

The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 27

ISSUE 7

JULY 2021



Cover photo provided by Roy Prentice

MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting on Zoom

**Thursday, July 15, 2021
7:00 PM**

The PolliNation Project

The University of Michigan – Dearborn's Environmental Interpretive Center's PolliNation Project coordinator **Kaitlyn Tatro** will give a presentation, including an overview of the solitary cavity-nesting bees and wasps that use insect hotels in home gardens and an introduction of PolliNation activities in the community. There will be time to answer questions based on your interest, such as plants that attract and provide for hotel residents, citizen science activities, or making your own insect inn.



FUN NOTE: Kaitlin would like attendees to have a penny on hand during her talk!

The goal of the PolliNation Project is to increase habitat and awareness of native bees and wasps through an initiative to promote insect hotels—birdhouses for bees—that support pollinators and conservation. A recent UM-D graduate with a degree in Environmental Science and Economics, Kaitlyn is passionate about taking action to save pollinators facing drastic declines due to habitat loss and fragmentation, pesticides and pollution, and invasive species and diseases.

Online information includes:

[Insect Hotels \(umdearborn.edu\)](https://umdearborn.edu/insect-hotels)

[PolliNation Project \(umdearborn.edu\)](https://umdearborn.edu/pollination-project)

[PolliNation - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

JUL	MEETINGS			AUG	MEETINGS	
6	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00pm		3	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00pm
15	Tollgate Volunteer Mtg – Zoom	7:00pm		19	Tollgate Volunteer Mtg – Zoom	7:00pm
JUL	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES			AUG	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
3	4 th of July Weekend	N/A		7	Heritage/Rockledge Gardens	9:00am
10	Rose Garden/12 Mile Clean-Up	9:00am		14	Rain/Farmhouse/Shade Gdns	9:00am
17	Xeriscape Garden/Pond	9:00am		21	Hosta Garden/Pond	9:00am
24	Children's Garden/Nursery	9:00am		21	Volunteer Appreciation Picnic	TBD
31	Grand Re-Opening Event	2 - 8pm		28	Demo Garden/Nursery	9:00am

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FROM THE TOLLGATE FARM MANAGER

GREETINGS

Roy Prentice

Greetings all,

It has been heartening to see activity returning to the farm. Summer camp started on Monday, July 5, with 20 eager campers arriving to enjoy the grounds. This is a much smaller group than usually attends summer camp. Until a month or so before camp opening, we weren't sure what camp during the pandemic would look like. A short lead time for camp led to difficulties securing staff. We are running our camps with full and part-time staff that we have on-hand, necessitating smaller camps. It is still fun to have kids back on the property!



Photo provided by Roy Prentice



MSU Tollgate Grand Re-opening

The Tollgate staff is in the midst of planning for an end-of-July event, the *MSU Tollgate Farm Grand Re-Opening* scheduled for July 31st. The event is Tollgate's way of formally welcoming the public back to the farm. We are planning entertainment by musicians, Garden/Plant education tables and tours, and an information table showcasing Tollgate volunteering opportunities. Volunteering at the information/education tables qualifies for EMG hours. If you would like to volunteer to help with this event, please see the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F49ABA82BA7FF2-msutollgate1>

You can also come to Tollgate and enjoy our Grand Re-Opening event as an attendee rather than as a volunteer. The event promises to be a lot of fun, with an opportunity to experience aspects of the farm that you may not have seen before if you have confined your activities to the gardens. Pre-registration is required. You can learn more about the event and register to attend at:

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/TollgateOpening/>

Care for the gardens

With the Grand Reopening right around the corner, we want to make sure that the gardens look their best. I need your help at upcoming Saturday workdays. Despite the challenges of the last year, the gardens look pretty good. Thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers who have worked so hard during difficult times to keep the weeds in check. There is still more to do before July 31! Please plan to attend an upcoming Saturday workday. Not available on a Saturday? No problem. Contact myself or Renee and we can set you up with a project area.

Thanks for all that you do for the farm,
Roy

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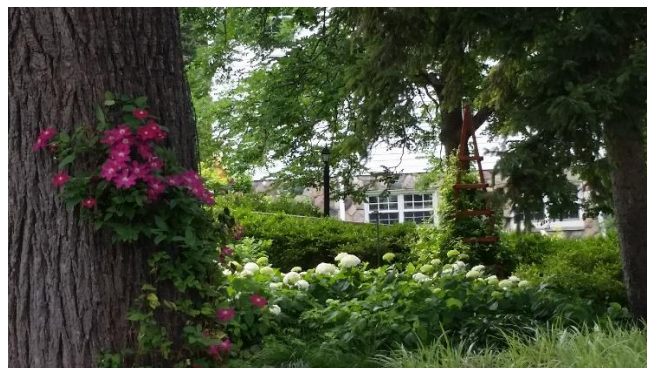
**Notes from the President
Renee Cottrell**

"Just living is not enough," said the butterfly, "one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower."

– Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) Danish Writer

We are very pleased to now be able to meet indoors and outdoors without attendance restrictions. The Saturday group workdays will no longer require registration and "Active" members will continue to get email reminders of those activities.

Our July member's meeting is *anticipated* to be the last Zoom meeting for this garden season. TGAC meetings and the monthly member meetings will return to in-person format. To give all members a chance to become comfortable and transition into larger group meetings we hope to have our August meeting outdoors in the pavilion, September in the big barn and return in the cooler weather to the conference center for our final scheduled October member meeting. We have learned in these past 18 months that having Zoom meetings has allowed some of our members to attend who would not have otherwise driven to the site. Our colder and early months of the year seem particularly appropriate for the on-line format. January, February and March of 2022 will resume Zoom access. We will keep you posted as we implement the technology to bring you in-person and on-line options.



Notes from the President continued on Page 4.

Thanks to all who have been working during this challenging spring and summer to keep up on our garden maintenance and enhance the garden experience for all our returning visitors. Volunteerism is an exceptional contribution to your community of which you should be very proud. Thank you to ALL members who have continued to support our Garden Volunteers organization and Tollgate as a whole. The loss of program opportunities in the past year and a half has greatly impacted the site and your support has been greatly appreciated **and** essential in continuing our TGV mission and the educational objectives of the Tollgate programs. You make Tollgate special.

2021 PLANT SALE SUCCESS-

Thank you to the Nursery Team and the other volunteers that assisted in the by-appointment version of our 2021 Spring Plant Sale. There were plenty of good-looking plants in stock for both days of the event and many large purchases that helped make for a very successful garden fund raising event. The Team enjoyed the more measured attendance with more one-on-one customer contact time to provide education on appropriate plant selections. The customers were generous in their compliments and purchases. Congratulations on a job well done!

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Notes from the President continued from Page 3.

This month will be our public **Tollgate Grand Re-opening event on July 31st** that will showcase our projects in the gardens, fields, animal husbandry. The event has planned garden and CSA field tours, walks, hayrides, 4-H animals, concessions and more. We welcome any “Active” garden volunteer members who can assist in the event. Some of these positions are eligible for EMG hours, others are not but are still essential for a smooth event. This is an afternoon-into-evening event with 2 shifts to work. There are plenty of ways to contribute to this event.

We still need:

- Assist with garden clean up during the upcoming weeks - weeding, deadheading for best presentation
 - Set up for Fri. 7/30/21 at 9:00 am
 - Garden volunteers to staff info table to meet and greet guests, talk about the gardens and volunteer opportunities
 - Parking assistants to direct traffic
 - Check-in support
 - MSUE activity table assistance
 - Miscellaneous support assistance
- Please see the link below for shift details and opportunities to volunteer.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f49aba82ba7ff2-msutollgate1>

Other events: At this time, we are anticipating going forward with the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic planned for **August 21st** and the Fall Plant Sale on **Sept. 18th**. Keep a look out for further updates, emails and details as these dates get closer.

Area Garden Teams- All expanded budget requests for garden area expenditures should be submitted for TGAC approval ASAP. Any receipts and a reimbursement form for your Tollgate garden purchases should be submitted as soon as possible so we can reconcile actual expenses against budgeted expenses. Contact me if you need a form and instructions.



As always, thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.

Renee Cottrell, AMG
TGV President
rmcottrell4@att.net

Photos on pages 3 and 4 provided by Renee Cottrell

The Tollgate Farm News



**VOLUNTEERS
TOGETHER
DIVIDING
GROWING
SHARING**

NURSERY NOTES

Peg Palmer

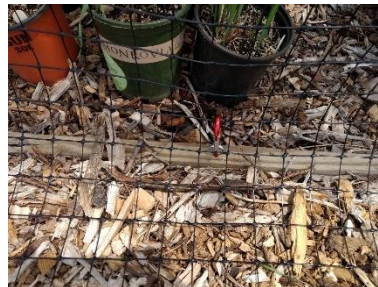
THANKS FOR SUPPORTING OUR SPRING PLANT

SALE! Your donations were just what we needed to stock the nursery with a lot of great plants for the sale. The process to participate in the sale was a bit more complicated because reservations were required to manage the number of shoppers in the nursery at one time. We extended the sale hours to Sunday, in addition to the usual Saturday hours, so we could offer sale reservations to more customers, and all the slots were filled well before the sale! One benefit of controlling the number of shoppers is that we were able to provide more personal service to help them find the right plants for their garden.



