Learning from the Past Updated for 2018

On Thursday, January 18, return to Tollgate for garden observations and lessons learned from the past. Professional gardener Gail Morrell is always learning new things about plants, pests and tools. Building on her extensive knowledge of gardening, Gail will share insights on both problems to avoid and successes to build on in 2018. Tollgate members remember Gail and her passion for garden maintenance, especially weeding. Gail always provides practical tips and suggestions for optimum results in the garden.

In 1991, Gail became a Master Gardener and established a garden maintenance company. A professional gardener for twenty-some years, she has worked as the head gardener on several estates and is currently the landscape manager for a gated community in Bloomfield Hills. Gail was an instructor and Practical Gardening Trainer at the Michigan School of Gardening, active in the Association of Professional Gardeners, and a past president of the Troy Garden Club. Her previous presentations for Tollgate gardeners were Putting the Garden to Bed in 2009, Fall and Winter-Interest Plants in 2012, Shrubs and Evergreens in 2013, Weeds in 2015, and the premier of Learning from the Past in 2017.

Renew Your Membership for 2018

It is once again time to renew your membership. Click on this link to the form on the MSU Extension Tollgate Farm and Education Center website [MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers Membership Form](#). Forms will be available at the next Tollgate Volunteer general meeting and attached to this newsletter.

### TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

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<th>JAN</th>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Tollgate Volunteer General Meeting</td>
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<th>FEB</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Maple Syrup Tapping</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Pond Path Mulching</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Special Weekend - Maplefest — No Workday</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Grass Cutback</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Mulch Nursery Paths</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Easter/Passover Weekend — No Workday</td>
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Greetings All,

After a slow start, winter feels like it is really here. Frigid weather, gusting winds and a triumphant football season, it must be January!

Visions of Sunshine: The gray days of January getting you down? Longing for the rejuvenation of the spring season of growth? Spring will be here before you know it! Now is a great time to consider getting more involved in Tollgate in 2018. Many of our volunteers have decided to take on the stewardship of one of the gardens on the farm by becoming an Area Garden Leader (AGL). Having each of the gardens on the farm cared for by an AGL keeps our gardens looking their best throughout the season. Being an AGL is easy and makes a real difference for the farm. Please contact Renee or myself if you are ready to take on a bit more commitment. Our goal for the gardens is to have an Area Garden Leader for each garden on the farm.

Maple Syrup News: The maple syrup making project is getting in gear for 2018. Our big tapping day is set for the last Saturday in February, 2/24, beginning at 10:00 AM. On our public tapping day all are invited to come to the farm to see first-hand how maple syrup making is done. We start in the Activity Center (coffee and cookies on hand, of course) with a short discussion of what maple syrup making is all about. After fully warmed and fortified with food and beverage, we head to the woods. Usually the evaporator is up and running so you can see the steamy side of the syrup making process. Fun day and we should be done by noon.

The maple syrup season lasts from February through early April. Collecting and boiling sap during the season is very weather dependent. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this project, or just want to be “in the know” about maple syrup happenings, let me know. I will make sure that you are added to our maple syrup email information list. Being involved in the maple syrup project is a fun way to get out of the house and enjoy the farm early in the season.

I greatly appreciate all that Tollgate Volunteer Membership do to keep the farm looking good. Because of the work of all of our volunteers, Tollgate is a very special place. Even though the cold winds of January are howling outside the door, take heart, spring will be here before we know it.

Roy
“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”

Alfred Austin

Happy New Year! We look forward to a season of enhanced gardening knowledge, renewed friendships and beautiful, bountiful rewards as we share the fun and knowledge of gardening together. Planning for 2018 is underway with the activity calendar being set and available soon on the website. Members are encouraged to participate in the group activities on Saturday mornings and/or on a team where you can set your own work schedules. Multiple gardens on-site have the need for the focused attention of an individual or team with various settings to stimulate or satisfy your preferred gardening interests. Many of these available sites have an existing garden plan in place for easy transition for those of any experience level. We have a power point presentation on the garden highlights to help members decide on their areas of interest. Please contact Roy or myself for further details.

