

See what's happening at Tollgate this month!



## MSU Tollgate Farm May 2020



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## Save the Date! Upcoming Events



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

Michigan State University has made the decision to cancel or postpone all in person activities until September 1st. There is nothing we love more than sharing the farm with each one of you. However, providing a safe place for social, emotional, and physical growth is paramount for all our programming.

This news means the farm will be closed to the public until September 1st and we will be cancelling all our summer activities including Summer Camps, Story Hour, Night Hikes, and Stewards Teen Leadership programs.

We recognize that many children will be missing out on their normal school studies. The MSU Tollgate team has shared online video content on Facebook and will continue to share more resources on our social media pages. There are also many free resources available from Michigan State University

## Virtual School Garden Series

Join us for a series of free school garden virtual education sessions Wednesdays at 10am. [By registering for the entire series](#), you will be able to attend each session using the same link.

May 20 at 10am: **Pollinator Gardening with Children** with Ellen Koehler. What are pollinators, and why are they important to us? How can we help pollinators? School and community gardeners, join us to explore ideas and resources for place-based learning about plants, pollinators, and pollination.



June 3 at 10am. **Planning the Fall School Garden** with Kristine Hahn. Learn about the best crops to grow and some important considerations when planning a Fall school garden in the narrow window from September - November.

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 to participate in the series here: [https://msu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0vf-urrzkvG9BovAkvXy8\\_NjMbAHPZIPin](https://msu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0vf-urrzkvG9BovAkvXy8_NjMbAHPZIPin)

Questions? Please email Kristine Hahn.

## 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 spring and summer with a \$15 cost for attendees. The next workshop on May 31st focuses on tips and tricks

for low energy garden maintenance. 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 May 31st workshop? Sign up for July 12th, and August 16th. If you have any questions about the series, please email Will Jaquinde.

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

### **We Are Still Looking for Your Feedback! Formal and Non-Formal Teacher Needs Survey**

Michigan State University Extension Tollgate Farm's learning experiences for teachers and students begin with an inquiry learning and place-based education focus. As a means to better serve teachers, students, and school districts during this time of remote learning, Tollgate seeks your input on the types of student and teacher learning opportunities that would be most helpful.



[Tollgate 2020 Teacher Needs Survey Here](#)

### **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](#).

## Easy At-Home Activities for Youth

Check out our [Experience Tollgate Blog](#) for some simple at-home activities that inspire creativity, exploration, and science. We will continue to update this page with more activities weekly!



## Maintaining connection through virtual summer camp!

The summer camp team at MSU Tollgate Farm are excited to announce that we will be offering a free virtual summer camp platform starting the week of June 22<sup>nd</sup>. This platform will be updated weekly with a themed camp page filled with youth activities, videos, recipes,

a blog, and so much more! This summer camp might look and feel a little different than our usual camp on the farm, however, we will bring some of our favorite farm and outdoor experiences to the comfort of your home. Be on the lookout for a for more updates soon!

## Building Resilience with

## Teens: Virtual Summer Steward Program Series

Our MSU Tollgate Farm Stewards and Stewards-in-Training (13-19 years old) are a community of strong young leaders who are passionate about learning leadership skills while working with kids in the outdoors. In light of summer camp being canceled, Tollgate will be holding a Virtual Stewards Summer Series for our past and current stewards and stewards-in-training every other Thursday, May 28 through August 20. Youth-led and staff-moderated zoom sessions will include time for fun, connection, and team-building as well as presentations by special guest presenters on a range of topics including resiliency, mindfulness, relationships, leadership skills, and the art of staying focused. For more information or to receive the registration link, please email [Ellen Koehler](mailto:Ellen.Koehler@msu.edu).



## Rescheduled: Starry Night on the Farm now September 19-20th, 2020

Starry Night on the Farm combines adventure and learning for a fun family overnight. What better way to celebrate fall's arrival than to join us at MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center for an exciting outdoor overnight learning experience? This family-oriented visit will give you a rare glimpse into what goes on after sundown on the farm. Come explore the night sky and the importance of agriculture and the sun in our daily lives. Watch for more details come summer.

## Tollgate Farm 4-H Club - Virtual Edition

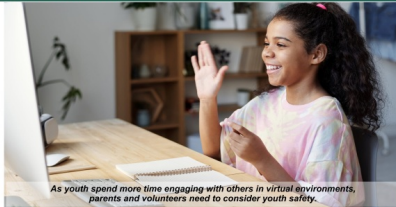
We all miss being at the farm and look forward to the day that we can return. Meanwhile the Club has been meeting virtually via Zoom.



