

See what's happening at Tollgate this month!



## MSU Tollgate Farm June 2020



*Visit Our Website or Follow us on*  

## Save the Date! Upcoming Events



### **Tollgate programming and events during Coronavirus COVID-19**

As you may already know, Michigan State University has made the decision to cancel or postpone all in person activities until September 1st. This means the farm will be closed to the public until September 1st, but select volunteers have been given permission to begin work in the gardens on the farm. Although this may make it appear that Tollgate is now open to the public we remain closed. If you are interested in volunteering at Tollgate, [see the article below](#) on instructions for steps to volunteer. We appreciate your help in keeping our staff and volunteers healthy and safe by not entering the farm during this time.

**Get your Tollgate swag from**

## our new Farm Store!

Want to support Tollgate and get a new t-shirt? Check out our new Farm Store for two t-shirt options, the one seen here and the 2020 camp t-shirt, available until July 3rd.

Visit the Farm Store [here](#).



## Virtual School Garden Series

**June 17 at 10am. Cover Crops for School Gardens with Will Jaquinde.** Between social distancing and limited access to schools, cover crops are a low maintenance option to control weeds, improve soil, attract beneficial insects and more! Learn the basics on how to plant and manage cover crops to get the most out of them for this season and beyond.

Register [here](#). Questions? Email Kristine Hahn.

## Join us for Virtual Winged Wonders Camp

Are you 10-14 years old? Do you love the outdoors? Join us for a Winged Wonders Virtual Experience June 22-26. MSU Tollgate Farm has banded together with MSU Kellogg Bird Sanctuary to offer a virtual exploration of wild and domestic birds through interactive, hands-on science learning. Become



a birder in your own backyard as you study these winged wonders and their amazing feats. Try your hand at bird ID, meet a raptor, explore embryology, take a habitat challenge, and more with KBS and Tollgate staff. Throughout the week, join us for daily interactive sessions at 1 pm and/or visit the Winged Wonders blog page for self-directed activities!

Registration required below for daily interactive sessions.

Save the dates for Virtual Outdoor Adventure Camp (July 27-31) and Vet Science Camp (August 10-14) for ages 12-14.

[Register here.](#)



## **MSU Tollgate Farm Camp-in-a-Box!**

Tollgate made the tough decision not to host a Summer Camp on the farm this year which meant that we have had to get creative and figure out a

way to provide the community with experiential learning opportunities that require minimal materials, can be done from home, and promote curiosity and discovery. With this in mind, we came up with the idea of "Camp-in-a-Box"! We are offering two different camp themed boxes filled with camp activities, materials, some of our favorite Garden Kitchen recipes, camp swag, and much more! From making and planting your own biodegradable pot to dissecting an owl pellet, these boxes are great for everyone! Our Adventure Box and Garden Box are available now for a limited time, so don't wait and get your "Camp-in-a-Box" today!

## **Virtual Mornings on the Farm**

Mornings on the Farm with sustainable agriculture educator Will Jaquinde will continue to be virtual for the rest of the summer with a \$15 cost for attendees.

The next workshop on July 12th focuses on summer crops

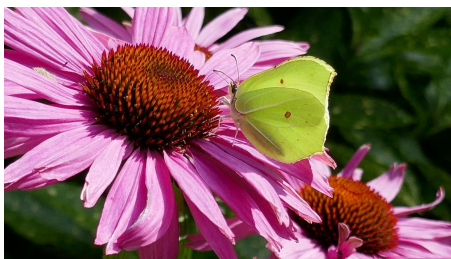




and plant management for yield and pest control. Will is in his 5th season managing the vegetable production at MSU Tollgate, which grows more than 150 varieties across 50 crops and three acres using organic growing practices for a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. In this series, Will shares his decades of plant experience to help you grow a low maintenance, productive vegetable garden!

Can't make the July 12th date? Sign up for the final workshop on August 16th. If you have any questions about the series, please email [Will Jaquinde](#).

For more information or to register, visit the [event page](#).



