

The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 6

JUNE 2025

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting

Thursday, June 19, 2025
7:00 PM
(In the Conference Center)

Nature Journaling

Karen Gourlay, Maybury State Park Interpreter

Join Tollgate gardeners and supporters to learn about and experience Nature Journaling. Journaling about nature can be a fun and creative way to spark curiosity and improve your observational skills. Explore how nature journaling can be an added benefit to annual record-keeping by prompting you to observe your garden more closely, track seasonal changes and interactions, and make comparisons over the years.

Maybury State Park interpreter and former State Park Explorer Program coordinator Karen Gourlay will cover ways to record observations, types of journals and supplies, as well as assorted styles used by other journalers. She will share resources, sample journals, and places to find more information. If you are already keeping a nature journal, feel free to bring it. There will be paper, pens, and other supplies for those who need them to do a warm-up exercise, or you are welcome to bring your own journal or notebook. Please consider bringing a small item from your garden or nature (seedhead, conifer cone, stone, bark, flower, leaf, etc.) that might be used to practice journaling as time permits.

Related links:

- [Free Download! Your Quick Start Guide to Nature Journaling — Wild Wonder Foundation](#)
- [Nature Journaling: Get started and grow! • John Muir Laws](#)

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025

JUNE	MEETINGS		JULY	MEETINGS	
3	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm	3	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm
19	TGV General Meeting - Onsite	7:00 pm	19	TGV General Meeting- Onsite	7:00 pm
JUNE	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES		JULY	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
7	Spring Plant Sale	9:00 am– 2:00 pm	5	Farmhouse/Rose July 4 weekend	9:00 am
14	Rose/Entrance	9:00 am	12	Children's/Xeriscape	9:00 am
21	Office/Heritage/Rain	9:00 am	17	Garden Open House	6:00 pm– 8:00 pm
28	Pond/12 Mile	9:00 am	19	Hosta/Shade	9:00 am
			26	Demo	9:00 am

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FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*

We did it! My very first plant sale at Tollgate is officially in the books—and what a day it was. The sun was shining, the gardens were blooming, and the turnout completely blew me away. I couldn't believe how long the line was!



Seeing so many people excited to support the farm and take home beautiful plants was both overwhelming and heartwarming.

What made it truly special, though, was working alongside such an incredible group of volunteers. Their energy, laughter, and willingness to jump in wherever needed made everything run smoothly. We absolutely couldn't have done it without them.

With the plant sale behind us, our sights are now set on summer camp! Tollgate staff members, Barbie and Kassie are hard at work training new staff and stewards, making sure everything's ready to welcome kids back for another unforgettable season. We can't wait to fill the farm with laughter, curiosity, and summer fun once again.

Photos provided by Linda Piasecki

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

"Spring being a tough act to follow, God created June."—Al Bernstein Actor, Writer, Filmmaker

Thank you all for your precious time and talents that made the Spring Plant Sale event a success! There is a lot of effort to pull this major fund-raising event off and the volunteers and staff came through again!



Looking ahead we will have our Tollgate Garden Volunteer Garden Open House event July 17th, 2025, 6-8:30pm (July 18th rain date) This will be a weekday evening event, replacing our July membership meeting, with tours, talks, snacks and a chance to get together and enjoy the gardens. Keep a look out for the upcoming email requests for sign up to help with this event. See the flyer in this issue. Invite your friends and family!

There are still plenty of areas that need help for garden maintenance on the site for those who may want or need weekday individual assignments. Garden teams are also looking for more members to assist under the direction of the Area Garden Leader (AGL). The google sheet link is sent along with workday notifications to the Active gardeners. This document will allow gardening volunteers to view the request for garden help as posted by the AGL's. If your schedule is better for weekdays or you are just looking for additional opportunities don't hesitate to contact me for information on the link or about garden assignments.

Please check out the calendar for upcoming work activity days, other articles for opportunities and the soon to be coming request for volunteer assistance at the Open House event on July 17th. Enjoy the gardens. As always, thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, President
Tollgate Garden Volunteers
248-251-4505
mccottrell4@att.net

Photo by Renee Cottrell

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PAR Report - *Kathryn Fitzpatrick*

This is peak planting season. Already we have planted Oldenbor kale, Candy carrots with green onion companions – both pelleted seeds and a strip of Bolero carrot tape seeds, Bridger onions, Zebrune shallots, Cobra and Seychelles pole beans, watermelon radishes, and Rio Grande Verde tomatillos. Next up are 50 lbs. of Kennebec and Red Port seed potatoes which have sprouted nicely, Golden/Straightneck/Nimba zucchini and Caserta summer squash (maybe with companion dill). Whew! But that's not all! Also, flash collar greens, rosemary inside the pole bean trellis, Jalafuego Jalapeno, Altiplano Serrano, and Baron Poblano hot peppers all with companion thyme. Haku and Botran cabbage with companion sage, Gateway cucumbers, and Kossak kohlrabi with companion leeks. Lots of

transplant and direct seed planting, and of course, continuous removal of weeds. The greenhouse transplants have been well managed, and we have benefited from strong, healthy plants.