We have been testing the virtual waters with various activities: Bingo, learning about how killdeer raise their young, picking a basket design for a virtual basket weaving event, and making virtual visits to the farm. At one meeting we made a word cloud answering the question: Why is Is Tollgate Special?

Click here for a 4-H word search created by one of our members.

For more information about Tollgate Farm 4-H Club visits us on the web, on facebook, or email us!



As youth spend more time engaging with others in virtual environments, parents and volunteers need to consider youth safety.

#### Top 5 tips in keeping youth safe in virtual environments

Christine Heverly, Michigan State University Extension - April 2, 2020

The most important goal for adults who work with children and youth, be that a parent, caregiver or volunteer, is keeping children safe. One important area to be aware of and understand is the different virtual environments youth are engaging in on a computer, tablet or smartphone. It is important to understand all the different virtual environments because youth often interact in a variety of environments, such as Zoom, Skype, FaceTime and other social media platforms.

All parents and adults working with youth should consider these five tips from Michigan State University Extension:

- Understand why youth are drawn to virtual

environments. Youth are drawn to anything that allows them to hang out and share information with friends, clown around and meet other youth. These virtual environments often combine all these aspects, as youth can connect with friends without being in the same physical space.

- Create some ground rules for usage and participation in virtual environments. These can include only using electronic devices in common areas of the home and never in bedrooms, time limits with the reminder to get youth up and moving, and engaging in some non-screen time activities.

- Consider creating a schedule for youth to write in when there are engaging in virtual environments and who they will be engaging with. Then, each day take the time to ask youth what they did in each of the items on their schedule, who they engaged with, what they learned, any exciting news to share or anything concerning that came up.

## 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.

May Newsletter

## Tollgate News & Announcements

### Missing Tollgate Farm?

Our Sakura Garden has bloomed, we are fertilizing the hay fields, and invasive garlic mustard is blooming! Want to



learn more about what's happening on the farm during the Covid-19 Stay Home, Stay Safe order? [Click here](#) to see photos and learn more about the essential work on the farm.



### **Update on Sustainable Agriculture at Tollgate Farm**

Our Sustainable Agriculture team is getting ready for the first CSA distribution next week.

They are excited to have incorporated their Farmall 140 tractor into the operation. They have mounted a wooden grid roller (after previously rolling it by hand) and can now make straight uniform beds in seconds. This makes

transplanting faster and the plant placement much more uniform. They have also placed the 'Cat' Tunnels for the tomatoes and peppers. For more updates, check out our [facebook](#) and [instagram](#).

### **What Does Tollgate Mean to You?**

At Tollgate, we have been thinking about the beauty of the farm and all of the gatherings and learning experiences that have come to life over the years. Will you share with us what

Tollgate means to you?  
Photographs with or without captions, stories, poems, anecdotes, memories are welcome. Another option would be to film yourself answering the question, 'What does Tollgate mean to me?'



Once these have been gathered, we'll send the collection back out to the Tollgate community. We hope that sharing in this way will help us all maintain our special Tollgate connection during this time of physical distancing. Please sign and return this media release with your submission by emailing Ellen Koehler.



### **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 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](#)



### **Coming Soon! Volunteer Central for MSU Extension Volunteers**

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSUTollgate Farm. Coming soon is a new

volunteer selection process called Volunteer Central which all volunteers with MSU Extension will be asked to complete. Watch for word from Tollgate staff or, if you are an Extension Master Gardener, from your County Master Gardener Coordinator.

## **Tollgate Opportunities**

### **Rent the Tollgate Conference Center Starting September 1st, 2020**

The MSU Tollgate Conference Center, historic barn, and Americana



boardroom are available for your next business meeting, bridal or baby shower, private luncheon, or special event. Our catering staff are available to meet your needs for your event!

To learn more about hosting your event at Tollgate, visit the **Conference Center Website**.



### **MSU Tollgate Farm Accepting Wedding Reservations for 2021!**

Looking for a wedding or rehearsal dinner venue for 2021? MSU Tollgate Farm is now accepting reservations for 2021. Did you have to cancel or reschedule your wedding reservation for Tollgate or any other venue in 2020? Book with us and get 20% off! Email our Events Coordinator Kari Heughens for more information.

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.

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