



The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 25

ISSUE 4

APRIL 2019

MSU Tollgate Gardens Volunteer General Meeting in the Conference Center

Thursday, April 18, 7:00 PM

Cooking with Maple Syrup

Join Tollgate garden volunteers in the conference center for the April 18 meeting and much anticipated return of

Mary Spencer with her cooking demonstration including recipes and samples. This year, the theme is maple syrup. Assisted by her daughter Sammy, Mary will be preparing:

- Maple Roasted Tomato Toast with Goat Cheese and Mint
- Spinach Apple Salad with Maple Cider Vinaigrette and Sugared Curried Pecans
- Apple Maple Caramel Poke Cake

Mary Spencer's goal is to make people better cooks. She teaches a variety of cooking classes for adults, and sometimes special classes for children, in the evening at The Omelette and Waffle Café on Northville Road in Northville. Upcoming topics at *Taste: A Cook's Place*, www.tasteacooksplace.net, include Grains from Couscous to Farro, Indian Restaurant Favorites, Instant Pot Cooking, Spring in California Wine Country, Springtime in Tuscany, Meatless Mondays, and Kentucky Derby. May topics will be posted soon.

A culinary instructor at ABC Warehouse locations in Livonia, Troy, Lakeside and Novi, <https://www.abcwarehouse.com/eventscooking-classes>, Mary also conducts food tours, does menu planning and researches heirloom recipes. She has been teaching cooking for approximately 20 years and has over 5,500 cookbooks in her personal collection.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

APR	MEETINGS		MAY	ACTIVITIES	
18	Tollgate Volunteer General Meeting	7:00 PM	4	Front Farmhouse / Dry Shade	9:00 AM
27	New Volunteer Orientation	9:00 AM	11	Rose Garden / Rock Ledge / Nursery Division & Potting	9:00 AM
APR	ACTIVITIES		18	Plant Sale Division / Prep / Plant Drop off	9:00 AM
20	Easter / Passover Weekend NO DIRECTED WORKDAY		25	Memorial Day Weekend NO DIRECTED WORKDAY	
27	Spring Clean Up / Xeriscape / Orientation & Pancake Brunch at Noon	9:00 AM	31	Plant Sale Set Up	10:00 AM
MAY	MEETINGS				
7	TGAC Meeting	7:00 PM			
16	Tollgate Volunteer General Meeting	7:00 PM			



Greetings All,

Maple Syrup Making

Time to say goodbye to the 2019 maple season. It was an amazing year that spanned the breadth of human emotion. The first two weeks of March were a low and desperate time. The cold grip of winter delivered temperatures that refused to release sap from the trees. Through the Tollgate maple event, Maple Feast, sap and syrup were so hard to come by that even basic needs for programming were in doubt. Finally, temperatures warmed and sap began to flow. And flow. And flow! What began as a downward looking, kick the dirt, aw shucks, this



On April 19 Volunteers Labeled, Tagged and Topped the Maple Syrup Bottles with Gold Foil

Photos by Larry Bolam

may be our worst season ever, suddenly exploded into great promise. Bad became good, then good became great! All involved with this year's maple production are still a bit dazed. All feel that this year's record total of 180 gallons of syrup, which shattered our former high of 126 gallons, is as unbeatable as Usain Bolt's 100 meter time of 9.58 seconds. And yet, who knows what 2020 will bring?

In addition to this year's record, the volunteers working on the maple syrup project supported lots of educational activities. This season, the sugar-bush and sugar shack hosted over 1200 visitors during field trips and special events.

The culmination of the season is the maple syrup pancake lunch served by the maple volunteers as part of our April 27 New Volunteer Orientation and garden workday. This luncheon will feature pancakes, Tollgate syrup, bacon and sausage and is free to all Tollgate volunteers! If you are interested in purchasing Tollgate syrup, this is your golden opportunity. The season always seems to come and go quickly.