Along with the planting, we have the never-ending task of weeding. We were fortunate to have a hardy group of DeMaria Construction volunteers join us to weed several beds and pathways. The group also planted three beds of Bridger onions, - Thank You!

We have a serious invasion of Canada thistle in the potato beds we will need to address aggressively – they really bite back, so extra care is needed. The pathways continue to

be overrun by weeds and grasses, despite heavy application of mulch. Again, an ongoing battle to mitigate as much as possible. Weeds always seem to find a way!

Happy Spring!

Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photos by Kathryn Fitzpatrick



NURSERY NOTES - *Peg Palmer*



Plant Sale 2025 is now in the rear-view mirror! This year's challenging cool, late spring delayed nursery plant donations and narrowed our planning window for the sale. The silver lining of cool weather was plants that were less stressed by intense heat, so they looked their best for the sale. There were also some early spring blooming plants still showing their colors.

Tollgate's Spring and Fall plant sales generate funding for all the beautiful gardens on the Farm. We're delighted with the success of this year's sale, which generated **\$9,100.00**. **This is big news!!** All

funds go towards maintaining the gardens of the Farm!

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the spring plant sale a success!

Peg Palmer
Nursery AGL

Photo by Linda Piasecki

AGL Information – *Marilyn Alimpich*

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Most AGLs have sent in budget requests. If you have not and anticipate garden help or purchases, the next TGAC meeting to approve your budget is July 1. Act soon if you want an approved budget before buying new plants. If you need help with budgeting, or completing the form, please contact me.

The plant label project is complete for this year. Linda Piasecki and I finished engraving the labels. Roy beveled the label edges and Edward and Adrian assembled them. Thank you! Your finished labels are on the shelf in the Volunteer Center. Remember to save all the information on your new plants for next winter's label project.

The Tool Shed attached to the barn will be cleaned and organized in the next couple of weeks. **Please remove any garden decor you currently have stored in the shed** - either by placing it in your garden or discarding - **by June 15**. This will help in keeping the shed efficient and safe for our volunteers to utilize.

Please use the links below if you still need a form or assistance.
You can also text or call me at (734) 730-6565.

Marilyn Alimpich
masoleil@sbcglobal.net

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

Photo by Linda Piasecki

THANK YOU! THANK YOU TELLY'S GREENHOUSE



It was a beautiful day and a successful sale, thanks to the incredible support of our community. A heartfelt thank you to George Popadelis of Telly's Greenhouse for his generous donation of annuals to Tollgate, which added beauty and value to both our gardens and the 2025 Spring Plant Sale. We're also deeply grateful to all the volunteers whose time, energy, and dedication helped make the event such a success. Your contributions are truly appreciated and make a lasting impact.

..... Photo by Roy Prentice

TOLLGATE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Do you enjoy the Zen of lawn mowing? The sun on your shoulders, the smell of freshly cut grass and pleasant surroundings await the volunteer interested in assisting during this busy summer season. Tollgate staff would like your assistance with mowing and or trimming of the turf spaces on the grounds. There will be training required on the zero turn mower and grass trimmer before you begin. Choose to do a little or a lot, a specific garden area or just trim work if preferred. A well cut and trimmed lawn really accents a garden space. If you can help with this task please contact Volunteer Liaison – Destiny Pearson 248-347-3860 Ext.251 pears278@msu.edu.

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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.

Takaki (Taki) Benn	Sherry Mueller
Pat Coppersmith	Gary Rotter
Brian Frol	Larry Schoer
Shelly Haaseth	Susie Sherman-Hall
John Humphrey	Laura Steiner
Joe Johnson	Tom Steiner
Laurey Konjaevich	Chloe Truxton
Paul Lukasiewicz	Wanda Whalen
Brian Maddaford	Sue Woodson

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! Theresa 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
Dave
Komraus

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WORKING THE POND



Photos provided by Linda Piasecki

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TOLLGATE GARDEN SURPRISES!!



Photos by
Renee Cottrell



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EXCELLENT PLANT SALE!!



Top two photos by Linda Piasecki

Bottom photo by Renee Cottrell

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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.

Tollgate Garden Advisory Committee (TGAC)

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



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Farm Contact - Destiny Pearson : pears278@msu.edu