



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Franklin County 2025

Annual Report

100 Union Plaza Drive
Union, MO 63084
636-583-5141

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

 **Extension**
University of Missouri
an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

PHONE 573-882-2394

EMAIL cchiggins@missouri.edu

Dear County Commissioners, Elected Leaders, and Friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the remarkable progress we have made together. MU Extension continues to deliver on its mission of linking the University of Missouri with every community across our state, ensuring that Missourians have access to the knowledge, resources, and partnerships they need to thrive.

Through the dedication of our faculty, staff, councils, partners, and advocates, MU Extension continues to make a measurable difference across Missouri. Last year, we had more than 1.5 million educational contacts and generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact. Building on that momentum, your support also helped secure a \$5 million recurring increase in state funding. This important milestone is already being invested in people, programs, and facilities to strengthen agriculture, improve health and well-being, support local economic development, and prepare youth for leadership through 4-H.

We have also adapted to new realities. Even as the sunset of federal SNAP-Ed funding forced hard choices, our commitment to delivering nutrition and health programs to families in need has not wavered. We are expanding investments in rural health, civic leadership and community development to address the priorities Missourians tell us matter most. We are also aligning our work with university, state, and federal priorities to maximize impact, whether in rural healthcare, agricultural innovation or workforce development.

Our strengths remain clear: people, programs, and partnerships. From nearly 6,000 4-H volunteers to county council members, master gardeners, and master naturalists, Extension thrives because of the dedication of those who serve. Our trusted, research-based content was accessed nearly 2 million times and downloaded more than 76,000 times last year, and innovative programs, from soil testing to urban revitalization initiatives, continue to meet Missouri's evolving needs.

Thank you for your continued partnership. MU Extension belongs to all Missourians, and together we will keep building resilient communities, fostering innovation, and preparing our state for the future.

With appreciation,

Chad Higgins, PhD
Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement
Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff

Matt Herring

East Central Regional Director

Kendra Graham

Extension Engagement Specialist

Maria Calvert

Human Development Specialist

Tanner Adkins

4-H Youth Development Specialist

Julie Hilkerbaumer

4-H Youth Program Associate

Cheri Kramme

Nutrition Education Associate

Rachel O'Halloran

Nutrition and Health Specialist

Emily Poncher

Community Health Specialist

Marsha Parsons

Office Administrator / Bookkeeper

Kay Hilkerbaumer

Office Support

Michael Graham

Livestock Specialist

Rachel Hopkins

Agriculture Business Specialist

Kate Kammler

Horticulture Specialist

Kate McDonald

Agronomy Specialist

Billy McCaslin

Forestry Management Educator

Brian Schweiss

Sustainable Forestry Specialist

Council Members

Janet Hubbard, *Chairman*

Bob Buxton, *Vice-chairman & Farm Bureau*

Katherine Post, *Secretary*

Josh Roehrs, *Treasurer*

Elizabeth Belew

Ken Bolte

Ginny Brinker

Robin Busekrus

Adam Hecht

Sharon Helling

Doris Koch

Sue Koch

Barb Laberer

Carrie Maune

Clayton McDaniel

Bette Minx

Kesha Nichols

Tara Schreit

Karen Veasman

Lisa Weirich

Ken Cox, *Appointed Member / Commissioner*

Paul Arand, *Appointed Member / City of Union*



BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations Budget

Income	
County Appropriations	150,000
Total Income	150,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	96,900.16
Payroll Expenses	11,269.71
Non-Payroll Expenses	2,450.00
Travel	5,846.51
Telephone	4,063.63
Office Supplies/Service	8,258.15
Postage	896.78
Utilities	3,870.21
Repairs/Maintenance	1,408.15
Professional Services	280.00
Rent/Lease	14,709.00
Insurance	2,325.00
Total Expenses	152,277.30



MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

Extension funding is a three-way partnership of federal, state and county government. Federal and state money, through the University of Missouri system, pay professional staff salaries, training costs, computers and communication equipment. County funds support the local office, secretarial and youth assistant salaries, staff mileage and council expenses.

The Franklin County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Franklin County Commissioners for their continued support of extension programs.



Local Impact

Did you know you can donate directly to Franklin County Extension with a gift to be used immediately or as an endowment contribution for long term efforts. Monies put into the endowment are left forever to earn interest with the county office benefiting each year. You can also direct your donation to a specific program such as 4-H or Master Gardeners.

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Franklin County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Franklin County, showcasing the meaningful ways local engagement supports residents. It includes data on the number of students, employees, retirees and alumni affiliated with the University of Missouri System, along with the healthcare and extension services provided over the past year.

In addition, the report highlights the broader contributions of the UM System across Missouri in key areas such as education, research, healthcare, economic development and public service. It features metrics like job creation, financial aid distribution, research investment, healthcare access and broadband expansion.

This report is a valuable resource for understanding the measurable benefits the UM System brings to Missouri communities. It supports informed decision-making, advocacy efforts and strategic planning by illustrating the tangible impact of university-driven initiatives at both the local and statewide levels.



[Access Franklin County's Impact Report.](#)

GRAND CHALLENGES

Grand Challenges

The Grand Challenges — Economic Opportunity, Educational Access, Health and Well-being, and Agricultural Stewardship — represent the most pressing issues facing Missouri communities. They are important because:

By focusing on these challenges, MU Extension in Franklin County can better leverage university resources, data and partnerships to empower people to improve their lives, businesses and communities.

This report presents localized data and insights in how MU Extension in Franklin County is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.



[Access your county's Grand Challenges Report.](#)

Clover Kids Camp 2025



4-H Day Camp 2025

Franklin County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact



What is 4-H? 4-H is where Missouri's young people find their spark and learn by doing. Whether raising animals, coding robots, growing gardens, or giving back to their neighbors, 4-H members gain real-world skills with the help of caring mentors.

Rooted in University of Missouri Extension, 4-H connects classrooms, communities, and families to create learning that sticks—building confident, capable leaders who are Beyond Ready for life. In 4-H, youth discover their strengths, practice resilience, and learn to lead with heart—preparing them not just for what's next, but for anything that comes their way.



