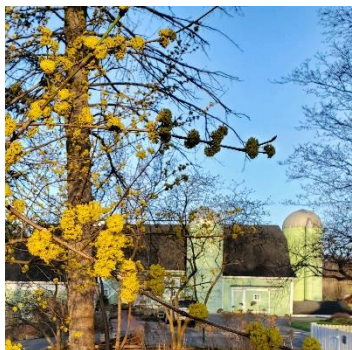


The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 27

ISSUE 4

APRIL 2021



MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting on Zoom

**Thursday, April 15
7:00 PM**

Spring Wildlife in Michigan

Environmental educator and naturalist **Andrew Nowicki** will talk about spring wildlife in Michigan to increase our awareness of animal habitats. His interpretive program will cover local animals with tips for observing birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals. For example, spring is the best time to be on the lookout for Chorus frogs who will be difficult to find in the summer.

Andrew runs programs across the state teaching audiences about wildlife and improving outdoor experiences. He also does guided nature walks and owl hikes. His website is <https://nowicki418.wixsite.com/wildlife> and includes downloadable pamphlets to learn more about the connections between people and the environment. Andrew works at the Howell Nature Center (though this is not an HNC program). He has worked as a wildlife technician conducting biological surveys. Andrew earned a BS in zoology from Michigan State University.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

APR	MEETINGS			MAY	MEETINGS	
6	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00pm		4	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00pm
18	Tollgate Volunteer Mtg – Zoom	7:00pm		20	Tollgate Volunteer Mtg – Zoom	7:00pm
APR	ACTIVITIES			MAY	ACTIVITIES	
Wk. of 3	Easter Weekend	n/a		Wk. of 1	Spring Clean-Up/Shade	n/a
10	12 Mile/Pond	n/a		8	Farmhouse	n/a
17	Nursery/Children's	n/a		15	Nursery Division/Potting	n/a
17	Plant Sale Div./Prep/Drop-off	n/a		22	Rose Garden/Rock Ledge	n/a
24	Spring Clean Up/Xeriscape	n/a		29	Memorial Weekend	n/a

Cover photo provided by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

FROM THE TOLLGATE FARM MANAGER

GREETINGS

Roy Prentice

Greetings all,

Maple Syrup Making



Time to say goodbye to the 2021 maple season. The word for the season was "early." The season

started early and ended after the third week in March. After a bit of pre-season maintenance to the reverse osmosis machine, it performed to everyone's satisfaction saving lots of time and firewood. The RO machine extracts water from the sap solution concentrating the sugar in the sap thereby greatly reducing the time needed to boil off water, concentrate sugar and make syrup. Tollgate's RO master, Kurt Westermann, trained several new RO operators this year. Their addition to the syrup making efforts is greatly appreciated.

Although there were no field trips or group visits to the maple operation in 2021, lots of virtual programming took place in the woods. The MSU Tollgate educational staff took full advantage of the maple season to share Tollgate's story with classrooms throughout SE Michigan. Many volunteers helped with the sap gathering, firewood hauling, and evaporator tending, all while keeping Covid guidelines in mind. The season was short, but

fruitful producing 95 gallons of syrup. Thanks to all who made our 2021 season a success even under difficult circumstances.

Gardens Coming Alive



As the snows of the winter of 2020/21 release their icy grip, the Tollgate volunteers are returning to the farm. Each year the gardens get better. Please help us make Tollgate reach its fullest potential. In the absence of our usual

Saturday workdays, contact our president, Renee Cottrell or myself to direct you to where the gardens need the most attention.



If you have completed the MSU required VSP process, thank you. If you are considering completing VSP so that you can volunteer on the property, your help would be most welcome. Tollgate can help make the VSP process as easy as possible. Please

contact me if you have questions. Without your help, Tollgate would be just another farm. With your help, we will continue to work toward a high level of true awesomeness.

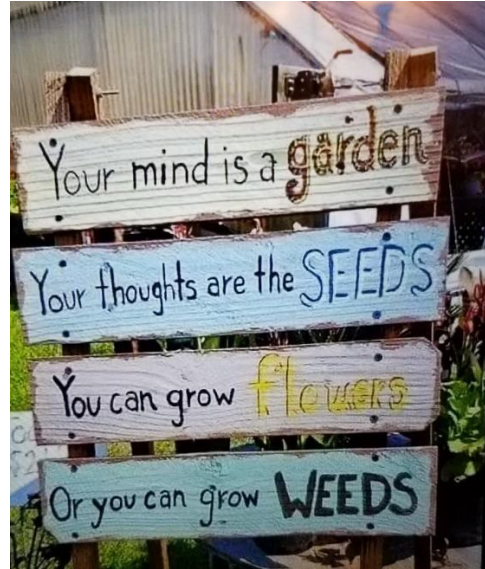
Thanks for all that you do to make Tollgate such a special place!
Roy

Photos provided by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News



**Notes from the President
Renee Cottrell**



Greetings Tollgate Garden Volunteers!

