



STATE OF ILLINOIS
PIATT COUNTY
in the heart of agricultural America

Piatt

Piatt County HCE, Extension Office, 210 S. Market Street, Monticello, ILL.

“FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”: HCE Hosts Brad Thomas

HCE hosted some local talent on Jan. 23 at the Piatt County Extension Office, located at 210 S. Market Street, Monticello.

The guest speaker was Brad Thomas, the owner of Thomas Farm. Although Brad makes his living off of his small farm, one of his passions is being outside maintaining and enjoying his fully functioning year-round Koi Pond. Brad and a friend dug out this over- 2000 gallon pond about 6 years ago.

Brad has learned what he knows about koi and pond construction from talking to other experts, doing additional research, and living daily with his ever maturing koi pond ecosystem. Even though a good pond is expensive to build (several thousand dollars), if it is built correctly, Brad feels that it requires a fairly low amount of maintenance. He recommends using Helix pond equipment, a 45 mil. rubber liner, and only smoothed rounded rocks(no smaller than golf ball size) within the pond. He also warns against using

sandstone or limestone within the pond itself because of the fact that both of these kinds of rock dissolve quite easily. A healthy pond needs to have crystal clear water. A healthy year-round pond needs a heat rock to keep a hole open in the ice during the winter. Even though the koi go dormant during the winter, they still need an air-exchange so that there is plenty of oxygen available below the ice covering.

Although Brad loves his Koi Pond, he also has some other interests that are expanding his outdoor experiences. Brad is beginning to experiment with aquaponics (the growing of vegetables, etc. with the help of and in harmony with living fish). This coming summer you just might also see Brad selling eggs at the local farmer's market. Brad raises pastured poultry and is hoping to bring his eggs to the market.

Thanks to Brad for a very interesting and informative presentation. Thanks also for sharing your Koi Pond with us: your digital slides of the waterfall enhanced pond show a beautifully created living-ecosystem!



Brad Thomas is shown here with Dan and Karen Thomas. A digital picture of the Koi Pond is in the background.

Is HCE Membership for You?

Do you like to cook? Do you like to knit, crochet, quilt, sew, build things, or do any number of other creative crafts? Do you like to learn about new topics of interest and importance?

Would you like to learn about :

- “Saving Money by Comparing TV vs. Streaming Options”
- “March Madness Recipes (dips and Healthy snacks)”
- “New Ways to Cut Electricity Bills”

- “Hanging Gardens”
- “Saving Money on Food Costs”
- “Backyard Bird Watching
- “Life in India”
- “What’s New in the Kitchen”
- “Easy Meals/Freezer Meals”

These are the topics that HCE, with the help of the University of Illinois Extension, are presenting locally this year.

HCE Mission Statement: The Illinois Association for Home and Community Education enhances the lives of individuals and families through quality educational programs and experiences encouraging responsible leadership and service to the community.

Additional information is available at the Piatt County Cooperative Extension Office, 210 S. Market, Monticello.

Ask for information on how to become a member of HCE.