

The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2025

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting

Thursday, August 21, 2025
7:00PM
(In the Conference Center)

An Introduction to Our Native Bees and Their Habitat Needs *Stephanie Steele, The Xerces Society*

Join Tollgate gardeners and supporters to learn about native bees and their habitat needs from Stefanie Steele with [The Xerces Society](#), the largest invertebrate conservation organization in the world.

Stefanie is the Pollinator Conservation Specialist for Urban and Small Farms. Based in Detroit, she helps incorporate pollinators and other beneficial invertebrate habitat in small urban agricultural areas and community gardens. Her work supports projects such as [Xerces' Detroit Pollinator Habitat Kit program](#) and the [USDA's People's Garden Initiative program](#).

Stefanie has a master's degree in biology from Portland State University where she studied cavity nesting bees and wasps and completed a study of solitary bees. She worked with several urban gardens, orchards, farms, and restoration areas to incorporate pollinator habitats.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025

| AUG | MEETINGS | | | SEPT | MEETINGS | |
|-----|--|---------|--|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5 | TGAC Meeting – Zoom | 7:00 pm | | 5 | TGAC Meeting – Zoom | 7:00 pm |
| 21 | TGV General Meeting - Onsite | 7:00 pm | | 21 | TGV General Meeting- Onsite | 7:00 pm |
| AUG | WORKDAY ACTIVITIES | | | SEPT | WORKDAY ACTIVITIES | |
| 2 | Entrance/Rain | 9:00 am | | 6 | Shade/Hosta | 9:00 am |
| 9 | Pond/12 Mile | 9:00 am | | 13 | Farmhouse/Rose | 9:00 am |
| 16 | Heritage/Office | 9:00 am | | 20 | NURSERY/ FALL PLANT SALE | 9:00 am- 12:00pm |
| 23 | Nursery/plant division | 9:00 am | | 27 | Xeriscape/Children's | 9:00 am |
| 30 | Rockledge, divisions Labor Day Weekend | 9:00 am | | | | |

The Tollgate Farm News

FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*

July flew by in a blur of sunshine, wheelbarrows, and wonderful community moments here at Tollgate! The Oakland County 4-H Fair was a major highlight of the month. Despite a few bumps along the way, our 4-H kids did an incredible job. Their hard work, positive attitudes, and determination shone through both in the show ring and beyond, we couldn't be prouder of their growth and achievements.



Back on the farm, progress continues on the farmhouse residence. While there haven't been major changes to the exterior of the building, a huge thank-you goes out to Nancy, Linda, Marilyn, Lori, and Kathy for their efforts cleaning up the yard and preparing it for grass seeding. Their hard work has made a noticeable difference!

Another exciting development is the farm stand, which is steadily taking shape thanks to Monique and our summer intern, Yael. Yael has devoted part of her internship to this project, and it's been inspiring to see everything come together. We're looking forward to opening the stand and offering fresh produce and farm goods to the community.

July also brought a successful Garden Open House, drawing a great turnout of visitors eager to tour the gardens, ask questions, and learn more about our plants and theirs at home. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the hard work of our volunteers, and the positive energy was contagious.

We rounded out the month with an outstanding educational experience for our 4-H youth, a necropsy workshop led by Dr. Holahan. This hands-on opportunity allowed the kids to explore animal anatomy across several species and apply critical thinking as they discussed possible causes of death. It was a meaningful and memorable way to end July, deepening their understanding of animal health and science.

Finally, we want to thank all of our incredible volunteers for everything you've contributed this month. Whether you were helping tidy the farmhouse grounds, leading garden tours, or supporting youth through unique learning experiences, your time and energy are the heart of Tollgate. We're so grateful to have such a dedicated and passionate community helping us grow. Here's to keeping that momentum going into August!