### **The Tollgate Pollinator Project**

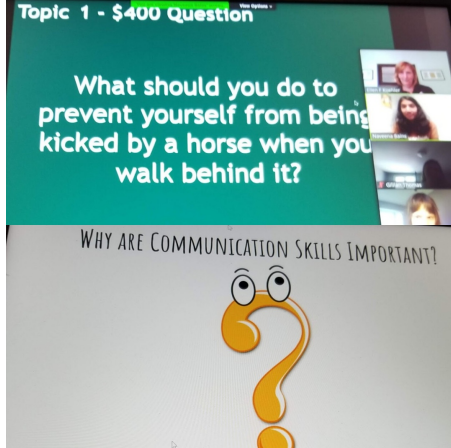
What are pollinators, and why are they important to us? How can we help pollinators?

The Tollgate Farm Pollinator Project is a new remote learning series for formal and non-formal educators including videos, activities, and resources for place-based learning about plants, pollinators, and pollination. For more information, visit the [website](#).

### **Summer Adventures from Home**

Covid-19 has presented us with a challenge on how we can continue to fulfill our mission of providing hands-on, screen free, and experiential learning opportunities to our community. Starting the week of June 22nd, MSU Tollgate will be offering free weekly themed camp pages on our [Experience Tollgate website](#) filled with videos, excursion ideas, and easy to do activities that are perfect to keep your at-home-campers busy, learning and exploring! Although this won't be able to replace our summer camp on the farm, we hope that the community can use it as a tool to inspire the youth to get outside and discover all the magic that nature has to offer!





## Building Resilience: MSU Tollgate Virtual Summer Stewards Series

Over 50 teens so far are registered for Tollgate's virtual summer series for past, present, and potential stewards and stewards-in-training 13-19 years old to explore resiliency and leadership. Led by youth and

moderated by staff, each session includes a team-building activity and guest presenter. Steward Gillian Thomas designed a Tollgate Wheel of Questions game followed by Extension Educator Lisa Tams, LMSW, ACSW who led a discussion on Mindfulness as Mental Strength Training. Stewards Naveena Bains and Garrett Kucharski led Tollgate Jeopardy before the group explored People Power: Growing in Interpersonal Skills with Extension Educator Liana Pepin. Join us for the remaining sessions:

- June 25: The Art of Staying Focused: Time Management
- July 9: The Tollgate Goose Chase Challenge
- July 23: Friendship, Boundaries, and Communication
- August 6: Fun Money: Money Management and YOU
- August 20: Reducing Stress with Self-Care

Register here!

## This Month's 4-H Newsletter is Here!

Oakland County 4-H Connections is a monthly newsletter for 4-H members, families, and the general community with news and information about 4-H youth development activities in Oakland County.

June Newsletter

**Oakland County  
Youth & Families**

**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**Extension**

**June 2020**

*Healthy families have variety of traits that provide well-being.*

**Qualities of a healthy family**

Terry Clark-Jones, Michigan State University Extension - April 2, 2018

Researchers across the country and around the world have found that strong families have a wide variety of qualities that contribute to a family's well-being. These traits have been found across all racial, social and economic groups as well as in families across the globe. Strong families are not families without problems. Functional families are not, simply, the opposite of dysfunctional families. All families face challenges, but some families are better equipped to deal with them than others.

The first step in developing the strengths of one's family is to consider those areas in which the family is doing well and areas the family members would like to improve.

**Six qualities that researchers have identified as indicators of a strong family:**

- **Appreciation and affection** - they help each other, keep promises, and show affection to each other.
- **Committed** - Strong families are very loyal to each other, share responsibilities, make decisions together, allow members to make their own decisions with support, and find it easy to trust one another.
- **Positive communication** - Families that eat together regularly communicate (as long as the phones and TVs are turned off.) They like to share feelings with each other and cue into each other's feelings. Put downs and sarcasm is rare.
- **Strong coping skills** - Families with healthy well-being tend to be resilient. Crisis brings them closer together and they are supportive of one another. They look for something good from a bad situation and tend to accept the things they cannot change.

