

The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 7

JULY 2025

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers Open House Thursday, July 17, 2025 6:00 – 8:00 PM

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers
Present
**2025 Summer Garden Walk
Open House**

Thursday July 17, 2025 6-8:00pm

Rain Date Friday July 18, 2025

FREE ADMISSION

Enjoy a summer evening as you stroll and get to know the MSU Tollgate Gardens

GARDEN TOURSINFORMATIONAL TALKS*** HAYRIDES***

BEAUTIFUL PHOTOGENIC GARDENS

Complementary cold beverages and dessert snacks available.

Tollgate Volunteer Guides Available To Answer Your Question

Michigan State University
Tollgate Farm and Education Center
14111 Meadowbrook Road
Novi, MI 48165
TOLLGATE EXT. 121
www.tollgate.msu.edu
Please - No Pets allowed



Accommodations for persons with disabilities
may be requested by contacting the event
coordinator two weeks prior to the start of the
event. Requests received after this date will be
honored whenever possible.

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TOLLGATE GARDEN OPEN HOUSE

All are invited to the July 17th Open House. Instead of our monthly meeting the TGVs will host the public for an evening in the gardens 6-8pm. Please join us for this FREE event to educate and entertain as well as introduce more people in the community to the gardens and activities at Tollgate! We have planned self-guided and volunteer guided garden walks, educational talks, wagon hayrides and dessert snacks for this evening in the gardens. Active volunteers are invited to participate as hosts for short shifts and enjoy the event with friends and family before or after your shifts. All members are welcome to attend as guests and enjoy in person interaction with other Tollgate Garden members.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025

JULY	MEETINGS		AUG	MEETINGS	
1	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm	5	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm
17	TGV General Meeting - Onsite	7:00 pm	21	TGV General Meeting- Onsite	7:00 pm
JULY	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES		AUG	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
5	Farmhouse/Rose July 4 weekend	9:00 am	2	Entrance/Rain	9:00 am
12	Children's/Xeriscape	9:00 am	9	Pond/12 Mile	9:00 am
17	Garden Open House	6:00 pm-8:00 pm	16	Heritage/Office	9:00 am
19	Hosta/Shade	9:00 am	23	Nursery/plant division	9:00 am
26	Demo	9:00 am	30	Rockledge, divisions Labor Day Weekend	9:00 am

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FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*

I hope everyone had a joyful and safe Fourth of July. Here at the farm, summer is in full bloom. The gardens are bursting with color, buzzing with pollinators, and filled with the sweet scent of fresh blossoms. Frankie and I have been spending time exploring the children's garden, searching for caterpillars to add to her butterfly house and taking in the scent of the blooms along the way. Watching her crouch down to talk to ants or gently carry a new discovery is a reminder of the quiet magic this place holds.

Meanwhile, camp is already heading into its third week. The days are busy, loud, and filled with excitement, just the way summer should be. Whether they're feeding goats, tromping through the woods, or learning something new in the garden, the kids seem to be having an absolute blast. Of course, camp days are long and full of a lot of moving pieces, but the laughter, curiosity, and growth we see make every moment worth it.



Our 4H youth are also deep into their preparations for the county fair. It's been inspiring to watch their dedication as they bathe, shave, and start packing up their animal's gear. The fair is more than just a tradition, it's a celebration of hard work, responsibility, and the connections formed between youth and their animals. We are all looking forward to cheering them on as they head into this exciting time of year.

But alongside all the joy and energy of summer, I also have a sad update to share. We recently lost our pony, Milkshake. He contracted Potomac Horse Fever (PHF), a bacterial disease spread by aquatic insects like mayflies and caddisflies. Although we do vaccinate for PHF, no vaccine is fully effective, and despite veterinary care and our best efforts, complications from the illness were too severe. Milkshake was a spicy pony with a big opinion and a beloved presence at the farm. His loss has been deeply felt by our team and the many children and volunteers who cared for him. Feel free to stop by and give Sesame a pet, she is also feeling his loss.