Community clubs are at the heart of 4-H. Led by trained volunteers, members come together regularly to learn, lead, and serve. Youth elect officers, enroll in projects, and plan hands-on activities that build leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. Clubs explore a variety of topics throughout the year.

Franklin County continues to have the largest community club program in the State of Missouri with 698 active youth members. When including school enrichment and afterschool programs, Franklin County 4-H reached 2,624 youth in 2025.



4-H brings hands-on learning directly into schools through in-school and afterschool programs that extend classroom lessons. **Teachers and 4-H professionals**, guide students through 4-H projects in areas such as science, agriculture, health, and leadership, helping youth connect learning to the real world.

Franklin County's most popular school enrichment program continues to be embryology. In 2025, nearly 1,800 youth across 19 schools learned through hands on experiences, the life-cycle of chick hatching. This program is an important educational intersection between Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), with Agriculture Education. STEM and Agriculture Education are high demand economic opportunities in Franklin County. County youth are being trained early in these areas through 4-H School enrichment.

Franklin County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact



Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs give youth hands-on experiences in areas such as animal science, veterinary science, plant science, and agronomy. Members explore the biology, care, and management of animals and crops while developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Franklin County 4-H has a long tradition of animal science learning and exhibition. In 2025, 784 animal projects were enrolled in from beef, to chickens, to dogs, and many more. The most popular animal project in the county was swine with 378 youth enrolled.



4-H's Leadership and Civic Engagement programs foster understanding, confidence, and decision-making skills to empower young people to become informed and active citizens. These initiatives prepare youth to become future leaders by engaging them in programs where they have voice and influence.

A highlight each summer in Franklin County is 4-H Camp Counselors. These 4-H teen members lead camp sessions throughout the summer where they care and lead younger 4-H members in life skill development and independence building. These experiences help teens grow as confident communicators and thoughtful problem solvers, ready to lead wherever life takes them.



Missouri 4-H Natural Resources programs engage youth in hands-on learning across climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing, and wildlife conservation. Programs like the **4-H Sportfishing Contest** and **Sportfishing SLAM** give young people practical experience while building teamwork, problem-solving skills, and a love of the outdoors.

The **4-H Shooting Sports** program teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting, and archery principles, demonstrating how 4-H encourages holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs help youth cultivate life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics while exploring the natural world around them.

Franklin County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

Volunteers: 4-H members are supported by 251 youth and adult volunteers. Volunteers are the core of the 4-H Program. They help to create, support and deliver educational programs and experiences. Missouri 4-H volunteers report contributing on average 100 hours per year to the program. These individuals serve as role models and mentors for youth.



Civic Engagement: Franklin County took nine 4-H youth to visit the Missouri State Capitol for Missouri 4-H Day. These teens spoke with local elected officials about their life skills developed in 4-H and learned more about government operations for the state. More than a trip, 4-H teens are working toward becoming our next generation of elected officials.



FRANKLIN COUNTY 4-H AG CAREERS TOUR 2025



“The farm tours helped me see things in agriculture that we don’t use on our farm. It gave me ideas of different crops and technology I could add to our farm.”

- Dylin, Age 13



“Although I plan to seek a career in the beef industry, this tour helped me to see that I could be happy working in other areas of agriculture as well.

The opportunities are endless!”
- Aurora, Age 17

By Julie Hilkerbaumer, YPA II, Franklin County

The 4-H Ag Careers Tour was designed to allow 4-H youth the opportunity to explore various careers in agriculture and give 4-H members perspective on job opportunities that exist within their community. 4-H youth attended five tours over the course of six months.

OUTCOMES:

The 4-H Ag Careers Tour has helped young people find their *sparks* (4-H Thriving Model) and introduced them to how they can turn those *sparks* into future careers.

-  Thierbach Orchards
-  Straatmann Feed & Transfer, Inc.
-  Sydenstricker Nobbe Equipment
-  Deppe Farms & Blaue Ag Solutions
-  Heritage Valley Tree Farm



Franklin County

Missouri 4-H

"My 4 -H Story", 3 First-hand Youth Testimonials



"I'm Regan and this is my first year in 4-H. I'm part of the New Haven 4-H Club. This year I did floriculture, arts & crafts, and cake decorating. In floriculture, I did a Christmas arrangement and gave it to my family members. I also did a spring project making corsages for prom. In arts & crafts, I did a shattered glass painting of Starry Night. I also did an animal ornament and a fall scene. Cake decorating was very delicious! I even made a small cake for my sister's first communion. I also made a lot of cupcakes, which are my favorite. They were so fun and different from everything else I've done. 4-H has taught me how to embrace my arts & crafts side in different ways."



"This year has been super busy. I have been working on all kinds of 4-H projects, raising a pig and a steer, and even doing some welding. It's been a lot to juggle, but I've learned so much along the way. The project leaders are amazing. They know their stuff and have been helpful whenever I have questions. I've picked up new skills, made some great memories, and even though it was a lot of work, it's been a great year."



"My name is Heidi and I belong to the Rockford Rebels 4-H Club. My project is beef. Through my 8 years in 4-H, I have had many experiences. One of my favorite experiences has been going to the fair and showing my animals and just seeing everyone show their animals that they have been working with for months. I have also always loved when we would do community service, like Christmas shopping for kids in our area and when we would bake pies for the senior home. I have learned a lot of life skills from 4-H. I have learned the importance of hard work, how to be responsible, and also how to work with others. Many people along the way have really showed me what 4-H is all about. I can truly say that without the experiences and people in 4-H, I would not be who I am today."



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

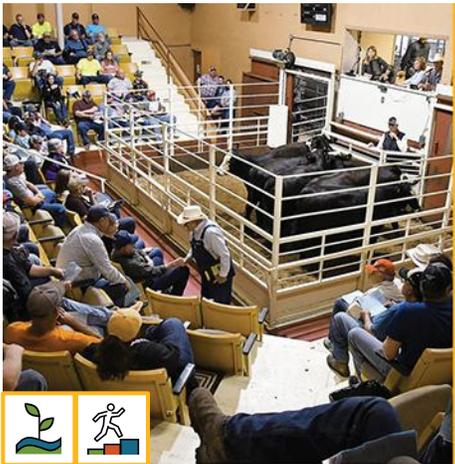
Agriculture and Environment



The **Missouri Master Gardener** program enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



In 2023, almost 4,000 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 149,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state.