April is our jumpstart month for clean-up activities in the gardens. I welcome all teams and AGL's to start assessing the needs in your area so that I may direct other interested active members to the tasks you need done. We are keeping our gardening members safe with distanced assigned activities and instructions for guidance when needed. Enjoy this outdoor activity as you learn more about the variety our garden sites have to offer. Let me know your area of interest and we will try to find matching garden assignments. Email me at rmcottrell4@att.net or leave a phone/text message at 248 251-4505. Thank you in advance for your interest and efforts.

April 15th is the deadline for inactivating Tollgate Garden Volunteer memberships not yet renewed for this year. Due to Covid we had been carrying over information from 2019 membership rolls and need to streamline at this time. If you wish to remain a member in order to be kept on the email lists that provide you with information pertinent to your selected membership status, **PLEASE RENEW NOW**. If you are unsure if you have renewed for 2021 or find yourself no longer getting our emails,

please contact Angie at
tollgatemembers@gmail.com.

If you are an Active status garden member, I invite you to visit the site and catch all the spring blooms and emergent plants. The hellebores, pulmonaria, spring bulbs and budding spring growth are all over the property to enjoy. Perhaps you will find a niche for your garden enjoyment and talents.

Continue to be safe. Be kind to yourselves and others.

Thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, President
Tollgate Garden Volunteers

The Tollgate Farm News



**VOLUNTEERS
TOGETHER
DIVIDING
GROWING
SHARING**

NURSERY NOTES

Peg Palmer

ECHINACEA (Coneflower) varieties are a popular staple of sunny Michigan gardens, whether the familiar native *E. purpurea* (Purple Coneflower) or one of the multitude of cultivars with different bloom colors, double blooms, compact size or other interesting features. We would love to have any and all of these Echinacea options for sale in the nursery!

***Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'**



Tollgate's Nursery will open for the season on Saturday, April 17 – welcoming donations from all our faithful Tollgate Garden Volunteers! The pop-up will be set up and ready to receive donations from your home garden. ***Following are just a few highlights of our "most needed" varieties:***

FERNS are great accent plants for shade gardens... we have plenty of Ostrich ferns (*Mateuccia struthiopteris*), but are looking for some other popular varieties in the Athyrium genus: *Athyrium-felix-femina* -Lady Fern, *Athyrium niponicum* - Japanese Painted Fern, Athyrium 'Ghost' – Ghost Fern; as well as *Osumdastrum cinnamomeum* (Cinnamon Fern).

Ghost Fern



Nursery Notes continued on Page 5.

The Tollgate Farm News

Nursery Notes continued from Page 4.

GERANIUM (Hardy Geranium) is an attractive native for shady areas, with many cultivars that provide amazing bloom colors and different foliage texture. Do you have a favorite in your garden you would like to share with other Tollgate gardeners and plant sale shoppers?

Geranium 'Max Frei'



GALIUM ODORATUM (Sweet Woodruff) is a reliable groundcover perfect for shady spaces, and the nursery could use lots more of it!



These are just a few highlights from our PLANTS WANTED list to get you thinking about what you might have to donate! Please check the full list online, and review the process to drop off your donations. Links to these directions:

Plants Wanted

Donation Guidelines

SPRING PLANT SALE IS APPROACHING FAST! This year's sale format will be modified somewhat to ensure the safety of all our shoppers as well as the Tollgate Volunteers who work so hard to host the sale. ***Here's what you need to know now:***

PLANT SALE DATES:

SATURDAY, JUNE 12 AND

SUNDAY, JUNE 13

HOURS: 9 am – 2 pm (last appointment begins at 2 pm)

FORMAT: 30-minute shopping appointments reserved in advance online

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Credit Card (scan QR code), CHECK, CASH (exact change only)

Look for more information soon about how to reserve your shopping appointment online!

Joining the Nursery Team is a great way to learn about growing lots of different varieties of plants and contribute to all the Tollgate Gardens through our efforts that raise new plants as well as funds to support the gardens. If you are interested in learning more about the options to join the Nursery Team, email me at: palmermargaretanne@gmail.com.

