

2024 Annual Report

Knox & Lincoln Counties Extension



EDWIN REMSBERG PHOTO

*Putting university research to work in homes, businesses, farms
and communities for over 100 years.*

Knox-Lincoln Counties Extension Association

Executive Committee

Aaron Englander, President
Jack Green, Treasurer
Loiusa Crane, Secretary
Diane Schivera
Nancy Wood

Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension

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For the hearing impaired: 800.287.8957

Knox-Lincoln Counties Staff

Extension Educator

Brett Johnson

Professionals

Ellen Baker	Ryan LeShane
Jennifer Doherty	Viña Lindley
Heather Elowe	Hannah Pennington
Parker Gassett	Brooke Sanborn
Gretchen Gee	Claudia Williamson
Ruth Griffin	Celena Zacchai

Community Education Assistants

Cindy Rogers
Elizabeth Stanley

Administrative Specialist

Pamela Doherty

front cover: Marshall Point Light Station, Port Clyde, Maine



CINDY ROGERS PHOTO

University of Maine Cooperative Extension seeks volunteers to serve on the Knox-Lincoln Counties Executive Committee

UMaine Extension can only be successful with the help of county residents serving on the Executive Committee. Board members provide oversight and support to staff, as well as help promote programs.

Knox-Lincoln Extension is vibrant and active! We provide a broad range of programs: 4-H youth development, assistance to commercial farmers and home gardeners, and in-home education for new parents.

Executive Committee members are asked to attend four two-hour meetings a year focusing on county programming, building maintenance, and finances. Members can follow their interests and become more involved in any of the county or state-wide programs offered by Extension.

If you're interested in UMaine Extension Programs and giving back to your community, serving on the Executive Committee is a great place to be! Contact Ryan LeShane 207.832.0343, in Maine 800.244.2104 or ryanleshane@maine.edu.

above: UMaine Cooperative Extension office in Waldoboro, Maine

left: Carrot Purple Haze

LIZ STANLEY PHOTO

President's Message

Dear Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Community,

Happy Summer! It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as President of the Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Association Executive Committee (KLCEA-EC). I get to see firsthand the amazing work the staff and educators are doing in the community. Critical services such as:

- Supporting Maine Families through early childhood with knowledge and resources
- Agricultural outreach, research and market development for the farming and horticultural sectors
- Partnership development to bolster coastal communities' resilience
- Youth engagement through 4-H and Blueberry Cove 4-H Camp and Learning Center connects with a broad spectrum of youth—cultivating the next generation of land stewards, farmers, teachers and more.

All of these programs support common values of hard work, respect, community mindfulness and gratitude. I am continually amazed by the expertise, skill and enthusiasm the Cooperative Extension staff bring to their jobs, which are essential services for the community.

A special thank you goes out to Liz Stanley for over two decades of service as the Knox-Lincoln Home Horticulture Community Education Assistant. Congratulations on retirement—you will be missed! Many thanks to Viña Lindley from Waldo County Extension for stepping up to additionally cover Knox and Lincoln Counties going forward. We are grateful to be integrating more with Waldo County.

Now is the time to help strengthen local community, enhance resilience and bring all voices to the table—joining the Cooperative Extension Executive Committee is a great way to do all of this! The EC oversees the budget, facility, vision and program direction of KLCEA. Please consider joining our board—we are especially seeking members from Lincoln County! Contact our office for more information.

Please enjoy this report and you may be as impressed as I at all the great work going on at Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension.

Sincerely,



Aaron Englander, KLCEA Executive Committee President
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Erickson Fields Farm and Program Manager
Rockport, ME

Native bunchberry, Cornus canadensis

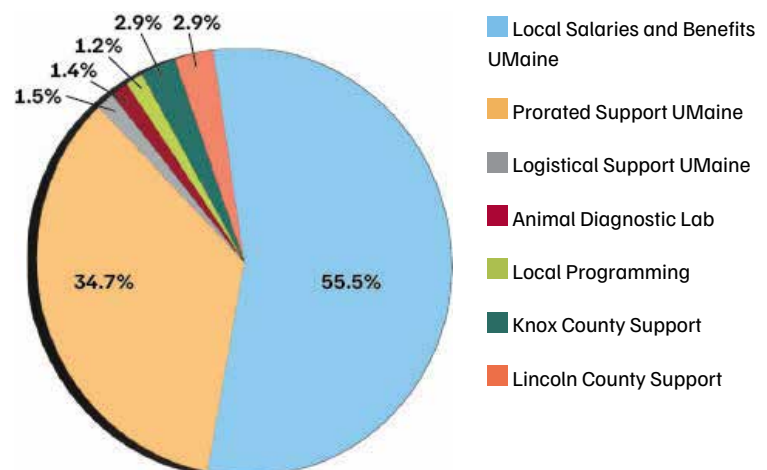


LIZ STANLEY PHOTO

Knox-Lincoln Extension Financial Resources

This graph illustrates the financial resources for programs offered, supported and managed from the Knox and Lincoln Counties office. Each year, Knox and Lincoln Counties tax dollars support UMaine Extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and programming expenses.

