Law for selling your homegrown or homemade goodies.
10:45-11:45am	Garden Smoothies Sara Ferris will blend together planting, harvesting, and nourishing information on how to kickstart your day with ingredients from your backyard garden. Garden smoothies provide you with a burst of energy along with a healthy balance of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and all the essential vitamins and minerals your body craves for optimal health.



SCHEDULE CONTINUED

11:45am-12:45pm	Lunch A box lunch will be provided with accommodations made for those with dietary restrictions.
1:00-2:00pm	Backyard Chickens Are you interested in getting backyard chickens? Lucinda Horton will share with you the benefits of having chickens, how to start, and general costs and other considerations.
2:15-3:15pm	Food Preservation with a Freeze Dryer Explore the world of freeze-drying food! Learn what foods do and don't freeze dry well, how long different foods last long-term, and different out-of-the-box uses for food (think tomato powder to add a punch to your soups). Julie Gilliland's presentation will be all about the freeze-drying process, including the different manufacturers on the market.
3:30-4:30pm	Garden Planning & Regenerative Philosophy Dig into garden planning specific to Illinois and succession planting for several different crops, including the earliest and latest they can be planted to expect a crop. Jarrod Yantis will also review the philosophy of regenerative agriculture and how we should change our perception and relationship with nature.

5:30-6:30pm	Soap, Spirituality, and Women's History: A Soap Making Workshop Enjoy a lesson in soapmaking throughout history, and how we can continue the art today with April Burns, Executive Director of Sage & Prim. This workshop includes a hands-on soap making tutorial. All supplies provided. <i>Please note this workshop is NOT included in the conference cost. Pre-registration was required to attend this workshop.</i>
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

SCHEDULE

7:30-8:00am	Check-In Check-in for the conference, get your swag bag (if you haven't already), enjoy refreshments, and get ready for another day of homesteading!
8:15-9:15am	Embracing the Freedoms of Homeschooling: Tips from a 2nd Generation Homeschooler Hannah Ackley will share the different types of "freedom" homeschooling families can embrace. Being a second generation homeschooler, she will share insight from a student perspective, and now from the parent perspective. She hopes to help new homeschoolers alleviate some of their own anxieties, give them confidence in their decision to homeschool, and be a voice of encouragement during their journey.
9:30-10:30am	Yes, You Can! In this presentation, Mary Liz Wright will help you learn all about home food preservation! She will go over updated methods, tips, and recipes that will have you saying 'Yes, I Can!' Mary Liz will be available to test pressure canner gauges after her presentation. Participants interested in this should bring your canner lids.
10:45-11:45am	The Secret Life of Ducks Doug and Jess Peterson began raising ducks last spring. They will share the joys and follies of being Duck Ranchers. Topics will include: when the babies arrive, transitioning to the outdoors, food, keeping up with the demand for water, eggs, and best of all, they will share the #1 secret of ducks!! Let's get quackin'!
11:45am-12:45pm	Lunch A box lunch will be provided with accommodations made for those with dietary restrictions. <i>Raffle basket drawing winners will be announced. You do not have to be present to win.</i>

SCHEDULE CONTINUED

1:00-2:00pm	Our First Year Raising Rabbits This session will be a run down of Eve and Alex Bronitsky's experience raising rabbits for meat in the middle of town, including her successes and failures. She will cover it all - winter care, summer care, breeding, butchering, feeding, and other considerations! A demonstration on butchering may occur if time permits.
2:15-3:15pm	Hobby Beekeeping Winter is the perfect time to learn about beekeeping and to plan ahead for starting hives in the spring. Dakota Radford's presentation will touch on bee biology, the chores of a beekeeper, and start-up equipment and expenses. Experienced beekeepers, those planning to start hives in the future, and those who are simply interested are all welcome. The presentation will adjust to the audience's needs and experience level. Live bees will not be present for viewing due to the time of year.
3:30-4:30pm	Now What Do I Do? Learn how to take all the information you have gained from the conference and turn it into an action plan from an experienced homesteader. Jennifer Hendrickson will help you set realistic, obtainable goals to get started or expand on your homesteading journey.



RESOURCES

We have compiled this information with the assistance of the conference speakers and researching highly recommended resources.

LITERATURE

- Dumbing Us Down by John Taylor Gatto
- The Call of the Wild and Free by Ainsley Arment
- The Practical Permaculture Project by Sophie McKay
- Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens by Gail Damerow
- The Backyard Homestead Series



WEBSITES & OTHER MEDIA

Illinois Department of Public Health - Cottage Food

<https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/cottage-food.html>

University of Illinois Extension - Food Preservation

<https://extension.illinois.edu/food/food-preservation>

USDA Local Food Directories

<https://www.usdalocalfoodportal.com/>

Pioneering Today Podcast with Melissa K. Norris

<https://melissaknorris.com/podcast/>

The Urban Farm Podcast with Greg Peterson

<https://www.urbanfarm.org/blog/podcast/>

Living Traditions Homestead Youtube Channel

@LivingTraditionsHomestead

Living Life Barefoot Youtube Channel

@barefootmicrogreens

Central Illinois Homestead and Small Farm Connection Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/826651338552477/>



BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS/GROUPS

- Illinois Department of Public Health
- University of Illinois Extension
- Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Illinois State Beekeepers Association
- Sangamon County Beekeepers Association
- Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District
- East Central Illinois Home Educators Network
- Regenerative Life Farm (Findlay, IL)
- Fit-2-Serve (Mattoon, IL)



THE DOUGLAS-HART FOUNDATION



"Through the responsible stewardship of Helen Douglas-Hart's gifts, the Douglas-Hart Foundation will be a leader in promoting the appreciation, enjoyment, and conservation of our natural resources by providing quality programs for all ages."

The Douglas-Hart Foundation manages three unique properties in Coles County, Illinois:



Douglas-Hart Nature Center

2204 Dewitt Ave E
Mattoon, IL



Friendship Garden

17th St & Lafayette
Mattoon, IL



The Whiteside Garden

8422 N County Rd 1820e
Charleston, IL

Helen Burgner Douglas-Hart had a dream of developing English tea gardens and a natural area that would reflect the native habitats of east-central Illinois. In 1963, Helen formed the Douglas-Hart Foundation and created Friendship Garden located at 17th and Lafayette near downtown Mattoon. In the 1960s, work started on converting a 33-acre farm field into a nature preserve - the Douglas-Hart Nature Center. Helen holds a rich history in Coles County and beyond. She traveled extensively around the world and took the time to share her experiences in several journals, which are available for viewing at the nature center's library. In 2018, The Douglas-Hart Foundation acquired The Whiteside Garden in cooperation with Eastern University Illinois. The Whiteside Garden is the former residence of the late Dr. Wesley Whiteside, a botany professor at Eastern Illinois University. Dr. Whiteside taught numerous subjects such as botany, local flora, plant taxonomy, plant morphology, and mycology. Over the years, Dr. Whiteside transformed five acres of his yard and farmland on the east side of Charleston into the botanical oasis we know it as today.

The Douglas-Hart Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and receives no tax support.