Even in moments of loss, the farm continues to be a place of growth, beauty, and community. We are pleased to share this space with all of you and thankful for the support and kindness you continue to show. As summer continues to unfold, I look forward to what's ahead and cherish every connection, every caterpillar, and every bloom along the way.

Photos by Destiny Pearson

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

“Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.” Russell Baker, American journalist, writer (1925-2019)

Notes from the President.....

A special thanks for the hard work of the active volunteers, staff and local volunteer groups to maintain the gardens during the recent/ongoing heat wave. Please take care by staying hydrated, starting in cooler morning hours and taking frequent breaks. Whenever possible work in pairs/groups to monitor for heat illness symptoms. (See summary below) Keep your phone handy in case you need emergency medical help.

Welcome and thanks to the recent new members who have assisted in the gardens for the past several weeks. Your interest and contributions are much appreciated. Please feel free to contact me if you need any guidance in the gardens, non-Saturday work assignments or have an interest in a specific garden team.

Renee Cottrell, President
Tollgate Garden Volunteers
248-251-4505
rncottrell4@att.net

PAR Report - *Kathryn Fitzpatrick*



Despite the heat and rain and pests, the fantastic PAR Garden volunteer team completed the planting of all beds with seed potatoes, zucchini and summer squash, collard greens, hot peppers with companion collard greens, cabbage with companion leeks, cucumbers, and kohlrabi. Due to the extreme heat, we have been working earlier in the day, taking frequent breaks for hydration and shade, and shortening the workday. We also have had to take precautions to address the tick outbreak. The MSU Tollgate Farm staff have been instrumental in helping remove the tall grass and weeds around the garden, and the team is applying tick repellent and doing careful checks after each workday.

On the positive side, we harvested the garlic scapes, and the garlic and onions are looking good. We have collard greens, kale, and parsley to harvest for distribution to Forgotten Harvest, and the squash seeds sprouted only one week after planting. There are also a few tomatillo fruits starting to ripen, the pole bean and cucumbers are flowering, and the cabbage is growing rapidly.

On the negative side, the weeds are outdoing the vegetables in numbers and strength – both in the beds and all the pathways. We are working diligently to combat both the weeds and the other pests using IPM – some organic sprays and Surround, but mostly good old fashion elbow grease. So far, fingers crossed, the late planting of the potatoes seems to have mitigated a potato beetle attack. We could certainly use additional hands with or without experience to help maintain this beautiful garden and continue to provide a

hearty bounty to those in need in the community.

Happy Summer!
Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photo by Kathryn Fitzpatrick

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NURSERY NOTES - *Peg Palmer*

With the hustle and excitement of the Plant Sale now behind us, the Nursery Team can catch our breath—just a little. July typically brings a slower pace, but as many of you know, things at the Nursery are rarely without surprises!

One of our post-sale rituals is swapping out the sprinkler heads in the overhead irrigation system. This routine maintenance is necessary because our well water has a high iron content, which gradually clogs the heads over time. It sounds simple enough—until it isn't!

This year, when the cleaned and new sprinkler heads were installed, the system didn't cooperate. We ran into some unexpected (and frustrating!) performance issues that had us scratching our heads. Enter Roy Prentice, who rolled up his sleeves to help troubleshoot. The problem proved tricky enough that it even drew in Kurt Westerman, the original designer of our one-of-a-kind irrigation setup. Now that's a team effort!

While most of us on the Nursery Team specialize in plants—not plumbing—this irrigation adventure is just one example of the curveballs we sometimes face. It's also a great reminder that here at Tollgate, we're part of a community rich with knowledge and always ready to lend a hand. Here's to teamwork and tenacity!

Peg Palmer
Nursery AGL

AGL Information – *Marilyn Alimpich*

Dear Area Garden Leaders,



All your efforts (with some help from sun and rain) have resulted in beautiful gardens once more.