As a unique partnership among federal, state and county governments, UMaine Extension uses funding from Maine counties and the University of Maine to match and access support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private foundations. Each UMaine Extension county office is also part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system.



4-H Youth Development

information: ryan.leshane@maine.edu

Knox-Lincoln 4-H Club Program

- 56 youth members, 36 adult volunteers enrolled in 2024; a nearly 65% increase in member participation, over 63% increase in adult volunteers
- Two new 4-H clubs came onboard in 2024; a livestock club in Bristol, and a volunteer-driven after school program in Warren.
- Knox-Lincoln 4-H staff offered local youth programs in subjects such as Public Speaking, Cooking, Photography, and Science.
- Five Knox-Lincoln 4-H teens took an active role in operating the 4-H Farm-to-Fair agriculture exhibit at Union Fair. Each of them received scholarship funds to participate in educational programs including 4-H National Trips and classes at Maine institutions of higher learning; funded by the Knox-Lincoln 4-H Leaders Association and donations from the Paper Clover Campaign at Tractor Supply Company Stores.



left: The total solar eclipse in Maine provided an opportunity for staff to engage with youth around astronomy.

right: Campers explore sea life at UMaine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Blueberry Cove.



EDWIN REMSEBERG PHOTO

Blueberry Cove 4-H Camp and Learning Center

- The 2024 season was a successful one, marked by a strong commitment to providing enriching outdoor and environmental education experiences.
- The camp served over 650 children in 2024, offering a range of programs, from summer camp, after school and early childhood all focused on connecting youth with the natural world. Campers participated in activities such as coastal exploration, sustainable agriculture in the camp's gardens, and various on-water adventures, all fostering both personal growth and a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship.
- The facility hosted several local and regional groups including the Maine Science Teachers Association for their annual conference.

Climate Resilience

information: parker.gassett@maine.edu

Maine Climate Science Information Exchange

- Supported Maine Governor's office in securing Maine's largest climate resilience grant: \$69M NOAA climate resilience grant award.
- Assisted Maine Department of Environmental Protection in developing comprehensive living shorelines materials, including installation maps and practical guides for coastal property owners.
- Documented hundreds of new marine climate-related research projects showcasing Maine's active role in climate science (via Maine Climate Science Information Exchange Office Website).
- Orchestrated a second edition update of the Maine Community Resilience Workbook, which has been downloaded thousands of times from the Cooperative Extension website, and is being used statewide.
- Advised legal review of U.S. state policy on nature-based engineering.
- Currently coordinating a summer 2025 symposium on Coastal Blue Carbon Ecosystems that will bring together researchers, policy makers, and stakeholders to discuss Maine's coastal carbon storage potential.



The Maine Climate Science Information Exchange connects climate change science and technical support with coastal community leaders in Maine

Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The 2023 – 24 Maine Master Gardener Volunteer training wrapped up in May 2024. Trainees in county cohorts receive self-paced material on UMaine's learning platform and connect virtually to specialists and industry experts on horticultural topics. Master Gardeners then volunteer in four focus areas:

- **Maine Harvest for Hunger:** Volunteers grow and donate produce from home and community gardens, glean at farms, and work directly with food security organizations. Program volunteers gleaned over a quarter of a million pounds of food for the people of Maine (258,731 lbs) statewide in 2024. The value of that food was over a half a million dollars (\$509,700). Nearly 4.1 million pounds (4,098,731) were gleaned since the program's inception in 2000.
- **Ecological and Sustainable Landscapes:** Volunteers learn best sustainable practices utilizing native plants for pollinator and wildlife-friendly habitats, controlling invasive pests, and mitigating climate challenges.
- **Youth and School Garden Programs:** Working with teachers and students to explore Maine's food system.
- **Educational Programming:** Presenting talks, webinars and writing articles relating to horticulture.
- In 2024 Master Gardener Volunteers donated 1,753 hours at a nationally recognized average value of \$33.49/hr; total value to Knox and Lincoln Counties of about \$58,532.



Master Gardener Volunteers and Extension staff enjoying lunch after a work day at the Brae Maple Farm Demonstration Garden in Union

- There were 17 projects across the two counties which reached over 350 adults and 350 youth.

Horticulture

- UMaine Extension's statewide horticulture team conducted multiple webinar series and videos featuring sustainable practices for beginning and experienced gardeners.
- In addition to Master Gardener Volunteer training, two other in-depth programs are offered: The Maine Gardener Training, which does not require a volunteer component, and the Maine Horticultural Apprentice Training, a micro-credential program for professionals in the green industry.