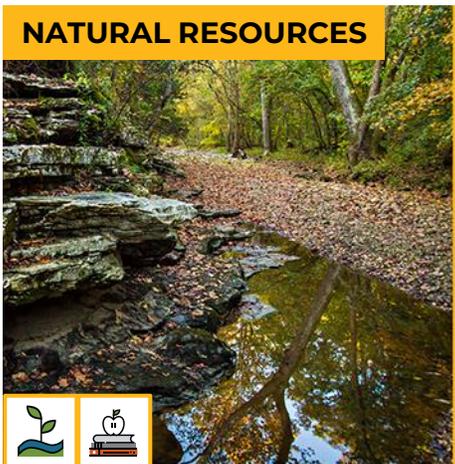


The Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program strives to enhance beef herd reproductive efficiency, boost farm income and establish dependable sources of quality replacement cows in Missouri. The program brings in the power of animal genomics through an enhanced DNA-option, Show-Me-PLUS.



Since its inception more than 900 FARMS have enrolled, with an estimated statewide impact of \$200 MILLION.

NATURAL RESOURCES



The Missouri Master Naturalist program is a community-based initiative for adults, supported by the Missouri Department of Conservation and MU Extension. It aims to create a group of knowledgeable volunteers who can offer education, outreach and service for the responsible management of natural resources in Missouri communities.

Additionally, the **Missouri Woodland Steward program** offers a short course that equips private landowners with knowledge of woodland management, helping them identify wildlife habitats, develop plans and connect with local natural resource experts.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

Agronomy Highlights—Kate McDonald, Agronomy Specialist

Client Contacts

- 597+ Program Participants
- 85+ Direct Contacts (Calls, texts, emails)
- 3 In-person Farm Visits

Popular Topics:

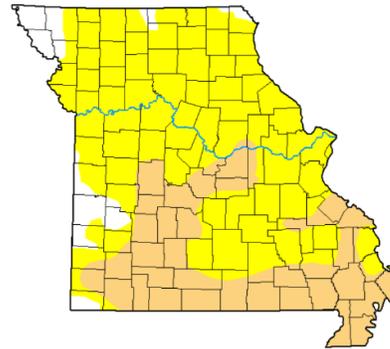
- ✓ Soil Test Results and Recommendations
- ✓ Forage and Pasture Management
- ✓ Lime & Nutrient Requirements
- ✓ Herbicides & Weed Control
- ✓ Drought Resources
- ✓ Nitrate Testing



Scan to subscribe to receive monthly agronomy newsletter via email.

In typical Missouri fashion, 2025 brought on its mix of challenges. The year started off cool and wet, making it hard for farmers to get in the field and get things planted. Late spring in April and May we saw some sporadic rainfalls, some with severe weather and flooding. Many fields were replanted due to this. As we rolled into summer and crops were established, the timely rains were perfect and left many optimistic about the year. However, in August the rain turned off, and we faced some extreme heat sending us into a drought. By the first week of September, 94% of the state was considered abnormally dry (d0) and 31% of the state was moderately dry (d1). Through September, the hot, dry trend increased rapidly, sending Franklin County into a severe drought (d2) by September 30th. Despite early-season flooding and the severe drought through the end of the growing season, corn performed exceptionally well statewide. Missouri is projected to set a new record average yield around 187–188 bushels per acre, surpassing last year's record Franklin County contributed strongly to this trend with an average around 180 bushels/acre. Soybeans struggled with the drought hitting at just the wrong time for pod set and seed development, but overall maintained some resilience with a state average of around 50 bushels/acre.

U.S. Drought Monitor
Missouri



September 2, 2025
(Released Thursday, Sep. 4, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

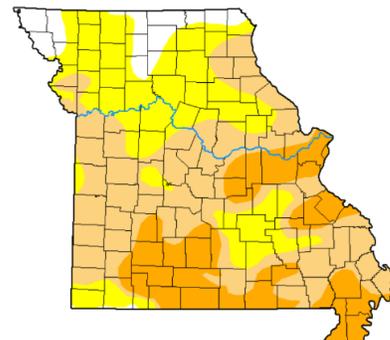
	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)						
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4	
Current	5.32	93.68	30.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Last Week (8-24-2025)	39.02	60.98	14.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	
3 Months Ago (6-23-2025)	71.68	28.32	7.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Start of Calendar Year (1-1-2025)	69.71	30.29	11.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Start of Water Year (10-1-2024)	39.30	60.70	23.73	7.96	0.00	0.00	
One Year Ago (9-23-2024)	44.31	55.69	14.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Intensity:
 None (White) D0 Abnormally Dry (Yellow) D1 Moderate Drought (Orange) D2 Severe Drought (Dark Orange) D3 Extreme Drought (Red) D4 Exceptional Drought (Dark Red)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:
David Simeral
Western Regional Climate Center

U.S. Drought Monitor
Missouri



September 30, 2025
(Released Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)						
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4	
Current	6.56	93.44	63.57	22.18	0.00	0.00	
Last Week (9-23-2025)	6.48	93.52	64.03	22.40	3.59	0.00	
3 Months Ago (7-1-2025)	92.16	7.84	1.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Start of Calendar Year (1-1-2025)	69.71	30.29	11.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Start of Water Year (10-1-2024)	39.30	60.70	23.73	7.96	0.00	0.00	
One Year Ago (9-23-2024)	39.30	60.70	23.73	7.96	0.00	0.00	

Intensity:
 None (White) D0 Abnormally Dry (Yellow) D1 Moderate Drought (Orange) D2 Severe Drought (Dark Orange) D3 Extreme Drought (Red) D4 Exceptional Drought (Dark Red)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