We also offered a free plant with each 3 purchased (limit of 2 free). Offering bonus plants isn't a new idea – but we took a different approach this year, stocking the “bonus plant” area with our best-looking plants with a large supply – enticing folks to buy that 3rd or 6th plant to get 1 or 2 free. Color-coded holding areas were set up with stakes and rope around the large tree between the Nursery and the old orchard. It was easy for customers to remember that their plants were in the pink, blue, orange, green or yellow area, and nursery workers were able to quickly place plant selections there as customers kept shopping. We were able to help about 100 families find good plants for the places they needed to fill in their home garden, and that's what the Nursery is all about! The success of this sale will help to bolster Tollgate's Garden Fund, with sales at approximately \$5,500! This money goes toward purchases of soil, fertilizer, mulch and all the other things needed to keep Tollgate gardens looking great!

DEER FENCING WAS INSTALLED around the perimeter of the Nursery just before the sale! This is a huge benefit, protecting our plants from deer, and likely providing some deterrence to other animal pests. It required a unique design (provided by Farm Manager Roy Prentice) that would provide full access to the Nursery from all points on plant sale day and limited but efficient access for the Nursery team and other volunteers on workdays. The deer fence is hung on heavy wires attached high on the wooden trellis supports with large carabiner clips (like a shower curtain).



It is also held in place with clips at the bottom – preventing deer from lifting the fence with their nose and sneaking in under the fence. Heavy metal swing gates at the center aisle on each of the 4 sides of

the nursery allow easy access for Nursery workers anytime as well as for other Tollgate volunteers on scheduled workdays. With these gates closed, there is a secure barrier against deer entering the nursery!



On Plant Sale days, when access to every walking path is required for larger numbers in the nursery, the entire deer fence can be rolled back after the lower clips are removed. Our recent Spring Sale was a great test run - Roy's ingenious design passed the test with flying colors! And having this deer protection in place in the weeks prior to the sale made a big difference!

Joining the Nursery Team is a great way to learn about growing lots of different plants and contribute to all the Tollgate Gardens through our efforts that raise new plants as well as funds to support the gardens. There are lots of opportunities to learn and do new things – like installing removeable deer fence on a shower rod – but more often learning to identify and grow a wide variety of perennials! If you are interested in more information about the options to join the Nursery Team, email me at: palmermargaretanne@gmail.com

Carabiner photo provided by Peg Palmer
Other photos by Roy Prentice

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We had our first harvest of the season with 22 lbs. of beautiful radishes and 63 lbs. of cabbage with enormous leaves, both of which were delivered to Feed the Need in Novi – check out the bounty. We will finish harvesting the cabbage this month, and plant beets in the cabbage beds. The row covers have been

effective in keeping down the cabbage moth damage, however it is amazing to watch the moths appear as soon as the covers are off. Sluggo seems to be doing

the job minimizing the slug damage to the cabbage, and it is the only product we use in the garden to deter insect damage.



The garlic will be harvested this month and hung to dry. We are still finding scapes, but the garlic tops are starting to brown. Our bean plants are climbing the trellis and putting out plenty of flowers. The onions, beets, and carrots are all flourishing. The squash plants are filling in, and hopefully the powdery mildew that is already present

will not do too much damage before we have squash flowers and fruit. Even the turnips have emerged and filled in the turnip bed.



plants. I have included pictures of the eggs, young, and adult beetles which we are battling every day.



In addition to the prolific growth of the vegetable plants, we have had a record year for potato beetles, which are highly effective at reproducing and demolishing potato

If the beetles succeed in consuming more than 30% of the potato plant, we will need to harvest early, as the plant will not continue to support potato growth.



The best method of managing the beetles is manual removal, and the tenacious PAR Garden team has already accounted for hundreds of snacks for the chickens.

We are also providing greens and damaged leaves for the livestock – especially the ducks and rabbits, so there is little waste. All our weeds are added to the compost pile and reused once they have decomposed. It is nice to be able to contribute not only to food security, but to enriching the livestock options and providing fodder for the compost that we use every year.

The team is doing a great job keeping the garden as free as possible of weeds and non-beneficial insects, and we are proud of how far we have come since last year. We hope that many come to visit during the Tollgate Farm Re-Opening Celebration this month to check out not only the PAR Garden, but all the beautiful and bountiful surrounding gardens. Happy Gardening!

- Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photos provided by Kathryn Fitzpatrick

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A Tollgate Mystery – What Happened?

There was a mystery in the MSU Tollgate CSA vegetable field recently. The fabric row covers were torn and some of the irrigation piping had been damaged, almost as if someone (or something!) had been playing with it. A walk around the field revealed a gap under the back gate that looked like the probable entry point for the culprit. Fortunately, Tollgate owns a trail camera. The camera was mounted on a fence post in the hope of revealing the perpetrator(s) of the malicious activities in the CSA vegetable fields. Turn the page to see if we solved the mystery!