This season, Destiny is arranging to deliver mulch to our gardens just ahead of the workday. This has worked out quite well, since she, or another staff member, can concentrate on our other needs rather than delivering mulch. About a week before your formal garden workday, please estimate how much mulch you will need (based on the tractor's front bucket, i.e. one load or two, etc.) and let me know. I will relay your needs to Destiny.

If you have made purchases, for which you want reimbursement, remember to submit your receipts and/or credit card statements to Destiny within 90 days from the date of the receipt. MSU will not honor receipts dated over 90 days. It's best to get them to her once you have the receipts and statement. You can email, text or mail a copy to Destiny. You can email, text or mail a copy to Destiny pears278@msu.edu.

Now is also the time to collect plant tag information for any new shrubs, trees and perennials for which you need a plant label. I'll ask for that information later this year and into January for the winter label-making project.

If you have any questions, please contact me at: masoleil@sbcglobal.net, or call or text 734-730-6565.

See you in the gardens,

Marilyn Alimpich
masoleil@sbcglobal.net

[2025 Garden Budget Planner](#)
[Tollgate Label Template Excel Version](#)
[Tollgate Label Template Word Version](#)

Photo by Linda Piasecki

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IN MEMORIAM



Sadly, we share the news of the passing of dear, long-time Tollgate Garden Volunteer Phyllis Stengel. Her daughter, Jackie shares: Phyllis Stengel had a long life filled with meaningful work as an English teacher, service to her country and community, lifelong educational pursuits, good books, opportunities to travel, music and theatre, volunteering, flowers, and an abundance of great friends.

Those of us who have known her will miss her happy and welcoming demeanor, her wit and intelligence and her generous heart. Phyllis was often the greeting face of Tollgate Garden Volunteers at our Fall Fair and Open house events welcoming guests with her smile. We extend our sincere condolences to her daughter and fellow Tollgate Volunteer Jackie and her family. Phyllis will be remembered with great fondness.

Photo by Jackie Stengel

Recognizing Heat Illness

Heat illness symptoms can range from mild to severe and include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and fainting. More severe cases, like heat stroke, can cause confusion, seizures, and a very high body temperature.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Mild Symptoms (Heat Exhaustion):

- ☐ Heavy sweating: The body attempts to cool itself down through perspiration.
- ☐ Muscle cramps: Painful spasms, often in the legs, arms, or abdomen.
- ☐ Fatigue and weakness: Feeling unusually tired or weak.
- ☐ Dizziness and headache: Lightheadedness and head pain.
- ☐ Nausea and vomiting: Feeling sick to your stomach and possibly throwing up.
- ☐ Fast, weak pulse: The heart beats rapidly but weakly.
- ☐ Cool, clammy skin: Skin may feel cool and moist to the touch.
- ☐ Fainting: Loss of consciousness.

Severe Symptoms (Heat Stroke):

- ☐ High body temperature: Core body temperature above 104°F (40°C).
- ☐ Hot, dry skin: Skin may be red, hot, and dry to the touch.
- ☐ Confusion and disorientation: Difficulty thinking clearly, acting confused, or having trouble speaking.
- ☐ Seizures: Involuntary muscle spasms.
- ☐ Loss of consciousness: Passing out.
- ☐ Rapid, shallow breathing: Breathing may be fast and shallow.
- ☐ Rapid, strong pulse: The heart may beat quickly and forcefully.

SUMMER CAMP REQUEST

The summer campers are working on a special project and are in need of plastic **shopping bags**. If you have any to spare, please turn them in to Jan Recinos at the main office at Tollgate. Thank you for your support.

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Membership Update April 2025

To all of you who donated to help the Tollgate Garden Volunteers make Tollgate a more beautiful place. Your donation is greatly appreciated! The support that you have provided will continue to help our program prosper and grow.

Gail Sanders Braun

Barbara Burke

Mary Carole Haering

Carol Oppenheim

Christine Schultz

Jackie Swenson

Kate Zalapi-Bull

Please take a moment to renew your 2025 membership and receive your new identification button for the season!