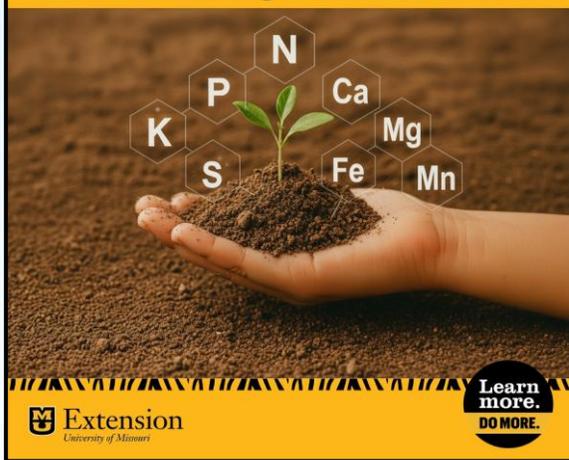
Author:
Curtis Riganti
National Drought Mitigation Center

Franklin County

Agriculture and Environment

Agronomy Highlights—Kate McDonald, Agronomy Specialist

Understanding Your Soil Needs



Soil testing is another service that MU Extension offers where producers can submit samples for quality testing and unbiased, research-based recommendations to clients for economically viable & environmentally safe nutrient management practices. This year, I analyzed and provided support for 131+ soil tests in Franklin County.

Each year MU extension holds private pesticide applicator training for producers wanting to purchase and apply restricted-use pesticides. Agricultural producers needing to obtain or renew certification of this license must take this pesticide safety training every five years. In 2025 we had 16 participants from Franklin County complete the training. Franklin County has a total of 484 registered private applicators in the county.

SAVE THE DATE

PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR LICENSE TRAINING

Tuesday, February 18th @ 6:00PM

Franklin County Extension Council
Foundation Meeting Room
102 Union Plaza Drive
Union, MO 63084

COST: \$75

*A valid photo ID is now required to renew or apply for a Private Applicator License.

Please RSVP
☎ 636-583-5141
✉ franklinc@missouri.edu

Extension University of Missouri



4th Grade Field Day Drone Demonstration

Franklin County

Agriculture and Environment

Agronomy Highlights—Kate McDonald, Agronomy Specialist



Fall 2025 Master Naturalist Graduates



Spring 2025 Master Naturalist Graduates

The **Missouri Master Naturalist** program is a community-based natural resource education and volunteer service program with the purpose of developing a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Missouri. The Franklin County Master Naturalist Chapter welcomed 17 new members for a total of 79 active members. This year, the group has successfully completed 6,472 volunteer hours.

More information about the Franklin County Master Naturalist program can be found at:

<https://miramiguoamissourimasternaturalist.org/Home>
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-master-naturalist>



In 2025, 48 **Franklin County Master Gardeners** completed a total of 2,580.65 volunteer hours, with a value of \$89,781 using the value of \$34.79 for 2025 per volunteer hour from the Independent Sector. Master Gardeners are required to complete 6 hours per year of continuing education, which totaled 438 hours in 2025. Master Gardeners were involved in many projects throughout Franklin County. Master Gardeners worked on several beautification projects including the Washington MO Community Garden, East Central College Round-About, The Tri-County Senior Center landscape, and Bethel Hills. (See attached MG Report for additional info and images).



Franklin County Master Gardeners on tour of All-American Selection Floral Bed at Franklin County Country Club in Washington.

More information about the Franklin County Master Gardener program can be found at:

<https://fcmastergardeners.org/>
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/extension-master-gardener>



Agriculture and Environment

Horticulture Highlights—Katie Kammler, Horticulture Specialist

Client Contacts:

83 calls and emails providing research-based horticulture information.

Topics included:

- Soil test results
- Pecan weevil
- Gouty oak gall identification
- Raised bed soil mixes
- Dahlia problems
- Herbicide drift
- Periodical cicada scarring on tree branches
- And many more horticulture-related inquiries

Programs Delivered:

- **Roses & Violets** — Scenic Regional Library, Pacific (13 participants).
- **Season Extension** — Scenic Regional Library, Sullivan (12 participants).

Farm Visit:

Assisted with issues related to growing cut flowers on a start-up farm.

Impact:

- Reached **25 participants** through educational programs.
- Supported local gardeners and farmers with practical solutions.
- Provided on-site assistance to improve specialty crop production.



Library program on roses and violets.



Success Story: Growing Garden Knowledge in Missouri

In 2025, the **Garden Spade e-newsletter** continued to be a trusted resource for horticulture enthusiasts across Missouri. With **2,556+ subscribers** and a **9.6% increase in subscriptions**, the newsletter reached more people than ever before.

Each monthly issue delivered practical, research-based tips on topics such as **insects, weeds, landscape plants, trees, fruits, and vegetables**, helping readers make informed decisions in their gardens and landscapes.

This growth reflects the strong interest in reliable horticulture information and the value of Extension resources in supporting healthy, productive gardens. By expanding its reach, the Garden Spade is empowering more residents to succeed in their gardening efforts year-round.

Ag Business

Rachel Hopkins
Ag Business Specialist
573-438-2671

hopkinsrm@umsystem.edu



Covering Franklin, Gasconade, Osage, Maries, Miller, Pulaski, Phelps, Dent, Crawford, Washington, St. Francois and Ste. Genevieve Counties

2025 AT A GLANCE

- **38** Lenders attended 'What Lenders Need to Know in 2026' in Jefferson City. Lenders heard from presenters discussing Market Outlooks, Policy Updates, Beef Feeding Calculator, Farmland Values and Rental Rates.
- **60** Attendees at the Farm Tax Workshops held in December, both in-person and online. Rachel hosted 2 locations (Ste. Genevieve & Vienna) and presented on drought & farm lease.
- **89** Mid-Missouri farmers and ranchers attended the Central Missouri Forage & Beef Conference in Maries County.
- **35** Local producers attended the Wurdack Producer Field Day in October to hear about local applicable topics.
- **120** Producers attended three Grazing Schools where Financial Aspects of Grazing were taught.

\$ 47,753 in lease's consulted on in 2025.



The cannulated bovine is always a memorable time with the FFA students.

1,924 DIRECT CONTACTS 7,140 INDIRECT CONTACTS



Rachel spoke to the East Central Cattlemen's Association in March 2025 on tips for succession planning.

