

Learn How to Have a Homegrown Lifestyle

Algona, Iowa – Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is offering a course for folks who want to reconnect with the land, grow food for their own use and create a sustainable landscape. Homegrown Lifestyle will be offered by ISU Extension - Kossuth County on Thursday evenings from 6-9 p.m. beginning March 29 and ending June 14.

Homegrown Lifestyle is a 12-week spring short course for people living on a large lot or small acreage who are interested in producing food for their own use in a way that sustains their natural environment. Each weekly session has a webinar, taught by extension educators with expertise in the topics, to bring the science of getting started to the class; plus, each class offers locally organized activities for a hands-on experience. In addition to weekly Thursday sessions, three half-day local tours or workshops give course participants the opportunity to experience small-scale food production and resource conservation practices first hand.

“Increasing interest in local foods has some folks wondering if they could grow their own food,” said Carrie Gatton, coordinator for Homegrown Lifestyle in Kossuth County. “The Homegrown Lifestyle course combines basic information on a wide range of topics with practical application, local tours and workshops for a complete educational experience.”

Weekly sessions are taught by extension educators, with activities led by local experts. The course will be held at the Kossuth County Extension Office.

Topics covered during the course include edible landscape design; soil and water conservation; growing and preserving vegetables, fruits and wild crops; backyard poultry; beekeeping; grazing and ruminants; and wildlife management. Homegrown Lifestyle focuses on fundamental, scale-appropriate food production techniques and conservation strategies that smallholders and modern homesteaders can quickly put to use. It is not a farm business planning class of commercial growers.

The course fee is \$179. Online registration opens Feb. 10 at www.homegrownlifestyle.org; intent to enroll can be emailed to homegrown@iastate.edu prior to that date. Registrations must be completed by March 22. For more information about Homegrown Lifestyle, contact Carrie Gatton 515-295-2469 or visit www.homegrownlifestyle.org.

“It was incredible learning from experienced gardeners – they shared simple things that have definitely improved my garden and farmstead this year,” said Rich Myers, a 2011 participant.