Please take the time to renew your membership and complete the membership form for 2018. This helps keep communication information up to date and to identify individual area of interest so we may guide members towards fulfilling experiences here at Tollgate.

As the new gardening year begins I would like to have member feedback on our Tollgate organizations performance. Any organization is only as successful as the membership chooses to make it. I look forward to any notes, kudos or concerns you may wish to share and will consider each carefully as we strive to enhance your volunteer experience at Tollgate. Your feedback is always welcome as we work towards strengthening our organization and implementing our mission statement. You may use my email rmcottrell4@att.net to contact me with your suggestions.

See this addition for upcoming info on the maple tree tapping in February and our early March activities.

Thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, President
rmcottrell4@att.net
248-398-2562

Area Garden Leaders (AGL) Meeting
January 13, 2018

Photos by Kathy Johnson
The last workday of 2017 for six members of the Nursery Team was the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25. We met in the morning to install row covers over 6 sections of plants that require a little help to make it through a Michigan winter in a pot. It was a beautiful, warm day to accomplish this task – I could even take my winter gloves off to be a bit less clumsy. The "starter houses" in the Shade House had been closed up a few days before, after spraying the Heuchera plants with fungicide. But the winds always seem to blow in the nursery, so we needed multiple hands to hold onto the 8 by 12 foot tarps, position them over the hoops and secure them with weights on the sides and large clips to firmly attach to the hoop at both ends. We used a new method to hold down the sides this year. Roy provided some long, very heavy metal poles. We rolled the sides of the tarp on the pole like a window shade and laid it along the edge of the pots. No loose ends of the tarp to catch the wind and blow away this year! But we still put a few bricks on top, just to be sure. And, so far, so good - our row covers remain intact, partly covered in snow, and are hopefully providing some good insulation for the pots inside.

As we welcome in 2018, the Nursery Team is itching to get into Deb Kearney’s basement greenhouse (aka Tollgate North) and get our hands a little dirty planting seeds! We currently have 2 sessions scheduled about a month apart, beginning at the end of January. At these sessions we will plant “sprouts” that have been chilling in Deb’s refrigerator for 30 or 60 days, depending on the recommendation for each seed type. In early May, we’ll meet again to take the plants out of the basement to “harden off” outside. Deb has an ingenious system – placing plants on a flatbed trailer that can be wheeled out of the garage for just a few minutes at first, then for a few hours or all day to expose them to the elements and get them ready for life in the nursery. They can be wheeled back into a more protected space quickly and with relative ease on a regular basis to provide the right balance of exposure to the elements versus protection from cold temperatures, frost, strong winds or storms.

Our propagation efforts this year will continue our focus on growing both very popular and some lesser known native plants. These new seedlings will still be quite small at our 2018 Spring sale, but this is a cost-effective way to introduce large numbers of very attractive natives into our nursery stock. Plants propagated this winter will be very attractive specimens this fall, and even better next spring. We’ll share our progress with you in the newsletter each month, so you can enjoy these winter gardening efforts with us!

If you’re interested in learning and having a different kind of gardening experience, consider joining the Nursery Team as a ROW LEADER or MEMBER AT LARGE. Please don’t think that you need to be a plant or propagation expert to join our team – we have all learned from each other and by doing. Most of our Row Leaders have become experts about the plants in their row through the experience of being a Row Leader and the interaction with others on team. Let me know if you’re interested and I’ll provide more information about the roles and opportunities available.

Peg Palmer - pegpalmer@mi.rr.com

Photo by Peg Palmer
Happy New Year everyone.

I have used nearly all the photos that have been submitted over the past several years and will be struggling to put out a calendar for 2019. So won't you share your photos of the farm for consideration in next year's calendar? I am looking for photos from all seasons. The preferred format is landscape but, I can work with portrait format. All submissions due no later than June 15, 2018.

You can send your photos to me at tollgatecalendar@gmail.com

Thank you for your help in making the calendar possible.

Nancy Roggers

New Artwork Joins the Farm!

If you are touring the Tollgate gardens this spring be prepared for a new point of beauty and interest. Tollgate metal sculptor, Laura Steiner, has donated another of her works to the Tollgate Gardens. The hummingbird is three feet long and is placed so that it looks ready to take wing. If you are standing near the Children’s Garden, look toward the Xeriscape, you can’t miss it!