KEY SUCCESSES

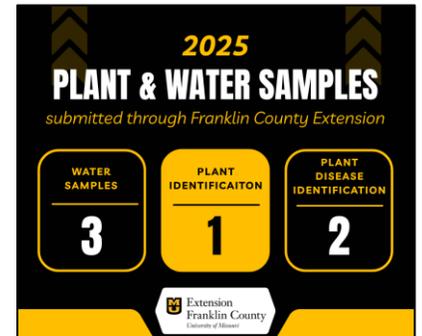
- ✓ **Monthly emails** sent out to subscribers letting them know of upcoming Extension programs in the region.
- ✓ Connected & educated **50 STL City youth** about agriculture at **Wurdack Extension Center**.
- ✓ **Rural Safety Day** educated **177 third graders** in Washington County of hazards they might encounter and thus preventing traumatic injuries.
- ✓ **Annie's Project** brought together **13 women in Maries County** for the 6 week- long event. It included field trips, guest speakers and activities.
- ✓ **Wurdack FFA Day** provided a learning opportunity for **528 9th graders** on different fields in agriculture and exposed them to new ideas and concepts.

Agriculture and Environment

Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory

The MU Soil & Plant Testing lab can analyze various samples such as:

- Soil
- Plant Tissue
- Water
- Manure
- Compost
- Greenhouse Material



Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory
University of Missouri Extension

Franklin County submitted over 200 soil samples in 2025 for row crops, hay ground, lawn, garden and food plots. Results provide nutrient values as well as recommendations for fertilizer and/or lime.

More information on the MU Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory can be found at:
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/soil-and-plant-testing-laboratory>



Plant Diagnostic Clinic

The MU Plant Diagnostic Clinic aids farmers and homeowners in diagnosing plant diseases. They also work to identify unknown plants and plant pests. Clients can submit physical samples or digital photos.

During 2025, MU Plant Diagnostic Clinic partnered with Missouri Department of Conservation to offer free testing of common oak tree diseases. Two of the most common oak diseases are Bacterial Leaf Scorch & Oak Wilt. Both can spread to nearby oak trees. By offering free testing, the diagnostic lab was able to track the number of trees affected and monitor the overall health of Missouri forests.



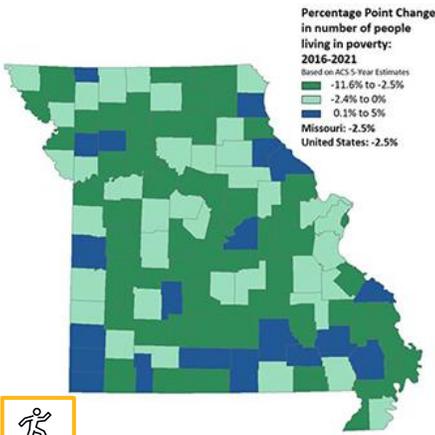
More information on the MU Plant Diagnostic Clinic can be found at:
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/soil-and-plant-testing-laboratory>





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Business and Community



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.

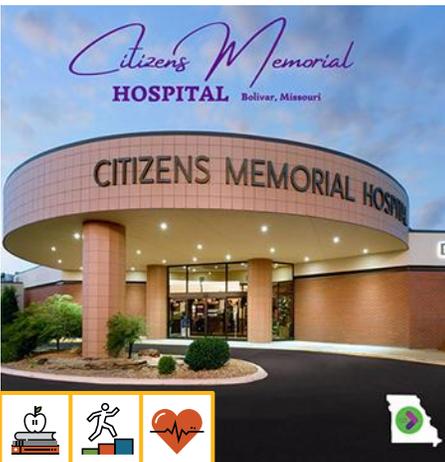
AMERICA'S SBDC MISSOURI CLIENT HIGHLIGHT



LOGS
- OF -
GLORY

The **Missouri Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** provide professional training and customized one-on-one counseling to small business across the state. Working with the Missouri SBDC helps business owners make confident decisions.

FY2020-2022, Missouri SBDC ASSISTED 878 STARTUPS and helped Missouri small businesses earn more than \$440 Million.



Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFWs) foster a workplace culture that promotes employee safety, health and well-being through strategies that support managers and employees, including reducing stigma and providing recovery resources related to the challenges surrounding substance use disorders. The framework was developed in partnership with MU Extension's Labor and Workforce Development Program.

As of 2024, 41 Missouri businesses have been designated recovery friendly workplaces, and 2,651 EMPLOYEES have been trained on addiction, stigma and naloxone distribution.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Business & Community



The **APEX Accelerators** (formerly known as Procurement Technical Assistance Centers) were created in 1984 by the Department of Defense to help businesses navigate the government marketplace. Since 1989, MU Extension has hosted the Missouri APEX accelerator as a business development partner program. The mission of the program helps businesses learn how to expand their market by selling goods and services to local, state and federal government entities.

In 2025, the Missouri APEX Accelerators served 10 CLIENTS and held 35 COUNSELING sessions in Franklin County.



More information about the Missouri APEX Accelerator program can be found at: <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/apex-accelerator>



The **Missouri Small Business Development Centers** (SBDC) provide professional training and customized one-on-one counseling to small business across the state. Working with the Missouri SBDC helps business owners make confident decisions.

Missouri SBDC assisted 41 clients and helped Franklin County small businesses obtain more than \$1.1 million in government contracts.



More information about the Missouri Small Business Development Center can be found at: <https://sbdc.missouri.edu/>

Local Impact

Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension coordinated and offered tax education through one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was in person and live online. Fall schools were in Columbia and Springfield and an online school. The schools were designed for those who prepare taxes including enrolled agents, tax preparers, CPAs, individuals, and attorneys.

The training included updates on legislation, rulings and cases, individual taxpayer issues, agricultural and natural resources topics, ethics, trusts and estates, agriculture and natural resource tax issues, business tax issues, business entity tax issues, IRS issues, installment sales, tax benefits of home ownership, retirement tax issues, and individual tax issues. The schools were approved for up to 16 hours of continuing education credit by the IRS, Missouri Bar and for CFP continuing education. Total continuing education hours reported to IRS for the schools was 4,024 hours.

