

The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2025

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 2025
7:00PM

(In the Picnic Pavilion - outside)

Recipes to Get You in the Mood for Fall Cooking Demo with Mary Spencer at Tollgate

Join garden volunteers and supporters in the **picnic pavilion** on Thursday evening, September 18, for a cooking demonstration of two recipes to enjoy this autumn. Tollgate members enjoy Mary Spencer's annual cooking demonstrations, especially the recipes and samples! Mary will also answer general or specific questions about cooking, ingredients, kitchen tools or appliances.

Mary Spencer's goal is to make people better cooks. Her business, *Taste: A Cook's Place*, www.tasteacooksplace.net teaches cooking classes at PARC in downtown Plymouth. Mary does many cooking demos on Zoom from her home kitchen for libraries across the state. She teaches a variety of cooking classes at The Old World Olive Company in Plymouth. For many years, she did demos at ABC Warehouse locations in Livonia, Troy, Lakeside and Novi.

Mary has conducted food tours, done menu planning and researched heirloom recipes. She has been teaching cooking for over 25 years and has more than 5,500 cookbooks.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025

SEPT	MEETINGS			OCT	MEETINGS	
2	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm		7	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm
18	TGV General Meeting - Onsite	7:00 pm		16	TGV General Meeting- Onsite	7:00 pm
SEPT	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES			OCT	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
6	Shade/Hosta	9:00 am		4-5	PUMPKINFEST	10:00am - 4:00pm
13	Farmhouse/Rose	9:00 am		11	Nursery Clean up	9:00 am
20	NURSERY/ FALL PLANT SALE	9:00 am- 12:00pm		18	Pond Clean up	9:00 am
27	Xeriscape/Children's	9:00 am		25	Fall Clean up	9:00 am

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FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*

August has come to a close, and September is already off to a strong start here at MSU Tollgate Farm. We wrapped up another successful camp season and are now shifting our focus to welcoming school groups back for hands-on learning. The transition from summer to fall is always busy and exciting, and this year is no exception.

As always, a heartfelt thank you goes out to our incredible garden volunteers. Your dedication helped make camp programs a success and turned the Children's Garden into a favorite spot for campers all summer long.

Over Labor Day weekend, some of our youth participants finished out the show season at the Michigan State Fair, taking home more ribbons! Congratulations to all the kids who did such an amazing job!



Looking ahead, preparations are underway for both the Fall Plant Sale later this month and Pumpkinfest in early October. These important community events keep the farm bustling, and volunteers and staff are already helping with planning and setup to ensure everything runs smoothly.

There have also been some changes on the farm, and you may have noticed fewer trees around the Volunteer Center; that day was particularly busy on the farm, with a massive crane on site to remove the trees along with a smaller crane for the well repair and a boiler company replacing the residence boiler. It's a good reminder that there are always many projects happening on the farm!

With school programs underway, fall events on the horizon, and life on the farm always bringing something new, we're looking forward to a full and rewarding season ahead.

Destiny Pearson
Livestock Coordinator

Photo above by Destiny Pearson

Before and after by
Linda Piasecki



BEFORE



AFTER

The Tollgate Farm News

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

“We know in September, we will wander through the warm winds of summer’s wreckage. We will welcome summer’s ghost.”- Henry Rollins, American singer, writer and spoken word artist

I hope all of you were able to enjoy family friends over the past Labor Day weekend! We still have plenty left to do including Saturday activity days and upcoming Fall Plant Sale! As temperatures cool a little enjoying a garden walk can be more tolerable. Come and enjoy all the beauty you have made possible!



FALL PLANT SALE Sept 20th 9am-noon. We will be doing a smaller scale fall plant sale to showcase the fall blooming perennials done in conjunction with the Sept. 20th workday in the Nursery. This is an excellent experience for new members, and all members, family and friends are encouraged to come to browse/buy!

PLANT DIVISION DONATIONS

Please keep us in mind for all your fall plant divisions for fall plant sale or before the season ending deadline of Oct 11th. See Nursery notes and recent email for details.

NOMINATIONS

A call for all interested members! September brings the time to make nominations for the officer positions on your Tollgate Gardens Advisory Committee (TGAC). All elected positions are voted on every year. This includes President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. These hours are considered towards (re-) certification and this opportunity is open to any member. You may nominate yourself or any other willing Tollgate volunteer. We will finalize nominees at the upcoming September 18 th meeting so email me by that date if you will not be attending the meeting. An email to place your vote will go out in Oct and conclude at the Oct. 16th meeting.

The **RECOGNITION DINNER** is a celebration of our gardening season and of our volunteers. Please **SAVE THE DATE!** Nov. 8, 2025, all members will get an invitation with further details.

See you at the In-Person September Meeting, in the Pavilion for some delicious fresh cooked treats!

