



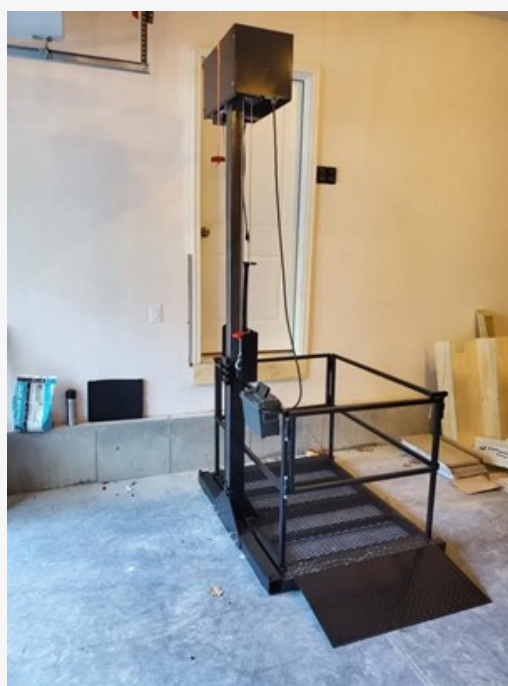
MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU Tollgate Farm March 2021

Check out our new MSU Tollgate Kid's Corner in the Opportunities and Spotlights!

Upcoming Events

- [MSU Learning From the Farm to You](#): From the Farm-to-School Virtual Programs Now Available
- [Virtual Sustainable Stewards Series for Ages 15-19](#): Starting March 26th
- [Virtual S.T.E.A.M. Break Camp \(Spring\) for Grades 1-4](#): March 29th - April 2
- [Steward Sustainability Leadership Institute for Ages 15-19](#): Winter-Summer 2021
- [Virtual Stewards Series](#): Thursdays, April 15 and June 3
- [MSU Extension Winter 2021 Virtual School Garden Sessions](#): March 17, March 31, April 14, 2021
- [MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening Series Sponsored by Bordine's](#): Second Saturdays 10 am, April 10th – September 2021
- Save the Date: Virtual General Volunteer Orientation April 12th at 7 PM
- [Evenings in the Garden: Spring Sessions](#): April 15th & April 29th, 2021
- [4-H Virtual Interactive Follow the Nutrient Trail \(Grades 3-5\)](#): weeklong from April 26-30 OR weekly April 8-May 6
- [4-H Virtual Interactive Plants and Their Partners \(Grades 1-3\)](#): weeklong from May 3-7 OR weekly May 4-June 1
- [Goat Shouts Are Back!](#) All Year Long
- [Building Leaders: A Summer Leadership Adventure for Ages](#)



Give Green Day on March 16th: Give to the MSU Tollgate Farm Wheelchair Accessibility Initiative

This March 16th is Give Green Day and our campaign this year is for the MSU Tollgate Farm Wheelchair Accessibility Initiative. At Tollgate we provide hands-on experiences for youth and adults in a production agriculture setting that connect people to the source of their food and the natural world. Unfortunately, individuals with limited mobility because of a wheelchair or walker have difficulty participating in these opportunities.

[13-19: Summer 2021](#)

- [In Person Summer Camp 2021: Complete the Survey](#)
- Specialty Camps: Winged Wonders, Vet Science, Outdoor Adventure: July 12-16, July 27-31 and August 16-20, 2021

News & Announcements

- Toggenburg Goat Kid Update: A Busy Saturday
- [March Oakland County 4-H Newsletter](#)

Opportunities & Spotlights

- [MSU Tollgate Kid's Corner March Maple Sugaring Activity](#)
- [Join Our Summer Camp Team: Now Hiring](#)
- [Staff and Volunteer Spotlights March 2021](#)
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#)

This project will support people with limited mobility in accessing the fields, woods, and pastures of MSU Tollgate Farm. By supporting this project, you will make it possible for people with limited mobility to engage with our programs. We could purchase several different pieces of equipment that will improve access for wheelchairs depending on the amount of funding raised. Specialized rollable walk-way mats (\$1,000-\$3,000), a wheelchair lift for our hay-wagons (\$3,500), or a custom-built trailer are all options for improving accessibility at the farm (\$7,000-\$10,000).