Gardens Coming Alive

As the snows of the winter of 2019 have released their icy grip on the land, the Tollgate volunteers have returned to the farm. We have already had several workdays where we began readying the beds for the coming growing season. Each year the gardens get better. Each year we have more visitors that come to Tollgate to enjoy the fruits of our work. Please help us make Tollgate reach its fullest potential. Please plan to attend our activity days. Without your help, Tollgate would be just another farm. With your help, we will continue to work toward a high level of true awesomeness.

Thanks for all that you do to make Tollgate such a special place!

Roy



Saturday Workday March 23

Photo by Darretta Ferasin



LEARN
GROW
MAKE FRIENDS
ENJOY

Notes from the President

Renee Cottrell

We have been off to a hit and miss season thus far with the late and unpredictable spring weather. This leaves lots of work opportunities for those looking for additional hours in the garden. We had a great turnout for the April 6 work day due in part to the great weather. We appreciate all the work that was done by the teams that day in multiple garden sites. We will need many hands to stay ahead of the weeds and they are early season opportunists! Please consider helping on our spring clean up dates and participating in the ever popular pancake brunch as our thank you for your ongoing dedication. Mother Nature may not be ready to gear up for spring but we are! See the Activity Calendar for details. I look forward to another season of fun and friendship.

Join a Garden Team?!

Do you have a particular area of interest? Would you like to work with more experienced gardeners in focused areas? There are still many gardens in need of small dedicated groups for organization of maintenance activities in specific gardens. Ask me or any TGAC member for a description of opportunities available; browse the garden binders located in the Volunteer Communication Center. Working with a team is an excellent way to increase your plant knowledge, develop connections and friendships with other experienced members and increase your familiarity with the site and the activities. Of course, all are welcome to the Saturday work activities for garden variety and the same benefits of information sharing and MG hours. The variety of gardens provides learning experiences with a little bit of something for everyone.

Attention AGLs / Teams-Budget / Garden Plan Requests Due May 1

In order to assist in the best delegation of funds and helping hands, we are requesting you submit your garden budget plans in time for the start of the planting season. If you have no specific special plans please return your forms via email or at a meeting so we have a good idea of the garden plans for the season. Those teams who have not yet submitted a budget/plan for your garden area are encouraged to do so by May 1. After the Plant Sale revenues are known, additional requests for funds can be made can be made!

LOOKING AHEAD

SAVE THE DATE FOR PLANT SALE — JUNE 1

Spring Plant Sale — Plan Now to Donate!

Even though the plants in your yard may be slow to emerge but you know you have new plans and plant purchases in mind, consider donating to the Tollgate Nursery for our plant sale in June. Plant donations will be accepted starting April 20. See the **Nursery Notes** in this issue

“A gardener learns more in the mistakes than in the successes.”

Barbara Dodge Borland



Volunteers Gathered for Children's Garden
Clean Up on Saturday, April 6

Photo by Darretta Ferasin

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Notes from the President *Continued*

(page 6) for additional details. If the weather is only letting you clean out the garage or garden shed keep us in mind for nursery pot donations. Pots, in one and two gallon sizes are needed, please no other sizes at this time since smaller ones are quickly overgrown and larger ones, hanging basket pots, clay and decorative pots are NOT appropriate for our intended use. Consider recycling! Our Nursery team has worked hard to improve the nursery space, procedures, stock and volunteer power to enhance our chances for a successful Plant Sale.

Sign Up for Volunteering at the Plant Sale:

An email will go out in May with the weekly reminders and a doodle link. If you prefer there will also be a paper sign up in the Volunteer Communication Center. You only have to respond once, both lists will be compiled.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OPEN HOUSE — JULY 20, 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Summer Open House “SUNSET GARDEN CELEBRATION”

Please join us for our open house event. Participate as a volunteer or come with all your friends, family, neighbors and enjoy the event as a guest. We will need volunteers assisting in staffing the event as garden docents, speakers, hospitality and set up. After the event we will enjoy a volunteer picnic! You will be prompted to sign up on the Doodle link that month or on a sign-up sheet in the volunteer communication center. Just sign up once, both lists will be compiled.

