



HI-LITES

Free Milkweed Seed Packets in April!

Throughout the month of April, while supplies last, you can pick up a free packet of milkweed seeds from our Mt. Vernon and Salem offices!

Why milkweed?

Monarch caterpillars eat milkweed. In fact, the monarch butterfly is also known as the “milkweed butterfly.” A monarch butterfly begins life as a tiny egg on the bottom of a milkweed leaf. Monarchs lay their eggs exclusively on milkweed because it will provide enough food for the caterpillars once they emerge. The caterpillars feed on the milkweed for approximately 2 weeks.

Monarch butterflies have a short lifespan of 4-5 weeks, but in that short amount of time, they are able to pollinate plants, crops, flowers, and trees. Their survival is important because 35% of the world’s food comes from pollinated plants that we depend on.

How do you grow milkweed?

Germination rates will be greatly reduced if not planted correctly. Milkweed seeds can be very slow to germinate and do take time and patience. For best results and to speed up the germination process, place the seeds in a wet paper towel in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 30 days prior to planting. Then plant the seeds in a sunny place about 1/2” deep and water them for at least two weeks.

After about two months, your milkweed plant will be big enough for caterpillars to eat. Each monarch caterpillar will eat through about 20 leaves!

Milkweed plants are food for caterpillars but poisonous to humans. Do not get milkweed sap on your skin or in your eyes. Milkweed is also toxic if eaten, so keep plants away from young children and pets.



Mt. Vernon Office
3906 Broadway
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Salem Office
1631 E Main St.
Salem, IL 62881
Tuesday - Thursday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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TCEC recognized at Safety and Energy Conference in Springfield



Director of Operations Brad Grubb (left) and Supervisor of Operations Kevin Cummings (right) accepted awards on behalf of Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Safety is of utmost importance, especially in the electric industry. To further safety education, supervisors from electric cooperatives across Illinois gathered in Springfield to attend the annual Safety and Energy Conference Jan. 29-30, hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).

The conference focused on safety and leadership in the energy industry, and attendees received relevant training to keep them informed and safe while on the job.

During the conference, safety leadership awards were presented to recognize individual and cooperative-wide commitment to safe work culture. Tri-County Electric Cooperative was recognized with a 2024 award for Best Lost Time Rate and a 2024 award for Best Incident Rate.

The AIEC Cooperative Safety Leadership Awards recognize safety awareness and reward cooperatives that demonstrate safety leadership, promote safety culture, and go above and beyond normal safety expectations.



Cooperative Calendar

April 11, 2025

Board Petitions Must be Filed
American Red Cross Blood Drive

April 18, 2025

TCEC Offices Closed - Good Friday

June 27, 2025

American Red Cross Blood Drive

July 12, 2025

Annual Meeting - Mt. Vernon

Sour Cream Bundt Cake

SIMPLE RECIPE

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 boxed yellow cake mix
- 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding mix
- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- 1 (16 oz.) container of cream cheese icing



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. In a stand mixer (or with hand mixer, combine all ingredients, except chips, starting at the beginning and adding one at a time.
3. Add in white chocolate chips and mix until fully incorporated.
4. Spray bundt pan liberally and pour batter into pan.
5. Bake for 45-55 min. until a toothpick inserted comes out with just one or two small pieces of cake on it. Remove from oven, let sit for 10 min.
6. Overturn into a cake plate or stand, let cool and frost with cream cheese icing.

Note: Use any cake mix, chocolate chip, or icing flavors that you wish to create a new flavor!

Future Leaders Meet State Officials During Youth Day 2025

For more than 60 years, the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois have given tomorrow's leaders the opportunity to learn from today's public officials. On March 5, approximately 200 high school students from across rural Illinois represented 22 co-ops during Youth Day, including 2 from Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

"Youth Day offers students from across the state a firsthand experience of democracy in action as they engage with their elected representatives in Springfield," said Brooke Gross, member services manager

at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and facilitator of its youth programs. "This annual event provides state senators and representatives a chance to inspire and support the next generation of leaders." In addition to meeting elected officials, the students also learned more about their electric or telephone cooperative's role in their own communities and had the opportunity to tour the Capitol Building and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

State Senators Bryant and Plummer, and Representatives Meier, Severin, and Wilhour met with the students representing Tri-County Electric Cooperative. These students included: Aubrey McCain of Jefferson County and Gracie Schnitker of Washington County.



Senator Terri Brant (center) is pictured with Illinois Youth Tour students from her district, including TCEC students Aubrey McCain and Gracie Schnitker.

During lunch, Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs addressed the students. He shared his journey from a small town in Illinois to his current role, emphasizing the importance of finding interesting and challenging

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**-Michael Frerichs,
IL State Treasurer**

opportunities. He encouraged students to pursue their passions and take risks. “When you push yourself outside your comfort zone, it’s uncomfortable at first, but you learn a lot,” Frerichs said. “I’m guessing this is a room of people who want to do big things.”

In addition to Youth Day, McCain and Schnitker were also selected to participate in Youth Tour, an annual trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives. This year’s trip will be held June 16-23. They will represent Tri-County Electric Cooperative on the weeklong trip and meet their elected officials, see historic sites, learn firsthand how cooperatives work and gain valuable leadership skills.



(Back, from left) Rep. Dave Severin, Sen. Jason Plummer, Rep. Charlie Meier, and Rep. Blaine Wilhour
(Front, from left) Aubrey McCain and Gracie Schnitker

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TCEC



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