GIVE NOW

Upcoming Events



FREE MSU Tollgate Farm Virtual Sustainable Stewards Series: Fridays, March 26, April 23, May 21, 4 - 5 p.m. EST

What does sustainability mean, and why is it important to you? MSU Tollgate Farm is offering this FREE virtual 3 part Sustainable Stewards Series to explore how you can be a sustainability steward with your peers and community partners. These panel discussions will help you prepare for college and career as you discover how sustainability will impact your future in meaningful ways.

Led by college students and local community partners and moderated by staff, these virtual panel discussions will be followed by Q & A and peer-to-peer discussion.

Becoming a Sustainable Steward - March 26, 2021 4-5 p.m. EST – MSU Sustainable Spartans

How might sustainability play a role in your future career? Join members of the MSU Sustainable Spartans to explore principles of sustainability, and how they can inform and influence every career and field of study choice you may make in your upcoming journey.

Solve Climate by 2030: Climate Solutions for Michigan - April 7, 2021 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. EST - MSU Sustainability and Partners

Hear from experts and state leaders as they share ambitious, but feasible actions, which could be taken to combat climate change in Michigan. Part of the international Solve Climate by 2030 initiative, join one of over 100 webinars across the world highlighting how



ambitious state and local action can put us on the path to solving climate change by 2030, and how you can get involved. Panelists: Julie Brixie, Michigan Representative, House District 69; Kevin Blaser, Business Growth/Development & Energy Specialist, Migizi Economic Development Company of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan; Will Lawrence, Co-Founder of the Sunrise Movement. Registration specific for Solve Climate available at:

<https://bit.ly/SolveClimateMI21>

Water World - April 23, 2021 4–5 p.m. EST – Erin Cassidy and members of Friends of the Rouge Friends of the Rouge seek to restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River Watershed through individual and community actions to assure that its natural, economic, and recreational value enhances the quality of life in the ecosystem. Along with other teen leaders and Friends of the Rouge staff and volunteers, explore issues facing this local watershed and the work of FOTR during this panel discussion.

Climate Science Basics: Climate Science and YOU - May 21, 2021 4-5 p.m. EST - Lindsey Kemmerling, MSU PhD Candidate, MSU Kellogg Biological Station What do you know about how climate change impacts you and how you impact climate change? Explore climate science and climate change with PhD candidate Lindsey Kemmerling as she shares climate science basics to help you build your own knowledge and understanding.

Register early to save your space. All are welcome!

Participants under 18 need parental consent to participate in this program.

REGISTER HERE

S.T.E.A.M. Break Camp (Spring) Registration Open

Join us virtually as we transition from winter to spring and dive deep into all the wonderful things that the new season brings. Each day offers a new theme with a hands-on STEAM activity that will get your child thinking and creating! From learning about the kid goats being born on the farm and hatching chicken eggs to dissecting an owl pellet-- this is a virtual learning adventure your child doesn't want to miss! This camp takes place March 29th - April 2nd and is open to campers 1st-4th grade. Learn more and register below.



REGISTER HERE

**Peer-to-Peer Network for Teens
Ages 13-19: Virtual Stewards**

Series



MSU Tollgate Farm is offering a virtual collaborative youth-led series for past, present, and future stewards and stewards-in-training ages 13-19. This is a safe place to connect and explore resiliency and growth as youth leaders during this time. Virtual sessions include a chance to relax, engage in peer-to-peer conversation, have fun team-building, and prepare for future leadership opportunities. Thursdays, April 15 and June 3, 4 - 5 p.m. EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Virtual Evenings in the Garden

Our popular Evenings in the Garden series is now virtual. These sessions are held on Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. All sessions will be held digitally. A video link will be sent prior to the session and a recording will be made available after the meeting with the exception of February 25th session.

April 15 - Dr. Bert Cregg, Professor of Horticulture and Forestry at MSU and Christmas Tree Extension Specialist: Christmas Tree Production in Michigan

April 29 - Dr. Wynne Wright, Associate Professor, Department of Community Sustainability at MSU - A New Way to Farm: Why is Lavender Farming Growing in Michigan?

