



MSU Tollgate Gardens

CHILDREN'S GARDEN Garden Collection



The front of the Children's Garden greets visitors with a flush of color. The mural on the fence was designed and painted by Tollgate volunteer, Irene Fahey. Annuals are planted in an "eye brow," arc to represent a rainbow. The rainbow colors compliment the mural.

Water Feature

The constructed pond is lined with a rubber membrane to hold the water. The many rocks around the edge of the pond hold the liner in place and add to the esthetics of the pond. The umbrella water feature is fun for the kids to stick their hands into and get wet but also serves the purpose of circulating water through a filter box at the bottom of the pond to remove debris from the water and provide aeration.



Around the pond, annuals are planted for color, along with hostas, grasses, and a dwarf ninebark. In the pond many water lilies provide beautiful flowers but also shade for the fish and frogs from the summers sun. The lilies also provide shade to help control the temperature of the water for the fish and frogs and provide them a hiding place from birds and other animals. The bridge over the dry stream bed affords a view of life in the pond.



Shade Garden

Looming over the Shade Garden is "Rasper, the Buzzard". This wonderful metal sculpture was created for the Tollgate Gardens by artist Laura Steiner.



Butterfly Garden

The symmetrical butterfly-shaped garden was planted to attract local butterflies. Some plants provide habitat for caterpillars, and others provide nectar for the butterflies. Butterflies are attracted to particular shapes and colors, such as purples, yellow, orange, red, and white with



yellow centers. They like clustered flowers with short, tubular blossoms, such as lantana. The sedums, liatris, coreopsis, purple coneflowers, fennel, parsley, pentas, cosmos, Profusion zinnias and purple salvia provide for their needs and are supplemented by the orchards, grassy fields, and native plants in nearby areas. The garden is situated in a sunny location with a nearby open water source. Pesticides are not used in the garden's care.

Tollhouse Garden

Many of the Tollhouse plants were from the original Children's garden. These plants include: the peonies, phlox, bearded and mini irises, amsonia, baptista (false indigo), purple coneflower, coreopsis, false sunflowers, turtlehead, obedient plant and rudbeckia. A new addition has been Clematis 'Betty Corning'.



Pizza Garden



What do you put on your pizza? In this garden we plant some of the typical toppings: tomatoes, onions, peppers, herbs and garlic. Some years we even have a pineapple plant.

Smelly Feely Garden



Every year a new variety of plants that have an aroma or feel interesting to the touch are planted. Some favorites are sage, lavender, rosemary, oregano, and lemon balm.

Peter Rabbit Garden



Peter Rabbit and family are very happy here at Tollgate. They love to eat kale and clover from the garden.

Vine Maze Garden

The vine maze displays many vine options for the garden. It also serves as a unique play-ground for children.



Native Prairie Garden



The children's prairie garden was planted in June of 2006 from plants purchased from Wildtype Nursery in Mason MI. The prairie contains a variety of native grasses and wildflowers that were found in Michigan and the Midwest before the Europeans arrived in the Americas. All of these grasses and wildflowers are low maintenance and drought tolerant plants.

When visiting the prairie in the spring, you will find red-yellow blooming columbine, pink nodding wild onion, and pink ground cover Prairie Smoke. The rest of the grasses and wildflowers in the garden bloom from mid to late July through the fall when they really put on a show. The seed heads of the short native grass, Prairie Dropseed, smell like buttered popcorn. Really they do, bend down and smell. The rest of the grasses are Little Bluestem and Big Bluestem, Indian grass, a switch grass. While walking the path, can you find the metal snake hidden amongst the grasses and flowers?



The flowers that you see blooming in late summer and early fall are the purple blooms of the asters, iron weed, bee balm, and joe-pye weed. Then there are the yellow blooms of cup plant and compass plant, goldenrod, and rudbeckia to name a few. The prairie plants in the garden provide shelter for wildlife and food for wildlife as well. Can you see them? Climb up the lookout and get a 'bird's eye' view of the prairie.

Sparty and His Dog House



At the rear of the Children's Garden you will find, Sparty, another creative metal sculpture by Laura Steiner. Sparty's dog house has a "living" or "green roof" using hardy succulent plants.

Gourd Trellis

Behind the Sparty House is a gourd trellis. This sturdy trellis will ensure quality gourds without the pest,



moisture and distortion that comes with growing gourds on the ground. It will be an interesting passage-way for visitors.

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center



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