Happy Spring! Thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, President



Spring Will Come

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2019

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 also be available at the next Tollgate Volunteer General meeting and attached to this newsletter.

Cindy Bolterstein
tollgatemembers@gmail.com

A Special Thanks!

To all of you who made a donation to help the Tollgate Gardeners 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. Thanks again and Happy Gardening!

Linda Belanger
Larry and Linda Bolam

Laurey Konjarevich
Therese Nagi

Roy and Cindy Prentice
David Sharpe

SATURDAY WORKDAY ACTIVITIES



Photos by Darretta Ferasin



The opening of the Tollgate Nursery for spring donations has been delayed until April 20 while we complete the new layout of the potting and labeling area. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but we think that you will appreciate the improvements in the organization of the Nursery potting area, which will place the potting trailer adjacent to the pop-up and the water faucet. If you have plants to donate that you are unable to keep at home, please contact pegpalmer@mi.rr.com to make arrangements.

Please review the **PLANTS WANTED** list (distributed periodically via email) to determine what plant varieties are wanted along with directions on the process to drop off your donations. We are hoping to bring in a record number of donated plants into the Nursery this spring – 3,500 pots! Since we have over 200 categories that we are requested, it really isn't possible to provide meaningful guidance in the limited space here – but I can't resist listing some varieties high on our **"MOST WANTED"** list:

- **Iris germanica / German Iris** – After strong sales last spring, we really need to restock! For the standard size Iris, our greatest need is for bloom colors other than the common blue/purple shades. On the other hand, last year we pretty much sold out of dwarf sized Iris with blue/purple blooms, so these are the colors we need to replace for the short varieties.
- **Ferns** – We need to restock several different varieties: Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium niponicum*), Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), Ghost Fern (*Athyrium*), and Cinnamon Fern (*Osmonda cinnamomea*)
- **Paeonia / Peony** – These spring bloomers always sell for a premium in the spring sale!
- **Rudbeckia varieties** - Sweet Coneflower (*Rudbeckia tomentosa*), Cutleaf Coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) are most wanted – but all Rudbeckia/Black Eyed Susan varieties are welcome.



Nursery Workday Saturday, March 23

- **SHADE plants** - *Ligularia*, *Hosta* (big leaved and blue leaved varieties), Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra*). Coral Bells/*Heuchera* (green leaved varieties) are needed.

The Nursery Team is also finishing up our propagation activities that began in January. Sunday, April 14 we will have another session at Tollgate North to plant the last batch of seeds that have been chilling in the frig. Having maxed out the capacity of Deb Kearney's basement greenhouse, we are conducting an experiment to plant additional *Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly Weed) seeds directly in a small plot prepared within a nursery row. We have struggled to stock adequate numbers of this popular native for multiple reasons. Plants in the garden typically emerge late in the spring, and often don't survive division and potting due to a deep tap root. Through our practice of winter seed propagation at Tollgate North, we have generated large numbers of stock for the Spring sale - but these new plants are quite small. So, second year seedlings are much more appealing – but this native variety is also known to be very difficult to overwinter in a pot – so we lose a significant percentage of these first-year seedlings.

This year, in addition to the seeds planted in the greenhouse, we are planting seeds directly in a soil bed created within the nursery row. An approximately 3 ft by 5 ft section of the row was lined with weed barrier, with a few inches of soil added up to the wooden row border. Butterfly Weed seeds that had been cold prepped were then planted in the prepared plot. We're hoping to have some seedlings by the plant sale that we can dig up and pot to sell that day. The intent of the weed barrier under the soil is to keep the tap roots shallow enough to avoid breaking when the plants are transplant-

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NURSERY NOTES *Continued*

ed. Unsold seedlings will be potted after the sale and may be attractive specimens for the fall sale or overwintered second year seedlings in spring 2020... if they make it through the winter in a pot!

PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR POTS! We'll need them if we come even close to our goal of 3,500 divisions!. We accept only 1 and 2 gallon pots in good condition (1 gallon size is our primary use). Drop off your pots in the bin inside the door of the shed adjacent to the nursery. Samples of the pot sizes that we accept are tacked to the wall above the bin. ***Please do not leave larger or smaller size pots- we DO NOT have room to store them!***

If you're interested in learning and having fun while involved in a different kind of gardening experience, join the Nursery Team as a ROW LEADER or MEMBER AT LARGE! It isn't necessary to be a plant or propagation expert to join our team – we have all learned from each other and by doing the work together. 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. We currently

have openings for Row Leaders and Co-Row Leaders, and becoming a member At Large is always an option as well. Let me know if you're interested and I'll provide you more information about the opportunities available. we

Peg Palmer - pegpalmer@mi.rr.com



Nursery Saturday, April 6

Quilting 2019 "Blowing in the Wind"

Tollgate's own Quilting Bees have completed the 2019 Tollgate Quilt that will be raffled off at the July 20 Open House. The quilt will be at the April 18 Volunteer General Meeting and the April 27 Volunteer Pancake Breakfast. Raffle tickets will be available.

Quilt Pattern: Solid Foundation

Approximate Size: 74 inches x 74 inches

Raffle Tickets: \$2.00 each or 3 tickets for \$5.00



Kay Pratt, Connie Marcangelo, Susan Bremer,
Lynn Strong, Mindy Kinsey and
Kathy Light (bottom right)
Quilters Missing from Photo: Darretta Ferasin,
Gail Kewitch and Nancy Rogers

Maple Syrup Bottle Labeling

Photos by Larry Bolam



Spring Photos of Tollgate Needed!!!!



Spring — the time of year when Tollgate comes to life, and the best season of the year to get those beautiful photos of Tollgate other than Summer, Fall, and Winter. Don't miss the opportunity to capture and submit your favorite Spring photos for the Tollgate Calendar. Thanks to those who have submitted photos in the past weeks. They are very much appreciated!

Email your photos to: TollgateCalPics@Gmail.com

The preferred format is JPEG landscape files. Photos from all seasons and aspects of life at Tollgate accepted.

Contact Larry Bolam at above address with any questions.

Photo by Larry Bolam

Tollgate Volunteer Information

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 binders located in the Volunteer Communication Center.

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

Garden Tools Available for Use at Tollgate

- Spades
- Garden Rakes
- Brooms
- Wheelbarrows
- 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 Repellent

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	TBD
Programs	Jackie Stengel
Hospitality	Teresa LaRosa
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/>

- The Tollgate Gardens Advisory Council next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 7, 2019 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 2019 Tollgate Garden Volunteers membership is from **January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.**

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

28115 Meadowbrook
Novi, MI, 48377-3128

tollgate.msu.edu

Contact Roy Prentice:
248-347-3860 ext. 251



MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers Membership Form

Please print all entries. Thank you.

2019

Name _____

Date Submitted _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

City _____ MI

Day _____ - _____

Zip _____ - _____

Evening _____ - _____

Email _____

Name you would like on badge

Were you a Tollgate volunteer member last year? 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.

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 emailed, please include an additional \$10 to cover postage.

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**

Questions: **Phone: 248-347-3860 Ext. 251**

2019 Membership is from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019

Please read this Privacy Policy:

By filling out and submitting this form you authorize the Tollgate Garden Volunteers (TGV) and MSU to use your contact information to communicate with you via email, newsletters and other formats. If you wish your email and other identification information to not be used by the TGV and MSU, please check this box (). (By checking this box you will not receive email notification of workdays, or other volunteer opportunities, special events and educational opportunities, or the availability of the newsletter online).

In the event of an emergency please notify:

Name

Phone