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Save the Date: Virtual General Volunteer Orientation April 12th at 7 PM

Want to volunteer at MSU Tollgate Farm? Are you already a MSU Tollgate volunteer? We have a virtual event for new and veteran volunteers to learn more about the Farm, our staff, programs, and operations. Learn about all the different areas available for volunteering from educational programs, horticultural gardens, sustainable agriculture, livestock, and so much more. Save the date for this virtual orientation. More information coming soon! Want to learn more about volunteering at Tollgate? Click the button below.

MSU Tollgate Farm HomeGrown Gardening – Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces

Join Sarah Rautio and Rebecca Krans and the HomeGrown Gardening Series **Saturday, April 10, 10 am, 2021** to learn how to successfully grow and harvest fresh vegetables in small spaces using creative and innovative ways. Join us to discover the tremendous variety of containers, square foot gardening, and ornamental vertical techniques a gardener can use, as well as the proper soil and plant care needed to ensure success. The series, sponsored by Bordine's, was designed to support and encourage home vegetable gardeners. Register for one or more sessions.



REGISTER HERE

Learning Fresh from the Farm to You: 4-H Virtual Interactive Embryology Adventure for 1st Grade



This spring, students will explore how a chicken grows from an egg to a chicken. They will answer the questions: How does the life of the egg, chick, and chicken develop? How are the adult and young alike yet different? How does a chick and a chicken use its behavior and parts to survive, grow, meet their needs? Aligned with literacy, math, and Next Generation Science standards, Tollgate's virtual interactive programs utilize inquiry place-based learning and interaction with the farm and farm educators. Students virtually visit the chicken coop and barns to investigate science phenomena taking place on the farm. Interactive sessions, recorded virtual farm visits, accompanying journal pages, and blog are included. Check out the blog from our early elementary trees program [here](#).

A financial aid process is available. Teachers may request this farm-to-school visit or others below. Financial aid process is [available](#). Questions? Email [Ellen Koehler](#).

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

**Virtual Follow the Nutrient Trail
(Grades 3-5) April 26-30 weeklong
OR April 8-May 6 weekly**

Thursdays

What is this Tollgate chickens doing here? Does your 3-5 grader want to join us to explore how these chickens and other animals on the farm depend on other living things to survive?

Join us for MSU Tollgate Farm 4-H Virtual Interactive Follow The Nutrient Trail Series this April. With a weeklong or weekly(with an after school time slot) option, students follow the nutrient trail of consumers, producers, and decomposers as we meet our goats, chickens, and red wiggler friends, the worms! Students will interact with Tollgate Farm staff as they question, hypothesize, experiment, analyze data, conclude and question again through hands-on STEAM challenges.



[REGISTER HERE](#)



Virtual Plants and Their Partners (Grades 1-3) May 3-7 weeklong OR May 4-June 1 weekly Tuesdays

Do you have a K-3rd grader interested in plants? Do they want to explore, how plants depend on their parts and on other living things to help them survive?

Join us for MSU Tollgate Farm 4-H Virtual Interactive Plants and Their Partners Series this May 2021! Two options for a weeklong or weekly series. Students will explore plant structure and function and what plants need to grow while visiting the garden, greenhouse, orchard and fields, pond area, and animal barn. Interactive sessions and STEAM design and build activities help students explore how they can make a positive difference in the world around them through plants!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Goat Shout-Outs are Back!

Send a fun message to a loved one or friend for their special occasion with the help of the MSU Tollgate goat herd. Write a brief custom message and a staff member will craft a 30 second private video link from our goats to your recipient. Messages like, "Happy Birthday Jack. You are no longer a kid!" or "Congratulations on your graduation from doe and buck!", are a perfect way to share some love. Requests will be fulfilled within 7

business days and will be sent by email. All proceeds from the \$20 fee go to supporting the care of livestock at the farm.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)



Winter 2021 Virtual School Garden Education Sessions

Michigan State University Extension is offering a free Winter 2021 Virtual School Garden Education series for formal and informal educators including school and community garden organizers. This series of six interactive, educational garden sessions will be held every other Wednesday starting February 3, 2021 to April 14, 2021 from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. By registering for the entire series, you will be able to attend each session using the same link. Please contact [Kristine Hahn](#) with any questions.