The new 2025 membership buttons are in the Volunteer building for all active members who have renewed their membership as of 05/21/25. The buttons have both pin and magnet attachments. Please pick up your new button. If there are corrections needed, please email me at tlrrehab@gmail.com. New buttons will be made over the coming month as necessary. Thanks! Teresa LaRosa

[2025 TGV Membership Form](#)
[2025 Member Levels Reminder](#)

Links to Forms & Other Info

[Tollgate 2025 Activity Calendar](#)

[Garden Orientation PDF](#)

[Tollgate Garden Web Pages](#)

[Other Tollgate Garden Volunteer Info](#)

MSU Tollgate Volunteer Sign-In:



Or

[MSU Tollgate Volunteer Sign-in](#)

NOTE: If you are unable to access or print any necessary forms from the links, please notify Renee, who will arrange to provide copies. Copies will also be available at all in-person TGV meetings.

Take a Tollgate Picture

Send photo files in separate emails, if necessary, to Judy Warren, Tollgate Calendar Editor, at TGFarmPhotos@gmail.com. Photos are also appreciated for the monthly Farm News. Photo files can be sent to: Ductapegirl212@gmail.com



Photo by
Linda
Piasecki

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4-H NEWS



THE OAKLAND COUNTY FAIR
July 11-20, 2025
Lifetime Memories

Springfield Oaks
County Park
12451 Andersonville Rd.
Davisburg, MI 48350
248-634-8830

For event Schedule
and pricing see
OakFair.org

Thank you to our Sponsors!

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Community
DREAM

Our member's schedule is:
Sunday, July 13 -- 6-10pm - Sheep
Monday, July 14 -- 10-1pm - Horse
Tuesday, July 15 -- 6-9pm - Goat
Wednesday, July 16 -- 10-1pm - Horse
Saturday, July 19 -- 530-930 - Market
Animal Auction (sheep)

Please come and support our 4-H
members!

Hope to see you there!

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TOLLGATE GARDEN SURPRISES!!



Photos by
Linda Piasecki

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TOLLGATE GARDEN SURPRISES!!



Photos by Linda Piasecki



The Tollgate Farm News

Activity Days: January - October

- Activity Day hours are 9:00 am – Noon, unless otherwise noted on the Activities section of the first page of the newsletter and the full year calendar (see Links page).
- Volunteer Activity Day and Meeting Information will be communicated by email.
- Active members will continue to get email reminders of these activities.
- Lunch will be provided on scheduled workdays.
- We strongly recommend you bring your own tools for your garden activities. All tools borrowed from the Tool Shed should be cleaned and sanitized with the wipes provided, prior to returning the items to the Tool Shed after use.

Volunteer Liaison – Destiny Pearson

248-347-3860 Ext.251 pears278@msu.edu

PresidentRenee Cottrell

Vice PresidentMarilyn Alimpich

Secretary.....Theresa Bridenbaugh

TreasurerKaren Harris

Membership

& Hospitality.....Teresa LaRosa

CommunicationsKathy Johnson

ProgramsJackie Stengel

Farm News Editor.....Linda Piasecki

Event Coordinator.....Lori Heiden

- The TGAC meets monthly virtually **on Zoom on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM**. All Tollgate Garden Volunteer members are welcome to attend and should contact Destiny Pearson for meeting link.
- Contact information for individual TGAC members and Area Garden Leaders (AGL) are available by contacting Renee Cottrell at rmcottrell@att.net to have message or contact forwarded for response. Contact info can also be found in the Garden Binders in the Volunteer Communication Center.
- Tollgate Volunteer Membership is renewed annually. The 2025 Tollgate Garden Volunteer membership is valid from **January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025**.

- For membership questions or to update your current membership information, email Teresa LaRosa at tlrrehab@gmail.com
- For general Tollgate information and questions, contact Destiny Pearson or see Website: <http://tollgate.msu.edu/volunteering/>
- TIP: If you aren't getting The Tollgate Farm News email, check your SPAM folder


MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
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Farm Contact - Destiny Pearson : pears278@msu.edu