Parent Education

Maine Families Home Visiting Program

- As part of a statewide network of Maine Families Home Visiting Programs, our team of seven parent educators provided 1,451 home visits to 166 families living in Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc Counties, and the Cumberland County Towns of Brunswick, Harpswell, Freeport, Yarmouth, Cumberland, and Falmouth.
- We served 153 children from birth to age five using the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model to support families with knowledge and resources to prepare their children for a strong start in life and greater success in school.

- This year we connected 114 families with community resources and programs including parenting classes, food pantries, housing assistance, medical and mental health services, and early intervention.
- In 2024, we offered two monthly playgroups for families with children birth to age five. The groups were held in the community at the Coastal Children's Museum and Rumpus Room and provided opportunities for social connections for children and parents.



above: Bubbles family activity in Rockland

left: Parent Program of Mid-Coast Maine Governing Board assembling craft kits for participant families



- According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Knox and Lincoln Counties have 271 and 306 farms in operation, respectively. A total of more than 50,000 acres are currently managed as farmland.
- In 2024 UMaine Cooperative Extension supported commercial producers in Knox and Lincoln Counties through one-on-one consultation on topics including pest and disease issues, soil testing, site suitability for farm production, soil nutrient management, and business planning.

IPM Practices in Christmas Tree Production

- Sustainable Agriculture Educator, Brett Johnson continues to develop and direct a comprehensive research and education program to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of Christmas tree production in Maine through adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices.

Growing, Marketing Specialty Potato Varieties

- In 2024, Johnson conducted specialty potato variety trials at the Rogers Farm Forage and Crop Research Facility in Old Town, generating data on yield and other traits related to performance for 15 potato varieties suitable for specialty markets. Short-term goals include surveying potato consumers in Midcoast Maine to rank purchasing preferences among potato products. Intended outcomes include increased knowledge of consumer preferences in specialty potato products and increased farm income through new variety adoption by Maine's specialty crop producers.



EDWIN REMSBERG PHOTO

Assistant Extension Professor, Brett Johnson explaining the use of Integrated Pest Management practices in the production of Maine-grown Christmas trees.

Business Planning for Producers

- The 2024–25 Business Planning for Producers cohort included 20 aspiring, new and beginning farmers, three from Knox and Lincoln Counties. Johnson is focused on increasing the level of participation through one-on-one business planning consultations he offers to new producers. Intended outcomes include increased awareness of business planning components and completion of business plans, leading to increased access to funding through the utilization of USDA Farm Service Agency borrowers training credit.



VIÑA LINDLEY PHOTO

Happy Retirement, Liz Stanley!

Liz's last day with Cooperative Extension was August 1, 2024. Join us in celebrating and congratulating Liz on her retirement, despite the loss it will mean for Knox-Lincoln and Waldo Extension offices and beyond. She has had an incredible impact in her community.

Liz was the person to turn to for any and all garden questions, giving of her knowledge with generosity, humility and humor for over two decades! She came to Extension with a wealth of knowledge from her background in professional gardening, but she also brought with her so many other talents and skills. For one, Liz is a great visual artist who created fabulous graphics that she used in her educational materials.

My earliest memory of working with Liz was with a group of 4-H youth building raised beds at a senior housing community. She showed up with her tools, tarps, buckets, and invaluable tips. Liz showed up for everything: volunteer events, work meetings, and social outings. In true Liz fashion, she plans to remain involved as a Master Gardener Volunteer. You may just see her at an event or two in the future.

—Viña Lindley, Home Horticulture Professional

Welcome, Viña Lindley!

Viña Lindley is now supporting the Home Horticulture program in Knox, Lincoln, and Waldo Counties. Viña implements programs that address critical issues in food access and sustainable approaches to home horticulture. Through educational workshops and community collaborations, Viña's focus is on empowering individuals, families, and institutions to enhance their understanding of sustainable practices grounded in research-based information. She supports the efforts of Master Gardener Volunteers to expand food access, deepen knowledge, and support a healthy environment in the community. Her collaborators include Maine Farm and Sea to School Network, Maine Department of Corrections, and Waldo County Bounty.





Two apple trees in bloom

The County Extension Act

The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices.

Cooperative Extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a “county extension association,” and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county or counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefore. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.¹

¹Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191–§195

Additional Resources

Garden and Yard Page for Home Gardeners:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/gardening/>

Horticulture Training Programs:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/learn/>

Insect Identification:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/home-and-garden-ipm/critter-id/critter-id-insects/>

Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/plant-disease/>

Tick Identification and Testing:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/tickid/>

left: Actaea pachypoda, white baneberry

back cover: Late afternoon at University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Blueberry Cove, St. George





LIZ STANLEY PHOTO

For more information contact:

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University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s successful educational programs result from a federal, state, and county government partnership. Since 1919, when the Maine Legislature passed the County Extension Act, the University of Maine has been in all Maine communities with a county office whose operations are funded by county government. Our educational programs anticipate and respond to local and state needs and issues. We also communicate those issues and opportunities to UMaine faculty to influence their research and development plans.