The Next Session on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 4:00 pm: Cool Weather Crops and Trellis Demonstration with Kristine Hahn, Extension Educator and Deirdre Hope, MSU Extension Master Gardener Coordinator.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

MSU Tollgate Farm Stewards Teen Leadership Program Calling all 13-19 year olds!

The MSU Tollgate Farm Stewards Teen Leadership Program offers teens a chance to mentor and lead at camp while gaining valuable leadership and life skills. Stewards-in-Training (13-14 years old) and Stewards (15-19 years old) assist the educational leaders and serve as role models for campers and peers. Fun adventures await teens as they make new friends while developing a deeper understanding of the farm and what it means to be a leader.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

**MSU TOLLGATE FARM
STEWARDS TEEN
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

Farm - Friends - Fun

[RESERVE YOUR SPOT HERE](#)



MSU Tollgate Farm Stewards Sustainability Leadership Institute for Ages 15-19

For ages 15-19 who love adventure, SSLI is designed to be a fun and life-changing stewardship experience which includes virtual sessions on sustainability, an outdoor team-building experience, leadership roles at camp, a mentorship model, a capstone sustainability action project, and a certificate of completion. Great on college applications, this Tollgate stewards leadership helps you make a positive difference in the world around you. For more info, email [Ellen Koehler](mailto:Ellen.Koehler).

RESERVE YOUR SPOT HERE

2021 Summer Camp Update

We are currently dreaming of hot summer days filled with kids exploring and learning outside at our farm. However, we are still waiting for approval from the University to host in-person programs on our farm. Until we have a better understanding of the timeline and what will be approved, it is impossible for us to provide a definite plan of what summer programs will look like for us this year. We will continue to update you as we learn more, however, at the time all we can offer is hope. We understand this puts you, as a parent/caregiver, in a tough position and understand the importance of camp for your child. Despite this uncertainty, we are still offering this interest application as a way to gauge interest in our hopeful summer schedule. If summer camp programs are able to move to forward, pending approval to return to in-person programming from the University, we will give those who fill out this application early-bird access to our registration. Fill our your interest application with the button below.

INTEREST APPLICATION



Specialty Camps: Winged Wonders, Vet Science, Outdoor Adventure: Save the Dates!

Specialty camps at MSU Tollgate Farm are designed with the slightly older camper in mind and involve challenge and adventure as well as opportunities for leadership development. Young

July 12-16, 2021

MSU Kellogg Bird Sanctuary
and
MSU Tollgate Farm

Winged Wonders Camp



Our Favorite Birds and Birding Stories



MSU TOLLGATE FARM

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teens and pre-teens, be sure to mark the following dates for these adventures!

- Winged Wonders (ages 10-14), July 12-16
- Vet Science (ages 12-15), July 27-31
- Outdoor Adventure (ages 12-15), August 16-20

MSU Tollgate Farm awaits word about the timing of the return of our in-person programming. Summer camp and stewards programming will depend on University COVID-19 guidelines.

News and Announcements

Updates from the Sustainable Agriculture Team

In a record amount of time, the 2021 Summer CSA has been filled! We are excited to be providing fresh, local and seasonal vegetables to 200+ families in our community!

If you missed signups for the Summer CSA but want to be put on the contact list for Fall CSA registration, please email

MSUE.TollgateCSA@campusad.msu.edu

With this sunny and warm weather, we have been getting a jumpstart on preparing our fields for spring plantings. For us this includes covering fields with opaque tarps as a form of weed management (occultation), lightly tilling fields so as to incorporate organic matter and disturb emerging weeds, removing rocks and large debris, and doing general maintenance of equipment and fencing. In a few weeks we will be planting spring greens, turnips and radishes out in the fields!

In the greenhouse, our transplant production is moving full steam ahead. So far we have seeded alliums (leeks, onions and scallions), kohlrabi and bell peppers for our caterpillar tunnels. And in the coming weeks we will be seeding kale, collards, pac choi, cabbage, head lettuce, celery, celeriac, beets, tomatoes, eggplant, and more peppers! This is definitely one of the most exciting times of years on the farm!