Photos provided by Roy Prentice

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A Tollgate Mystery – Solved!

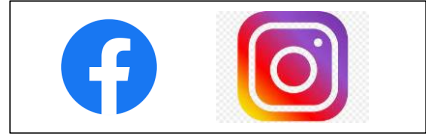
The trail cam placed near the hole under the gate revealed who was damaging the row covers and playing with the irrigation pipe. Coyotes are seen around the property on occasion. Evidently, they discovered that there are rodents to be had hiding under the row covers. Gwen Schaller, Tollgate's CSA field manager, commented that she wasn't sure that she wanted to improve the fencing around the CSA field to exclude the coyotes. "Sure, they tear the row covers, but our vole population is way down!" Evidently the CSA crew has discovered a new biological and totally organic rodent control method.



Photos provided by Tollgate Trail Cam

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Tollgate Gardens are on Facebook and Instagram



Share the beauty of Tollgate Gardens 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.

Our posts have been well received and we are increasing the awareness of our gardens, providing education on the plants in our gardens and hopefully encouraging some new volunteers. If you would like to help, please send high resolution photos to Kathy Johnson (kmj@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 Facebook posting:



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AROUND THE XERISCAPE GARDEN



Top row photos provided by Marilyn Alimpich
Middle row and bottom photos by Roy Prentice

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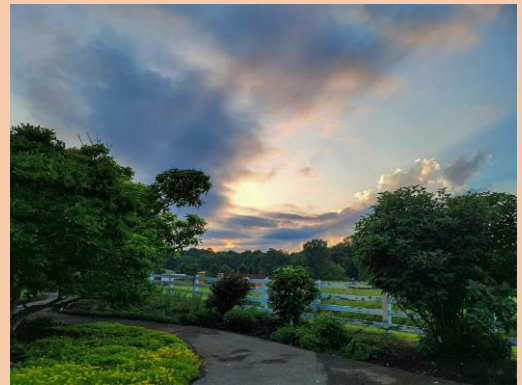
AROUND THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN



Top two row photos provided by Renee Cottrell
Bottom two row photos by Roy Prentice

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AROUND THE DEMO GARDEN



Top row photos provided by Lynette Leroux
Middle row photos by Renee Cottrell
Bottom row photo by Roy Prentice

Featured volunteer – Roy Hybl

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CHICKENS & COWS & SHEEP, OH MY!



Top photo provided by Lynette Leroux
Middle and bottom photos by Roy Prentice

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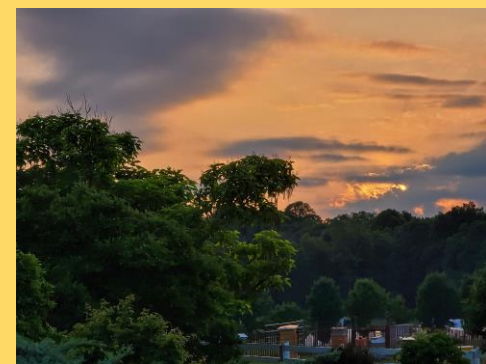
AROUND THE POND



Photos provided by Roy Prentice

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SUNSETS AT TOLLGATE



Photos provided by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News



"What is a weed?

*A plant whose virtues
have never been
discovered."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Photo provided by Lynette Leroux

Fall Coming Attractions!

From this in July:



Photo provided by Roy Prentice

To this in the Fall:



Photo provided online, credit unknown

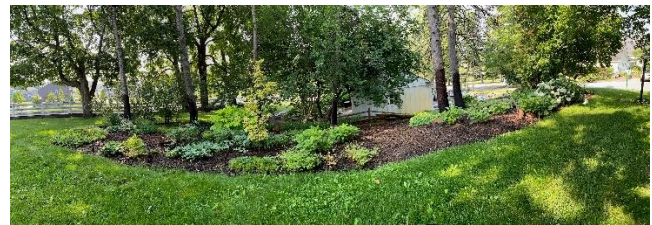
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Take a Tollgate Picture

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

Summer is a beautiful season at Tollgate. Think about capturing that beauty in a photo for the Tollgate calendar.



Top right two photos provided by Lynette Leroux
Middle row photos by Mary Anne Chadwick
Bottom row photos by Roy Prentice

Tollgate Volunteer Information

Activity Days

Effective with the July 10, 2021 workday, the Saturday group workdays no longer require advanced registration.

- Activity Day hours are 9:00 am – Noon, unless otherwise noted on the Activities section of the first page of the newsletter.
- Lunch will be provided on scheduled workdays.
- Active members will continue to get email reminders of these activities.

We strongly recommend you bring your own tools for your garden activities. 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

Communications Kathy Johnson

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