



## March Is Extension Month in Tennessee

**M**arch is Extension Month in Tennessee. Extension is a national educational program supported by USDA through the nation's land-grant universities and administered with funding from state and local governments in Tennessee through offices in each of the state's 95 counties. County Extension offices across the state are planning various celebrations and commemorations for the state's 105-year-old Extension program.

Extension is the outreach arm of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and the Tennessee State University College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences. An integral part of the land-grant mission, Extension programs are delivered in all 95 counties in the state by subject-matter specialists, county agents and volunteers.

"Extension means 'reaching out,' and University of Tennessee Extension extends the university's teaching and research missions to deliver research-based information and education to all the state's citizens through youth and adult programs in every county," said Tim Cross, dean of UT Extension.

Example programs available through county offices include the state's award-winning 4-H Youth Development Program including its summer youth camps; family and consumer educational programs; and healthy living courses. In keeping with the traditional view of Extension, information to assist the state's agricultural producers and foresters is also available, and the increasingly popular courses for Master Gardeners, and gardeners in general, are also conducted through county Extension offices.

"TSU Extension encompasses hundreds of Extension faculty members, scientists, educators, administrative staff and volunteers, all working to provide solutions for Tennesseans," said Latif Lighari, associate dean for Extension at Tennessee State University.

UT Extension also performs services for the state's citizens, including managing the statewide Soil, Plant and Pest Center through which clients can have the quality of their soil and forage analyzed and any insect pest or plant diseases identified. Extension also trains clients in the proper use of pesticides and even operates commercially certified kitchens where small-scale

vendors can prepare food items for sale while meeting state guidelines for food safety.

Extension's programs can be seen in Tennessee as an excellent investment of public resources. The statewide educational programs in 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and community economic development are estimated to impact the state's economy by more than \$493 million from July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014. This amounts to a return of investment of \$8.13 for every \$1 in public funds invested in Tennessee Extension.

Please contact me for more information about programs available here in Shelby County. You can find contact information online at the UT Extension website: [extension.tennessee.edu](http://extension.tennessee.edu). Just click on Shelby County. Information is also available at the TSU Cooperative Extension website: [www.tnstate.edu/extension](http://www.tnstate.edu/extension).

Until next time, happy gardening!



*Christopher Coppen*