

# The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2025

## MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 2025  
7:00PM  
(In the Conference Center)

## Creating a Miniature Landscape: Benefits of Hands-on Activities with Plants & Nature

Join Tollgate gardeners and supporters in the conference center for a hands-on activity and the last membership meeting of 2025. Participants will create a miniature landscape by planting small plants and making a path, pond, fence and more. Express your creativity in this project while enjoying conversation on the benefits of plants and nature.

Horticultural Therapist, Cathy Flinton will provide all materials—soil mix, small plants, rocks, shells, bark, miniature “benches” and other items—to create a miniature landscape. You are free to bring your own container, maybe a plant saucer (12” round, 3-4” deep) or something similar, possibly smaller, for your indoor garden. Cathy works with traumatic brain injury patients in a conservatory with activities designed to help them grow physically, mentally and socially. Cathy is a past president of the Michigan Horticultural Therapy Association (MHTA). She has a BS in Horticulture from MSU.

The MHTA website is <https://michiganhta.org/>. Under Resources, there are links for adaptive tool suppliers, recommended books, suggested horticultural therapy activities, and instructional videos. The website for the American Horticultural Therapy Association is <https://www.ahta.org/>. In 1997, Cathy wrote MSU Extension Bulletin E-1847 with J. Lee Taylor and Jane L. Taylor (who designed the 4-H Children’s Garden at MSU). The archive of the 4-page bulletin, Horticultural Therapy, is available at [https://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/extension\\_publications/e1847/e1847\\_97.pdf](https://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/extension_publications/e1847/e1847_97.pdf).

### TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025

OCT	MEETINGS		NOV	MEETINGS	
7	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm	4	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm
16	TGV General Meeting - Onsite	7:00 pm	8	Recognition Dinner	4:00 pm
OCT	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES		NOV	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
4-5	PUMPKINFEST	10:00am - 4:00pm	15	Rose winterizing	10:00 am
11	Nursery Clean up	9:00 am	27	Thanksgiving	
18	Pond Clean up	9:00 am			
25	Fall Clean up	9:00 am			

# The Tollgate Farm News

## FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*



It's been a busy and exciting season here at Tollgate! We kicked things off with a beautiful Saturday for the Fall Plant Sale last month. The weather couldn't have been better, and we had a steady stream of guests throughout the event. Your teamwork, organization, and smiles made it a great success.

Pumpkinfest followed soon after, bringing with it some record-breaking heat — but that didn't stop our visitors from enjoying the farm. We saw plenty of happy guests pulling some *massive* pumpkins from the field, enjoying hot-dogs, ice cream and of course Clays donuts! We also had the addition of a new attraction out in the woods where guests could stroll and see an assortment of different scarecrows. It was a nice place to walk and get a break from the heat!



Amidst all the fall activity, we also welcomed a new addition to the Tollgate barn! One of our ewes, Madi, gave birth to a healthy lamb in September. Both mom and baby are doing wonderfully. Following our naming tradition, the 4-H youth selected his name based on the first letter of his mom's name. After researching Michigan pests that start with "M," they decided on the name Mouse — a fitting and fun choice for our newest little resident. Thank you all for the care, time, and energy you bring to the gardens!

Destiny Pearson  
Livestock Coordinator

Photos by Destiny Pearson

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

**"I want to age the way that life makes you age, because there's beauty in autumn and winter and I think people forget that."**  
Helen Baxendale, British Actress

**Vote Now**- October is the month to vote on all elected positions for your Tollgate Garden Advisory Committee- TGAC. Though the field of nominees is very limited we ask that you participate in the voting process, write in votes for willing members are welcome! Please submit your ballot for the elected officer positions by email or US mail by the membership meeting on Oct.16th. Look for the ballot link in this issue.

**Please Note** – If you have not yet logged your hours on the Tollgate Volunteer Sign In site using the QR code you can still add them now as we close out our gardening activities for the season. This is NOT used by nor linked to the Extension Master Gardener records. Rather it is used only at Tollgate for recording visits and volunteer contribution of time to be used in reports, requests for funding and other administrative purposes.

# The Tollgate Farm News

**Membership Renewal-** Membership is renewed every year for the most accurate record keeping of Active and Supporting members. The form for 2026 will be an online document. We will have a tutorial for renewals for **January 2026 through December 2026**. Look for more communications on this topic coming soon.

Please complete your RSVP form sent in a recent email for the Nov. 8, 2025 Recognition dinner! It is a wonderful night to celebrate the season and our volunteer accomplishments. See you there!  
Thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, President  
Tollgate Garden Volunteers  
248-251-4505  
[rmcottrell4@att.net](mailto:rmcottrell4@att.net)

## PAR Report - Kathryn Fitzpatrick



October is our final harvest month, and we are on a roll – 1900 lbs. donated with only a couple more harvest weeks to go! We have had generous donations from the Sustainable Agriculture – CSA team as well as other vegetable growers in the garden with surplus vegetables. These additional donations are most appreciated and provide extra produce for Forgotten Harvest, Northville Civic Concerns, and PB & J who serve those in need in surrounding communities.