Destiny Pearson
Livestock Coordinator

Photo by Destiny Pearson

The Tollgate Farm News

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

“The garden suggests there might be a place where we can meet nature halfway.”- Michael Pollan, American Journalist, Professor at Harvard University



Thank you, volunteers, for a wonderful job hosting the July Garden Open House. Visitors were treated to an enjoyable and informative evening. The gardens looked great despite the recent high temps. As always, we are looking to create or add to existing garden teams! If you are a newer active member and would like to work in a chosen specific area, all of which are highlighted on the web site <https://www.canr.msu.edu/tollgate/gardens>, contact me for details. rmcottrell4@att.net

A reminder: PLEASE record your volunteer time on the Tollgate Volunteer Log in. We have made the QR code available in multiple locations on the farm to make this more convenient. Timely

recording assists in providing more accurate monthly reports used by MSU Extension Administration to demonstrate the value of our contributions in attempts to secure support for our programs here at Tollgate. The QR code and link are in this newsletter.

Thank you for being Tollgate Garden Volunteers.

Renee Cottrell, President

Tollgate Garden Volunteers

248-251-4505

rmcottrell4@att.net

Photo by Linda Piasecki

PAR Report - *Kathryn Fitzpatrick*

Harvest has begun in earnest – we donated 77 lbs. of fresh produce to Forgotten Harvest, PB&J, and the Northville Civic Concern in July! The parsley, kale, collard greens, and green beans have been consistent providers. We also harvested the garlic and hung it in the shed to dry. Usually, we take a portion of the garlic as the seed garlic for the fall planting, however this harvest is a little small and weak, so we may either procure new seed garlic, or use all the harvested garlic for planting.

The weeds have truly been a plague and may have contributed to the weak garlic, as they are outcompeting the vegetables in many beds. Additionally, we have had some irrigation issues resulting in both over and under watering. This may have contributed to some rotting carrots, but more investigation is needed to determine the true cause.

The Tollgate Farm News



Due to the generous donation of landscape cloth and two awesome staple guns, as well as volunteer effort above and beyond, we have covered the pathways between many of the beds. This should help us with mitigating the weed growth in the pathways and allow us to focus on the beds. We have had to stake the tomatillos as they are full of ripening fruit and clip the cucumber plants to the trellis to encourage climbing.

The onions, potatoes, kohlrabi, cabbage, and squash are all growing quite well, so we expect to continue with an abundant harvest over the next couple of months.

Happy gardening!
Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photo by Lynette Leroux

NURSERY NOTES - *Peg Palmer*

August begins the Nursery's transition from the slow pace of summer maintenance to restocking with new donations, hosting the annual FALL PLANT SALE, followed by more restocking and preparing our plants for winter in a pot.

The Nursery will open August 16th for fall donations! Look for PLANTS WANTED information to help identify the plants we need the most. We plan to accept plant donations through Saturday October 11.

Leave all plants in the plant donation area, behind the bright yellow gate! Please clearly label your donations - common name, botanical name, and bloom color gets a big nursery team cheer!! Plant ID sticks and pencils are on the workbench if needed – paper notes are unreadable if they get wet!! Also use pots and soil on the potting trailer as needed to keep plant roots covered and protected until the Nursery Team can process your donation.

Come to the FALL PLANT SALE on Saturday September 20 during the normal Saturday workday hours (9 am – noon). This is a smaller event than our Spring Sale that provides an opportunity to showcase fall bloomers that aren't at their finest in June - but all plants in the Nursery are available for purchase. If you're anxious to start some fall planting in your garden, the Tollgate Fall Plant Sale is the place to be!

Peg Palmer
Nursery AGL

The Tollgate Farm News

AGL Information – Marilyn Alimpich

Hello Area Garden Leaders,

By now, most of you have submitted receipts for your garden purchases. If you have not, and 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. You can email, text or mail a copy of your receipts and/or statements to Destiny.



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.