Renee Cottrell, President
Tollgate Garden Volunteers
248-251-4505
rmcottrell4@att.net

Photo by Linda Piasecki

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PAR Report - Kathryn Fitzpatrick



We are in the harvest season in earnest now with 1083.5 lbs. of vegetables donated so far. The team has been focused on harvesting onions, green onions, cabbage, green beans, a variety of hot peppers, carrots, kale, collard greens, kohlrabi, tomatillos, and squash. In addition, the carrots, kohlrabi, and green onions needed to be washed, and the greens and/or roots removed. The garlic and onions were allowed to dry so that the tops and roots could be removed. We did keep enough of the garlic to plant in the fall but will be ordering some new seed garlic to see if it fares better and produces more robust heads of garlic. The cucumber plants did not grow well or produce well, so we may be eliminating them from future planting. Turnips have been planted a little late using seed tape to help space the tiny seeds, so we hope to have a good harvest in the fall. The cabbage also didn't produce as well as expected, so we will be looking into different cultivars for next year.

Coming up this month we will be adding the potato harvest to the rest of the bounty, addressing irrigation issues that continue to create challenges, and of course continue to battle the weeds. However, the Oakland County Spartan Alumni volunteers did a tremendous job of weeding the beds one beautiful Saturday in August for which we are most grateful!

Happy gardening!
Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photo by Lynette Leroux

NURSERY NOTES - Peg Palmer

The Nursery is a busy place as we prepare for the Fall Plant Sale on Saturday, September 20 from 9 am until noon. This annual event provides an opportunity to sell more great perennials that can be planted now to enjoy in Spring 2026.



We will continue to accept donations of Michigan hardy perennials through Saturday, October 11. This gives us about a week to take an inventory of the plants that we will overwinter. Please bring your donations as soon as possible!

The plants we stock are Michigan-hardy, but winter in a pot presents extra challenges. Wide temperature swings during the season can be especially tough on potted perennials and some varieties require special care to make it through. To prepare for this, a physical inventory must be completed to identify which plants need this extra attention. Once that's done, overwintering plans can be finalized. Because this process takes time, please consider donating as early as possible.

Peg Palmer
Nursery AGL

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AGL Information – Marilyn Alimpich

Hello Area Garden Leaders,

Garden leads are encouraged to get their planned fall divisions to the Nursery by fall plant sale or at the latest by Oct. 11, 2025. A recent email was sent out with attached wanted list.

All AGLs and Teams who would like to be reimbursed for personal expenditures made on behalf of MSU Tollgate need to submit an expense reimbursement within the MSU required a 90-day limit from date of purchase. MSU will not reimburse requests made more than 90 days or more after the date of purchase. Submittal delay risks reimbursement rejection. To be reimbursed for MSU related expenses, please submit your contact information and receipts to Destiny at pears278@msu.edu. Online purchases will additionally require a copy of your credit card statement indicating that the purchase(s) were made. Destiny will fill out the reimbursement form for you.

As you work in your gardens, please assess the need for plant identification tags for your area and submit them to Marilyn (masoleil@sbcglobal.net) using the form in the AGL handbook. We plan to work on tags during the slower winter months. Accurate Latin name and common name are best and a variety name if it is known. It is our goal to have all gardens with this information to enhance educational value and enjoyment for all visitors.

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](#)

Additional Garden Information

SEPTEMBER NOMINATIONS FOR TGAC

Now is the time to think ahead to nominations for our TGAC board. This is an opportunity for members to contribute to the organization in the planning and organizing aspects of our group. Positions up for re-election every year are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. We nominate in September and vote in October to give all members plenty of opportunity to participate in our organization. Links to the job descriptions can be found below or in the binder located in the volunteer communication center. Please consider nominating yourself or another willing member to run for any of the elected positions. This is a great way to stay active in volunteering when circumstances may not let you participate physically in the gardens. Submit your nominations NO LATER THAN the Sept. 18th general members meeting. Bring your nominations to the August meeting if completed or via email, regular mail c/o Destiny here at Tollgate.

Just click on the position for the job description:

[President](#) [Vice-President](#) [Treasurer](#) [Secretary](#)

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Membership Update September 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.

Cathy Hodges

Nayuki Obata

Wendy Rowland

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 07/29/25. The buttons have both pin and magnet attachments. Please pick up your new button after 08/02/25. 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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FALL PLANT SALE

Michigan State University Tollgate Garden Volunteers

Fall Plant Sale

Saturday September 20th, 2025

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Reasonably priced, Michigan hardy perennials for sun and shade,
including Michigan natives that attract hummingbirds, butterflies and pollinators.**

Featuring late summer and fall blooming varieties

Payment with Cash, Check, Mastercard or Visa will be accepted

MSU Master Gardeners will be there to answer questions and assist in your selections



**Michigan State University
Tollgate Farm and Education Center
28115 Meadowbrook Roads
Novi, MI 48377
248 347-3860 ext. 251**

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 POND SURPRISES!!



Photo by Dave Komraus



Photo by Lori Heiden



Photos by Linda Piasecki

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TOLLGATE CHILDRENS' GARDEN



Photos by
Linda
Piasecki

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TOLLGATE GARDEN SIGHTINGS!!



Photos by Linda Piasecki

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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 CoordinatorLori 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
MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center
28115 Meadowbrook Rd., Novi, MI 48377
tollgate.msu.edu
Volunteer Coordinator - Janice Recinos : recinos1@msu.edu
Farm Contact - Destiny Pearson : pears278@msu.edu