We had an exceptional potato harvest with 373 lbs. of beautiful golden and red potatoes. The tomatillos, hot peppers, kale, and green beans have been prolific. The turnips planted using the seed tape are already being harvested – both the greens and the bulbs are perfect. One fun surprise were the giant green onions – they sure smelled wonderful. Kohlrabi has proven to be a nice addition with a robust yield of healthy bulbs. The pelleted seed carrots provided a good yield with healthy greens and roots.

Possibly on the chopping block due to less than worthy yields this year are herbs, cucumbers, leeks, and shallots. The onions, squash, and cabbage yields were reasonable, but we will be looking into different cultivars for larger and more robust vegetables.

Two final activities for the season are the planting of garlic beds, and our end-of-season potluck meeting to discuss the good, the great, the bad, and the ugly and make plans for 2026.

Happy gardening!  
Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photo by Lynette Leroux



# The Tollgate Farm News

## NURSERY NOTES - Peg Palmer

SUMMER 2025 HAS BEEN ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR THE NURSERY! We hosted two successful Plant Sales that brought in a total of almost \$13,000! All plant sale proceeds go to support all the beautiful gardens that are maintained by the dedicated efforts of the Tollgate Garden Volunteers.

October 11 is the last day the Nursery will be accepting donations, so we can begin winter preparations. This begins with an inventory of what we have so that we can develop a winter plan. While many plants overwinter well in pots, some are more challenged by the typical Michigan freeze/thaw cycle that traps moisture in the pot and can damage the roots. Over the years, we have evolved our strategies for these vulnerable plants, including un-potting selected plants and "heeling in" the Nursery row for the winter, and repotting in spring. This requires diligent record keeping to know what's needed to stock up for the Spring Sale 2026, and plants in pots are easier to keep track of than plants heeled in the ground!

And, speaking of pots - the Nursery is delighted to recycle the 1-gallon pots that you may find as you clean up your shed or garage this fall! Please leave clean 1-gallon pots, in good condition, in the plant storage area (yellow door at the SE corner of the Nursery). Please DO NOT leave pots larger than the standard 1 gallon size!

Peg Palmer  
Nursery AGL

## AGL Information – Marilyn Alimpich

Hello Area Garden Leaders,

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](mailto: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](mailto:masoleil@sbcglobal.net), or call or text 734-730-6565.

See you in the gardens,

Marilyn Alimpich  
[masoleil@sbcglobal.net](mailto:masoleil@sbcglobal.net)

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

Template Example (Word Version)

Common name	Genus	Species	Cultivar/Trademark Name	Garden	# Tags	Notes
<b>Example:</b> Guara	Gaura	lindheimeri	'Crimson Butterflies'			

# The Tollgate Farm News

## Additional Garden Information

### RECIPES FROM MARY SPENCER – SEPTEMBER DEMONSTRATION MEETING

In case you missed the September General Meeting with Mary Spencer, below are the recipes she created for those in attendance.

#### AUTUMN SQUASH SOUP



#### CREAMY TUSCAN WHITE BEAN SKILLET

Photos by  
Linda Piasecki



### TOLLGATE GARDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE BALLOT FOR 2025

You may cast your vote for the person nominated or write in yourself or a member of TGV for the following offices. (**NOTE: Be sure if you write in someone's name, that they are willing to fulfill the office**).

Please mark your choice and return this ballot by e-mail no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 16, 2025. Ballot count will be done and reported at the October membership meeting of the same date. If you wish to mail your ballot, it should be post marked no later than Monday, October 13, 2025 to ensure its receipt at Tollgate in time for the ballot count.

Send email responses to the Secretary at [tlb4@mi.rr.com](mailto:tlb4@mi.rr.com)

CLICK HERE FOR THE [2025 BALLOT](#)

OR

US Mail your ballot in a separate envelope to:

Tollgate Education Center  
Attention: Tollgate Gardens Volunteers  
28115 Meadowbrook  
Novi, MI. 48377-3128

# The Tollgate Farm News

## 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.

THANK YOU!

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](mailto: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](mailto:TGFarmPhotos@gmail.com). Photos are also appreciated for the monthly Farm News. Photo files can be sent to: [Ductapegirl212@gmail.com](mailto:Ductapegirl212@gmail.com)



Photo by  
Linda  
Piasecki



# The Tollgate Farm News

## PUMPKINFEST 2025



Top photos by  
Destiny Pearson

Other photos by  
Linda Piasecki





# The Tollgate Farm News

## TOLLGATE SURPRISES!!



Giant Ragweed  
Photo by Dave Komraus



Photo by Linda Piasecki



Photos by Linda Piasecki





# The Tollgate Farm News

## TOLLGATE GARDEN CRITTERS



Photos by  
Tom  
Culkin



# 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.

## Tollgate Garden Advisory Committee (TGAC)

### Volunteer Liaison – Destiny Pearson

248-347-3860 Ext.251 [pears278@msu.edu](mailto:pears278@msu.edu)

**President** .....Renee Cottrell

**Vice President** .....Marilyn Alimpich

**Secretary**.....Theresa Bridenbaugh

**Treasurer** .....Karen Harris

### Membership

**& Hospitality**.....Teresa LaRosa

**Communications** .....Kathy Johnson

**Programs** .....Jackie 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://tollgate.msu.edu)  
Volunteer Coordinator - Janice Recinos : [recinos1@msu.edu](mailto:recinos1@msu.edu)  
Farm Contact - Destiny Pearson : [pears278@msu.edu](mailto:pears278@msu.edu)