The teaching teams included CPAs, a former IRS stakeholder liaison, an IRS certified retired ag economics professor, an attorney, a certified financial planner, Missouri Department of Revenue, MU faculty and extension ag business specialists.

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. One comment from an online participant was “The video was outstanding — best I’ve seen on any CPE I’ve done live.”. Planning is underway to offer trainings in 2026. Local county residents benefit when local tax preparers have the opportunity to gain knowledge, which benefits their clients and communities. The tax schools are a program of the ag business and policy program of MU Extension, coordinated by Mary Sobba with help from a team of ag business specialists throughout the state.

The resources for the schools included the IRS, 2025 National Income Tax Workbook from the Land Grant University Tax Education Foundation, and materials written by the instructors.

The 2025 school attendance totaled 389 people, which was an 11% increase from 2024. The participants were from throughout Missouri and two from out of state.



Franklin County had 5 tax school participants — 2 fall and 3 summer attendees.



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Continuing Education



Established in 2002, the **Fire Officer Certificate Program** is designed for those who wish to further their professional development without the time and expense of traditional college classes. This program has been developed and evaluated to ensure it provides structured curriculum delivery and academic rigor. The program requires completion of 288 of instruction within three years.



The **Fire Service Leadership Enhancement Program (FSLEP)** prepares fire and emergency service leaders for the opportunities and challenges they will face. For 25 years, the MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute has partnered with the Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs and the Missouri Association of Fire Protection Districts on this program.



MU **Continuing Education for Health Professions (CEHP)** provides evidenced-based, relevant and responsive learning activities designed to narrow professional practice gaps with respect to knowledge, competence, and performance of the healthcare team. A commitment to lifelong learning, in partnership with those we serve, contributes to excellence in practice and improved health outcomes.

**CEHP provided 169 LEARNING ACTIVITIES
which reached over 53,000 PROFESSIONAL
across all Missouri counties.**



Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Health and Human Sciences



Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory (COMET) is a 2-hour training for older youth and adults to support friends, family, acquaintances, colleagues and neighbors' wellbeing.



Brain and the Disease of Addiction provides a foundational understanding of how the brain is affected from substances such as drugs and alcohol and how the disease of addiction develops. The Brain and the Disease of Addiction Program is for individuals, parents, students, healthcare professionals, and groups and organizations who will benefit from an understanding and knowledge of the science of the disease of addiction.



Resilience is the capacity to adapt when faced with adversity. **WeCanPROSPER Resilience Training** is a 2.5 hour training for participants to evaluate their personal resilience, tap into resources and create an action plan to enhance their resilience. Upon completing the training, participants can attend a facilitator session, enabling them to deliver the content within their communities and strengthen resilience within their networks.

100% of participants indicate that the skills and techniques they learned will help them become MORE RESILIENT.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Local Impact

Maria Calvert – Human Development Specialist

calvertml@missouri.edu

Focus On Kids Parenting Class: 284 Participants

In 2025, total of 284 participants across 30 classes completed the Focus on Kids in Franklin County. Across our region,

- **80%** of participants reported increased knowledge about cooperative coparenting benefits to children
- **78%** increased their knowledge about best strategies for child-focused communication
- **76%** increased their confidence in parenting skills during this transition
- **74%** report increased confidence in their ability to handle the transition
- **77%** feel they are better able to help their child adjust
- **30%** shared they have reduced intention for re-litigation services



Based on the metrics from similar programs at other major universities, we use the following equation to determine impact. (# of completers) x \$520 = estimated societal cost savings per year. As of the end of 2025, the estimated societal cost savings is \$147,680.

Healthy Aging Programs: 28 Participants

Healthy aging programs, such as Keep Your Keys, Wits Workout, and Alzheimer's Awareness, served 28 community members.

Mental Wellness Programs: 31 Participants

Mental health programs like Youth Mental Health First Aid Training & Taking Care of You served community members including 17 faculty/staff members at Strain-Japan R-XVI school district who became Youth Mental Health First Aid certified. Across YMHFA and MHFA trainings, 98% of participants feel they can recognize signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges, 91% are confident they can have a supportive conversation with an individual about mental health or substance use challenges, and 89% agree they are more likely to help when they encounter someone in distress.



Other Wellness Programs: 11 Participants

Other wellness programs including goal setting, healthy eating, and stress management, served 11 individuals at Life's River.

Other Programming

Five community members participated in the statewide, virtual Building Strong Families series. Across Building Strong Families class participants, 96% better understand the traits that help strengthen families, 96% know ways to help build my child's self-esteem, 100% report applying skills to engage in more positive parenting behaviors, and 100% agree that as a result of the class they are a more supportive parent to their child(ren).





Franklin County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

Cheri Kramme – Nutrition Program Associate

cjkramme@missouri.edu

- ▶ **Direct Contact / Teaching Participants: 6,513**
- ▶ **Community Partnerships with Franklin County Agencies: 54**
- ▶ **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — Assisted 49 people**
In Missouri, SNAP is administered through the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS has partnered with the University of Missouri and Feeding Missouri to assist individuals and families who need assistance in completing the SNAP application.
- ▶ **8 New Community Garden Beds**



Gerald Elementary Students



Meramec Mission, Sullivan



Aging Ahead Participants

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

Emily Poncher, MPA — Community Health Specialist

emilyponcher@missouri.edu

Serving Crawford, Dent, Franklin, Gasconade, Maries, Montgomery, and Phelps Counties

2025 at a Glance

Hello all! 2025 was a year of connection and collaboration across the counties I serve. My work focused on connecting with communities through local events, professional meetings, and community spaces to share practical health information and strengthen partnerships.

Throughout the year, I supported county and regional efforts related to physical activity, mental and emotional well-being, and emerging health concerns, including Alpha-gal Syndrome. This included facilitating Extension programs, collaborating with Health and Human Sciences colleagues, and sharing community health work through conferences, local media, and public events. In Franklin County, Extension served as a convener by bringing together service providers, health professionals, and community members to support shared learning and collaboration around key health topics.