Photos provided by Peg Palmer

The Tollgate Farm News



The planting season is finally here! The soil is warming and softening, birds are foraging and singing, the view is turning from brown to green, and soon we will have the wonderful Spring burst of colors. And, it is time to start growing wonderful fresh vegetables. We will be busy this month prepping all the beds – removing the covers, early weeding, gently turning the beds, and checking/maintaining the irrigation. This is also a great time to check, clean, and sharpen all our tools.



But best of all, we will begin planting the onion and cabbage transplants from the greenhouse (don't they look great!), as well as direct seeding radishes, carrots, and beets. Since we are still on alert for the final frost day, and need warmer soil temperatures, the turnips, squash, and potatoes will wait until May. We are also trying to avoid an early infestation of potato beetles by planting the potatoes a little later.

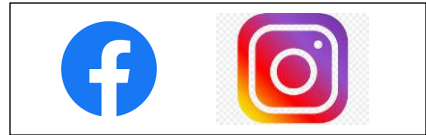
We still need volunteers for Wednesdays and alternate Thursdays, and this is a great way to work the soil, enjoy fresh air, have fun, socialize, get in EMG volunteer hours, and best of all contribute a valuable service for those in need. You do not need to have knowledge or experience growing vegetables, just a passion for gardening. Please contact me (kfitz111794@gmail.com) if you are interested and available – our season starts now and runs through October. We would love to have you join us in the garden!

Think Spring!
Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photos provided by Kathryn Fitzpatrick

The Tollgate Farm News

Tollgate Gardens are on Facebook and Instagram



We are posting photos and information about the gardens on the Tollgate Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ExperienceTollgate>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/msutollgatefarm/>) pages. Tollgate already has a lot of followers on these social media pages, so we can increase awareness of our gardens, educate on the plants in our gardens and maybe encourage some new volunteers.

If you would like to help, please send high resolution photos to Kathy Johnson (kmi@chartermi.net), along with information about the photo like garden name, plant name, and the time of year the photo was taken. Note: photos can be taken over the last few years. If you would like to draft a brief educational text about the plant and its care, please send that also. Kathy will help finalize the post for you and when completed she will coordinate with the Tollgate social media lead to get it published. We would like to have lots of social media posts on the gardens this year!

Example of a recent Instagram posting:



The Tollgate Farm News



**MSU TOLLGATE FARM &
EDUCATION CENTER**

NEW VOLUNTEER INTEREST SESSION & ORIENTATION

**Join staff and volunteers to learn
more about how you can help
support the unique programs and
property that make up MSU Tollgate
Farm during this free Zoom meeting.**

MONDAY APRIL 12TH |

7 PM TO 8 PM

REGISTER AT

[HTTPS://EVENTS.ANR.MSU.ED](https://events.anr.msu.edu)

[U/TOLLGATEVOLUNTEERS/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/u/tollgatevolunteers/)

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Extension

The Tollgate Farm News

ANIMALS AROUND THE FARM



Photos provided by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

AROUND THE POND



Photos provided by David Komraus

The Tollgate Farm News

GROWING IN THE GREENHOUSE



Photos provided by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

AROUND THE FARM



Top left photo provided by Marilyn Alimpich
Top right photo by Renee Cottrell,
All remaining photos by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

TREES & SHRUBS AROUND THE FARM



Top and bottom right photos provided by Renee Cottrell
Remaining photos by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

“Gardens and flowers have a way of bringing people together, drawing them from their homes.” Clare Ansberry



Photo provided by Roy Prentice

Please Renew Your
Membership for
2021

(Form is attached to the end of this newsletter.)

Thank you! Angie Carter

The Tollgate Farm News

Take a Tollgate Picture

Next time you are volunteering at Tollgate, consider taking some pictures for the Tollgate calendar. The preferred format is jpeg, landscape files.

Send photo files at full or actual size in separate emails, if necessary, to Larry Bolam at TollgateCalPics@gmail.com

Spring is a magical time at Tollgate. Think about capturing that beauty in a photo for the Tollgate calendar.



Photos on left provided by Renee Cottrell
Photos on right provided by Roy Prentice

Tollgate Volunteer Information

Activity Days

Group work activity days remain on hold. We have scheduled garden work focus "weeks" that will begin on each indicated Saturday date of calendar through the following Friday. Renee will work with Area Garden Leaders and interested Active Members on assignments and coordinate garden work in those areas. Teams can continue to work in their respective gardens following the social distancing and volunteer number limits. Renee will continue to coordinate the individual assignments in the gardens.