# Tollgate News & Announcements



## Interested in Volunteering at Tollgate?

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSU Tollgate Farm. We are now able to allow Master Gardeners and Non-Master Gardener volunteers to

return to the farm once they have completed our new volunteer selection process. If you would like to begin the steps to volunteer, please [visit our blog](#) for the full instructions. Please remember that we cannot allow volunteers to enter the farm until they are completed this process and have permission from our Farm Manager, Roy Prentice, or Education Coordinator, Ellen Koehler.

## Update on Sustainable Agriculture at Tollgate Farm

Our Sustainable Agriculture team has been hard at work 4 weeks into the CSA production season. In addition to harvesting and planting, they have also been doing a lot of watering. Before the rainfall last Wednesday, the last significant rainfall was over a month ago! With the long span with no rain they thought it was a great opportunity to describe their irrigation methods. To read more, [click here](#). Also, the Sustainable Agriculture team will be going live on [instagram](#) on **Saturday at 11 AM** to give a tour and answer questions. Don't miss it!



## Meet Our Staff!

Curious about everyone who works at MSU Tollgate Farm? Every Monday we will feature a staff member or volunteer.



## MEET OUR STAFF



Roy Prentice: Farm Manager

Roy Prentice has been the Farm Manager at Tollgate since 1993. Before his position at Tollgate, Roy was a field research technician and greenhouse manager in the lab of MSU's forest genetics professor, James Hanover from 1980-1993.

During this time, he received a bachelor's and master's degree.

Roy is also Tollgate's resident historian, having previously been a member of the Novi Historical Commission for nine years and a chairperson of the commission for three years. Roy and volunteer John MacInnis, later helped by volunteer Clay Ottoni, started the maple sugaring operation at Tollgate.

During the Stay Home, Stay Safe order, Roy has organized work schedules to care for Tollgate's livestock without the help of the 4H club and our full staff. Roy has also been working to add on to our horse barn to provide a better facility to care for Tollgate's horses. Roy works tirelessly to maintain and improve Tollgate while always having a good joke ready to tell his coworkers. Thank you Roy for all you do to make Tollgate an amazing place to work and visit.

## A Newsletter for the Formal and Informal Educators

Our new quarterly newsletter for educators is a place where formal and non formal educators can share ideas and best practices for teaching science outdoors and for connecting classroom learning to the place we know as Tollgate Farm.

Tollgate Newsletter for Formal and Non Formal Educators



**School Farm  
Collaboration for the  
2020/2021 School Year**



Using research-based curriculum and methods, school and community groups explore the farm and the natural world through inquiry and place-based learning. Remote learning series are available. Reservations for school-to-farm collaboration are being accepted now and in the future with payment postponed until the 20/21 school year

comes into focus. Tollgate Farm education staff is able to design a program or series to align with your teaching goals, standards, and science kits. For more information, email Ellen Koehler at [koehle43@msu](mailto:koehle43@msu).

Tollgate strives to provide opportunities for youth and adults of all income levels and welcomes a broad cross-section of participants to experience farm-based experiential learning. The goal of the financial aid process at Tollgate is to provide as many youth and adults as possible with the opportunity to enrich learning and broaden their experiences. Funding is limited and applications are reviewed based on the needs of the participants, potential impact on their learning, cost of the program, and potential for meaningful collaboration.

[Reserve School-to-Farm Visit for 2020/2021 School Year Here](#)

## Tollgate Opportunities

**Rent the Tollgate Conference Center Starting September 1st, 2020 with a 20% discount in 2021**

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, MSU Tollgate has





cancelled all weddings, business meetings, festivals and educational events through September 1st, 2020. With all the disappointment COVID-19 has brought to our lives, we would like to offer a 20% discount to any group that was unable to have their event in 2020, whether it was scheduled at MSU Tollgate or not. The discount will apply to the rental rate for any event scheduled in 2021.

To learn more about hosting your event at Tollgate, visit the [Conference Center Website](#) and see more photos of our historic barn and conference center on our [blog](#). Questions? Email our Events Coordinator [Kari Heughens](#).

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center offers programs throughout the year designed to allow adults and children to experience learning hands-on, explore the joys of gardening and the natural world, appreciate and promote locally grown food, and build community.

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY | **Extension**

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**<http://tollgate.msu.edu/>**

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