Key Successes

- Contributed to 100 Miles 100 Days regional collaboration, which engaged over 700 participants across East Central Missouri. Franklin County logged 594 miles.
- Led the Franklin County Service Providers Group throughout the year, promoting cross-sector collaboration.
- Organized an adult immunization convening that educated local health professionals and community members.
- Presented on Alpha-gal Syndrome to over 125 attendees at the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association Steak Dinner.
- Organized a holiday food drive, collecting over 65 units of food for local distribution.



Educating Franklin County Cattlemen's Association members on Alpha-Gal Syndrome



Rachel O'Halloran



Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health

Franklin County

Health and Human Sciences

Profiles and stories

16 health programs were performed in Franklin County in 2025. Those programs included the programs described here.



Home Food Preservation

Preserve the season's bounty in a safe and delicious way.

Learn safe techniques for pressure canning, boiling water bath canning, steam canning, dehydration, and freezing.

Understand the importance of using safe food preservation and storage methods to avoid cross-contamination and food-borne illnesses.

Fruit dehydration and jam making were offered for 72 community members.



Cooking for the Heart builds food skills through cooking while learning strategies to manage, prevent, or delay heart disease complications. The session offers detailed instruction, group activities, and hands-on cooking of a heart healthy recipe.

Participants shared that after the session they were more familiar with the benefits of a DASH diet and that they planned to prepare meals that were supportive of heart health.



#SNAPEdWorks to help Missourians to improve outcomes of chronic disease.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy supports older adults in maintaining strength, balance, and mobility to fully engage in the activities that matter most to them. The program combines safe, effective exercises with practical information on nutrition and wellness, helping participants build confidence, connection, and **well-being** for lifelong health.

34 residents participated.

Health and Human Sciences

Profiles and Stories



Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes encourage residents to improve community health by making healthy choices easier and more accessible. Residents design strategies around local needs, assets, and interests.

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program was offered by MU Extension in Franklin County in 2025. In the 2025 season a total of \$7,750 worth of benefit was issued, providing locally grown produce to 154 Franklin County residents. In addition, the new Bulk Bag delivery option delivered 87 bags. The program in Franklin County had a total redemption rate of 86%. The reach, redemption and use of this program was at an all time high in Franklin County.



Dining with Diabetes builds food skills through cooking while learning strategies to manage, prevent, or delay diabetes-related complications. Each session offers detailed instruction, group activities, and hands-on cooking of a diabetes-friendly meal.

After four weeks participants significantly increased **exercise, fruits and vegetable consumption** and use of the **Diabetes Plate Method**.

22 residents participated in diabetes education.



Tai Chi for Arthritis guide residents through the practice of 16 tai chi forms. Exercising in this way corrects painful postures, builds balance, and reclaims control of the mind. Each participant learns at their own pace and comes together to celebrate each other. Tai chi is supported by the CDC and the military to reduce pain and improve longevity.

12 residents participated.

Franklin County Highlights



Eileen Wade and Donna Huellinghoff put their creative touch on the Franklin County Extension office. The design was sketched out at night using a projector and then hand-painted during the day. Emmendorfer Exteriors then applied a topcoat sealant to protect the mural for years to come. It is a beautiful addition to the office.

Thank you!



Franklin County Highlights

Missouri
Century Farm

John & Sophia
Smithton

Family Farm Established 1908



A program of
University of Missouri Extension
College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Missouri Farm Bureau



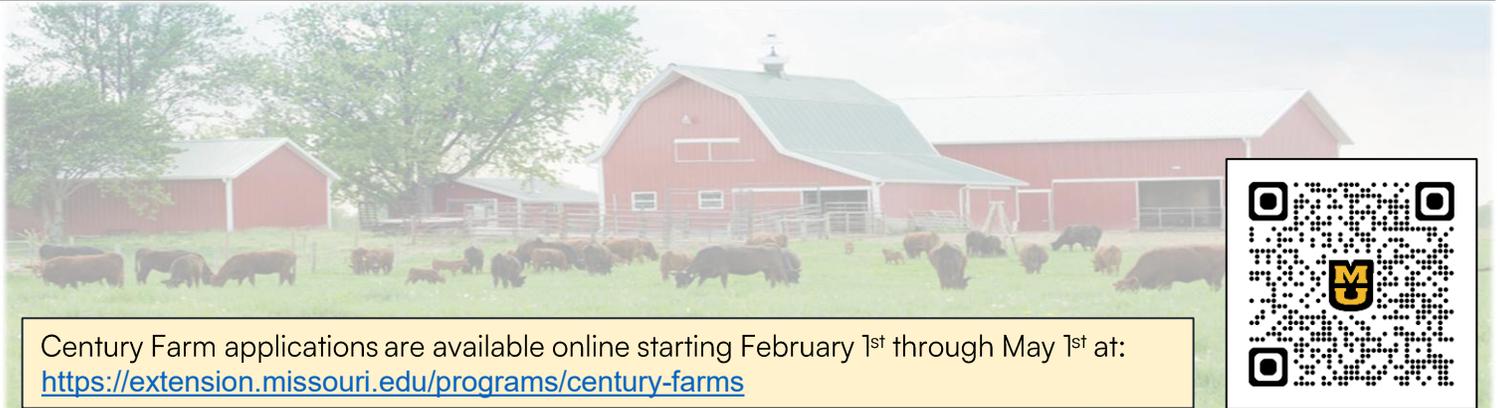
Century farms and ranches have shaped our nation and state. In every kitchen, behind every barn door, and in every soiled and calloused hand lie stories of those who feed our nation.

2025 Franklin County Century Farms

The Missouri Century Farm program celebrates the lasting contributions farmers and ranchers have made to our country and state's heritage. The "Centennial Farm" project was initiated in Missouri in 1976 to award certificates to persons owning farms that had been in the same family for 100 years or more. Interest in the program continued so the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and University of Missouri Extension planned a 10-year update in 1986 called the "Century Farm" program. This program has been sustained as a yearly event with over 100 farms recognized each year.

In 2025, Franklin County Extension was honored to recognize 7 Century Farms.