We strongly recommend you bring your own tools for your garden activities during the pandemic crisis. All tools borrowed from the toolshed **must** be sanitized with a 10% bleach solution prior to returning the items to the toolshed after use.

TIP: If you aren't getting
The Tollgate Farm News email,
check your SPAM folder

**Volunteer Activity Day and
Meeting information:
248-347-3860 Ext. 400**

Garden Tools Available for Use at Tollgate

Spades	Leaf Rakes
Garden Rakes	Garden Hoe
Brooms	Long-Handled Garden Forks
Wheelbarrows	Weed Buckets

Suggested Gardening Implements to Bring from Home as Needed

Trowel	Plant Division Forks
Pruners	Shrub Rake
Loppers	Sun Screen/Insect Repellent
Garden Scissors	Garden Gloves
Hand Saw	Knee Pads
Weeding Implement	

Tollgate Garden Advisory Committee (TGAC)

Farm Manager – Roy Prentice

248-347-3860 Ext.251 prentic1@msu.edu

President..... Renee Cottrell

Vice President Marilyn Alimpich

Secretary..... Dave Komraus

Treasurer..... Karen Harris

Membership..... Angie Carter

PR TBD

Programs..... Jackie Stengel

Hospitality..... Teresa LaRosa

Farm News Editor Nancy Powell

- The TGAC meets virtually on Zoom (until further notice) monthly on **the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM**. All Tollgate Garden Volunteer members are welcome to attend and should contact Roy Prentice for meeting link.
- Contact information for individual TGAC members and Area Garden Leaders (AGL) are available by contacting Roy Prentice to have message or contact forwarded for response. Once site is open to public, contact info can be found in the Garden Binders in the Volunteer Communication Center.
- Tollgate Volunteer Membership is renewed annually. The 2021 Tollgate Garden Volunteer membership is from **January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021**.

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

For general information and questions, contact
Roy Prentice or see Website:
<http://tollgate.msu.edu/volunteering/>

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

VOLUNTEER SIGN IN 2021

LOGGING YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS HELPS US TELL TOLLGATE'S STORY TO THE MSU COMMUNITY

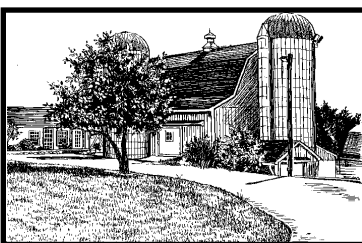
- USING THE CAMERA ON YOUR SMART PHONE, HOVER OVER THE QR CODE
- A LINK WILL APPEAR
- IF NO LINK APPEARS, YOU WILL HAVE TO DOWNLOAD A QR READER APP
- CLICK ON THE LINK TO THE GOOGLE SIGN IN PAGE
- COMPLETE WITH YOUR INFORMATION
- THIS SIGN-IN PROCEDURE DOES **NOT** LOG YOUR HOURS WITH MSU EXTENSION



MSU Tollgate gets a lot of credit for all of the wonderful volunteers that tend the gardens, make maple syrup, and support programming. The farm would not be the unique place that it is without the support of many willing hands. Traditionally, Tollgate has relied on a sign-in sheet in the volunteer center to capture the hours of volunteer service. Many of our volunteers who work in the maple project or distant gardens may not visit the volunteer center when they are on the farm. To capture all of our volunteer hours, we are trying a new recording system. By following the instructions below and scanning the QR code, you can record your Tollgate hours online from anywhere. After you have scanned the code, you can even bookmark the link so that you can access the hours reporting form without the code.

Thank you for making Tollgate such a wonderful place!

Roy



MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers Membership Form

Please legibly print all entries. Thank you.

2021

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ MI

Zip _____ - _____

Name you would like on badge, if needed

Date Submitted _____

Telephone Number

Day _____ - _____

Evening _____ - _____

Email _____

Choose **one only**:

___ **Supporting member:** I wish to support the volunteers and participate in monthly meetings but will **not** be participating *as a volunteer* in garden activities, projects or other events on the site.

___ **Active member:** I plan to participate *as a volunteer* in meetings, garden activities and/or other events or projects on the site and have or will complete the required Volunteer Selection Process.

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 or skills to share.

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**

Email: tollgatemembers@gmail.com

2021 Membership is from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

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 via e-mail.)

In the event of an emergency please notify:

Name

Phone