Jack is happy to be outside, even in cold weather. He can't understand why his pack mates insist on spending so much time indoors in the winter.
Activity Days
Activity day hours are 9:00 AM to noon unless otherwise noted on the Tollgate Garden Volunteer Important Dates and Events listed on the first page of the Tollgate Farm News or by the Area Garden Leader (AGL).
Lunch will be provided on scheduled workdays. Veggie alternatives are available upon request.
This schedule does not exclude you from working independently on the site. However, on non-scheduled days, your efforts will need to be self-directed with guidance from the garden area clipboards located in the Volunteer Communication Center.

Garden Tools Available for Use at Tollgate
- Spades
- Garden Rakes
- Brooms
- Wheel Barrels
- Weed Buckets
- Leaf Rakes
- Garden Hoe
- Long Handled Garden Forks

List of Suggested Gardening Implements to Bring from Home as Needed
- Trowel
- Pruners
- Loppers
- Garden Scissors
- Your Favorite Weeding Implement
- Hand Saw
- Plant Division Forks
- Shrub Rake
- Sun Screen
- Garden Gloves
- Knee Pads
- Insect Repellant

Tollgate Garden Advisory Council
Farm Manager
Roy Prentice - 248 347-3860 ext. 251
email - prentic1@msu.edu

President ......................... Renee Cottrell
Vice President ............... Marilyn Alimpich
Secretary ....................... Dave Komraus
Treasurer ...................... Sue Janczarek
Membership ................. Cindy Bolterstein
PR .............................. Yvonne DeMattos
Programs ................. Jackie Stengel
Hospitality ................. Yvonne DeMattos
Farm News Editor ........ Darretta Ferasin

For membership questions or to update your current membership information send email to: tollgatemembers@gmail.com

MSU Tollgate Gardens Volunteers
For general information and questions Contact Roy Prentice or See Website:
http://tollgate.msu.edu/volunteering/

If you aren’t getting The Tollgate Farm News email, check your SPAM folder

Volunteer Activity Day and Meetings Information
248-347-3860 ext. 400

● The Tollgate Gardens Advisory Council next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Tollgate Office Building.
All Tollgate Gardens Volunteer members are welcome to attend.

● Listings to contact individual Council Members and Area Garden Leaders are available at all general meetings and in the Volunteer Communication Center.

● Tollgate Volunteer Membership is renewed annually. The 2017 Tollgate Garden Volunteers membership is from December 1, 2017 to November 30, 2018.

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center
28115 Meadowbrook
Novi, MI, 48377-3128
tollgate.msu.edu
Contact Roy Prentice: 248-347-3860 ext. 251
### MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers Membership Form

**Date Submitted:** ____________________________

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<th>Name: ________________________________</th>
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Name you would like on badge. Please Print Carefully

**Were you a Tollgate volunteer member last year?** Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, do you need a new Tollgate Garden Volunteer badge? Yes ( ) No ( )

**Are you interested in:** Serving on a committee or garden project? Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, please note below if you have a particular area of interest, e.g., rose garden, children’s garden, hospitality, public relations, computer skills, etc

_________________________________________

**Are you a MSU Master Gardener?** ( ) certified ( ) candidate County ____________

*(It is not necessary that you be a MSU Master Gardener to volunteer with Tollgate Garden Volunteers. An interest in gardening is all that is required.)*

A donation in support of the Tollgate Volunteer organization would be greatly appreciated ($20 suggested). If you would like the newsletter mailed to you rather than receiving a notice of its availability online, please include an additional $10 to cover postage costs. Check here to have the newsletter mailed to you _______

Make checks payable to **Michigan State University**.

Return to: Tollgate Gardens Volunteer Office
28115 Meadowbrook,
Novi, MI. 48377-3128
Phone: 248-347-3860 ext. 212

**Note:** Membership is renewed annually.
**2018 membership is from Dec. 1, 2017 to Nov. 30, 2018.**

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**In the event of an emergency please notify:**

| Name: ________________________________ | Phone: ________________________________ |

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**Please print all entries. Thank you.**