- **Emmons Farm** — Established 1913 — Owners: John & Suzanne Emmons
- **Gerling Farm** — Established 1924 — Owners: Bob & Cindy Gerling
- **Casper Haberberger Farm** — Established 1918 — Owners: Harvey Haberberger
- **Henry Haberberger Farm** — Established 1906 — Owners: Shirlann Mitchell
- **Pisane Farm** — Established 1918 — Owners: Mark & Mary Pisane
- **Shulte-Steinbeck-Borcherding Farm** — Established 1892 — Owners: Lloyd & Dorothy Borcherding, Amy Covington, & Allen Borcherding
- **Wunderlich Farm** — Established 1870 — Sarah Saunders, Norbert Wunderlich, Lucy Junge, & Jolene Keck



Century Farm applications are available online starting February 1st through May 1st at:
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/century-farms>



Master Gardener Program

Community Connections

Number of Volunteers — 48
Number of Volunteer Hours — 2,580.65
Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours - \$89,780.81*
(*[Independent Sector](#) at \$34.79/hour)

Number of New Volunteers — 8
Number of Continuing Education Hours — 438
Number of Advanced Training Hours — 6

Pounds of Produce Donated — 900
Value of Pounds of Produce Donated - \$1,737
(*[Feeding America](#) at \$1.93/pound)

Social Media Analytics —
Total Content Views: 15,174
Total Engagements (reactions, comments, shares): 741
Total Followers: 74
Total Posts: 29

Projects and Activities:

The Demonstration Garden is located in Union and contains all native plants. Signs in the garden identify each of the plants. This year, the garden was designated as a Pollinator Waystation by MonarchWatch.org.

The Franklin County Master Gardeners (FCMG), in tandem with gardeners within the Washington MO community have formed a steering committee & are in their 6th year of operating the Washington MO Community Garden (WMCG). The garden was started as a FCMG intern project in 2019 by member Becky Obermark, FCMG, and features 12 plots for lease to the community. Any plots not leased during the growing season are planted with various vegetables and herbs by the garden's steering committee. 900 pounds of produce was donated to local food pantries & area restaurants. A Facebook page was added this year to increase community engagement.

The Round-About by East Central College was planted and maintained again this year. This is a beautification project to be enjoyed by the community.

Our Plant Sale this year set a record. Net income was \$2,669. We offered annuals, perennials and native plants. The community was very interested in the natives and several of our knowledgeable members were able to answer their questions and help them choose the best plants for their needs. Three of our members "advertised" our plant sale at the Sunset of the Riverfront event in Washington. We promoted our chapter as well as our sale.

Several members of our chapter judged the floral arrangements, terrariums, herb gardens, fairy gardens and pollinator gardens at the Washington Town and Country Fair. In addition to awarding a ribbon to each entry and determining Best of Show in each category, the judges left comments on each entry tag for the exhibitor ensuring a learning opportunity to them.

The Tri-County Senior Center landscape continues to be maintained by several of our members. This provides a lovely atmosphere for the senior members of our community.

Bethel Hills is a faith-based community where adults with and without developmental disabilities live their life to the fullest. Several of our members volunteer there on a regular basis keeping the grounds and landscape beautiful. This year, they introduced hydroponic gardening which is providing some of the food supplies for the residents. The residents are encouraged and help with the work and learn best practices from master gardeners.

Master Gardener Program

Community Connections

The Campbellton School Gardening Program for students was a huge success. It is a small school of approximately 122 students. Over 40 of the students participated in the after-school gardening program. The program was led by a Master Gardener volunteer and includes some classroom learning as well as hands-on learning in the garden.

Our chapter awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to one very deserving high school senior who is going to be studying horticulture in college.

We had 11 chapter meetings this year with an educational component in 9 of them. The speakers at these meetings educated us on various topics such as composting, native bees, growing mushrooms, new plants in 2025 and updates from Debi Kelly. One meeting was devoted to fellow members presenting on a plant they grow and discussion of the ease or difficulty of growing and other tips and tricks. We also toured Whitmer Native Garden at Shaw Nature reserve and Franklin County Country Club. The other two meetings were devoted to our Summer Picnic and Holiday Party.



Franklin County Master Gardener Chapter's 2025 plant sale held in Washington, MO supplied beautiful plants for the community.



Members tour Whitmer Native Garden at Shaw Nature Reserve.



Members pose by the Demonstration Garden sign after a morning of weeding and maintenance.

Master Gardener Program

Community Connections



The demo garden had frequent visitors this year.



Members snap a picture after a workday at the Washington MO Community Garden.



A load of vegetables harvested this summer and donated from the Washington MO Community Garden.



Two members judging beautiful flowers at the Washington Town and Country Fair.

More information about the Franklin County Master Gardener program can be found at:
<https://fcmastergardeners.org/>
<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/extension-master-gardener>



Franklin County Highlights

2025 Franklin County Farm Family



Front Row: Kevin & Kaylin Bade, Lydia (daughter), Dylin (son), Gary & Donna Meyer (Kaylin's Parents)

Back Row: Garrett Hawkins - Missouri Farm Bureau President; Kevin Roberts - Missouri State Fair Commissioner Chairman; Jerald Andrews - Missouri State Fair Commissioner; Chad Higgins - Vice Chancellor for MU Extension and Engagement & Chief Engagement Officers UM System; Jared Hill - Missouri State Fair Commissioner; Christine Chinn - Missouri Department of Agriculture Director; and Randy Little - Missouri State Fair Commissioner

Each year the Missouri State Fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state that are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local extension programs such as 4-H or FFA. The annual event is sponsored by five partner agencies: the Missouri Farm Bureau; the Missouri Department of Agriculture; the Missouri State Fair Commissioners; the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and MU Extension. The event showcases the impact that Missouri farm families have on the economy and heritage of the state, said Missouri State Fair Director Jason Moore.

“These families are involved in agriculture activities in their communities and are active participants in local outreach and extension. As the premier showcase for Missouri agriculture, the Missouri State Fair is most certainly the appropriate place to celebrate these families.”



Extension

University of Missouri

Franklin County
100 Union Plaza Drive
Union, MO 63084

636-583-5141

<https://extension.Missouri.edu/counties/franklin>

franklinco@missouri.edu