Marilyn Alimpich
masoleil@sbcglobal.net

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

See you in the gardens,

Photo by Linda Piasecki

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](#)

The Tollgate Farm News

Ginger Meyer Award Nominations for 2025

It is time again for nominations for the Ginger Meyer Award. Take time to honor a fellow Tollgate Garden member who shows a commitment to Tollgate, a love and knowledge of gardening and a willingness to share that knowledge with others. We have many worthy candidates in our membership. Please take some time to honor one or more of your fellow Tollgate Garden Volunteers to continue this tradition for our organization. A list will be compiled for presentation to the Americana Foundation for final award selection. Nomination forms are due NO LATER THAN the Sept. 18th general members meeting.

Bring your nominations to the August meeting if completed. This will allow sufficient time for the Americana Foundation to make a selection and have the presentation ready by the recognition dinner in November. Get a form via the [link](#) or by request from me ASAP. rmcottrell4@att.net
Our 2024 Recipient was Marilyn Alimpich.

Current Members who have already received this award include:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 2004 Renee Cottrell | 2010 Priscilla Needle | 2013 John Woodrich | 2014 David Komraus |
| 2015 Jackie Stengel | 2016 Peg Palmer | 2017 Joe Pyden | 2018 Deb Kearney |
| 2021 Kathryn Fitzpatrick | 2022 Mary Bohner | 2023 Kathy Johnson | 2024 Marilyn Alimpich |

PLANT HIGHLIGHT – PETTY SPURGE

This plant/weed has made inroads into the farmhouse manager's resident garden. It is very prolific. It is *Euphorbia peplus*, commonly known as Petty Spurge, Cancer Weed or Radium Weed. Information, below, is from North Carolina State Extension.



"This plant prefers moist, well-drained soils of loam, clay, or sand. It will thrive in full sun to partial shade. It flowers most of the year and will spread in most disturbed sites. It is drought resistant and is propagated by seedlings. No specific data are available on seed dormancy and germination but plants are prolific seed producers and emerge beginning in the cool weather of fall and continue through late spring.

Petty spurge has erect branching stems, simple and oval-shaped leaves that measure up to 1-inch long and has pale green flowers with triangular bracts. These distinctive bracts or modified leaves are below the small flowers.

This plant is a very common weed and can be found in landscaped yards, flowerbeds, farm lands, and disturbed areas. No known diseases or other problems.

The milky sap is a skin irritant and protective gloves should be worn when handling this.

Photo courtesy of North Carolina State Extension

The Tollgate Farm News

Membership Update August 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.

Denise Andrews

Lindsay Clark

Teresa Durigan

Tricia Earp

Cheryl Hack

Tammy Knurek

Miho Yamada

Miyu Yamada

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](#)

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

The Tollgate Farm News

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.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

The Tollgate Farm News

TOLLGATE GARDEN SURPRISES!!



Top 2 photos by Lynette Leroux



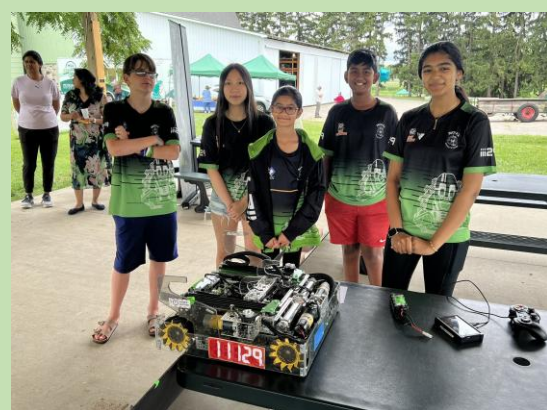
Photos by Linda Piasecki

The Tollgate Farm News

TOLLGATE OPEN HOUSE



Top 2 photos by Renee Cottrell



Photos by Lori Heiden

The Tollgate Farm News

TOLLGATE GARDEN COLORS!!



Top 4 photos by Linda Piasecki
Lower left by Renee Cottrell
Lower right by Roy Prentice



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
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