March is for Maple: Maple Syrup Season 2021 is Underway

MSU approved limited use of the MSU Tollgate sugar shack in accordance with CDC guidelines and our maple sugaring volunteers were very excited to get the go ahead. The season started slowly with a big snow in late



February that iced the woods and sap lines. Sunny weather and warming temperatures roused our sleepy maple friends and now the sap has started to move. A recent day produced 600 gallons of sap! The Reverse Osmosis machine is a huge help. The RO machine extracts water from the sap and concentrates sugars. The enriched sap is then sent to the evaporator for final cooking. The RO reduces the time that the sap spends in the evaporator by 60% or more saving time and firewood. So far the season has produced 70 gallons of maple syrup. With up to three weeks left before it is done, who knows just how much syrup 2021 will yield. Of course, none of this would be possible without our amazing maple volunteers. This year our maple volunteers have logged more than 320.5 hours at the Farm! If you get the chance to sample some Tollgate maple syrup, be sure to think of them and all their hard work.

Toggenburg Goat Kid Update: A Busy Saturday

Goat kid season has begun at MSU Tollgate Farm! Saturday, March 13th, three of our does all went into labor on the same day. Between them Ivy, Angel, and Eva gave birth to 6 kids, 4 bucklings and 2 doelings. The relay of births were assisted by our Interim Livestock Coordinator, Sam Stokes, Mary Hutka, the leader of the Tollgate Farm 4-H Club, and other volunteers. Can't get enough goat kid photos? Visit the Tollgate Farm 4-H Club's [Facebook](#) for updates.



Oakland County
Youth & Families

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension

March 2021

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Importance of Family Engagement

Family engagement helps schools and community agencies set children and families up for success. When you hear the words family engagement, you might imagine a family sitting, laughing and playing together. Positive family experiences are crucial to a child's healthy development and learning, but family engagement goes far beyond the four walls of a family home. According to the National Association for Family School and Community Engagement (NAFSE), family engagement is:

- A shared responsibility involving schools and other community agencies engaging families in meaningful ways to support the learning and development of children.
- Continuous, meaning it extends past childhood and throughout a parent-child relationship, even as children reach adulthood.
- Not locational, meaning it takes place in multiple settings including at home, in school or other learning environments, as well as other community programs.

Many schools, after school programs and other community agencies are looking to build a strong community focused on engaging youth and families together.

Why is family engagement important?

According to NAFSE, research shows that parental or family engagement in a child's education can improve their test scores, attendance, social skills, relationships, behavior and how a child feels about school. Why is family engagement associated with such positive outcomes? Family engagement works because it creates:

- Connected kids. Family engagement helps kids feel connected to their caregivers, families and communities. Kids who are connected feel safe, secure, supported and are ready to learn.
- Connected adults. Family engagement helps parents and other caregivers feel connected and tuned into their children and communities. When adults are tuned in and feel supported by schools and other agencies, they feel connected to their child and more prepared to support their child.
- Connected schools or institutions. When schools or other agencies are connecting and engaging with families, parents and children, they are getting valuable information about what families need, what strengths families have and how their programs are working.
- Fuel! Family engagement events and activities are supposed to be just that, engaging! When families spend time having fun together, they create strong bonds and build trust together.

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.

[READ MORE](#)

Opportunities and Spotlights

MSU Tollgate Kid's Corner

Do you have kids at home looking for some fun hands-on seasonal activities? We have you covered! Each month we will feature a seasonal activity from the farm. March is maple sugaring season and we have a fun sugar maple identification activity. Use the worksheet to learn how to identify a sugar maple and then get outside and see if you can find one! If you find one of these belly buttons or old tap holes, it's usually a clue it is a maple and someone has been tapping it for maple sugaring!

[GET THE ACTIVITY](#)



Join Our Summer Camp Team!

Do you love spending your summers outdoors? Do you have a passion to inspire and educate the future leaders of the world? Are you pursuing/have pursued a degree in natural sciences, agriculture or education? MSU Tollgate Farm Summer Camp is now hiring 9 seasonal full-time summer positions. Summer camp isn't just for kids, join our team and apply today.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Staff and Volunteer Spotlights March 2021

Curious about everyone who works at MSU Tollgate Farm? Every Monday on our Facebook and Instagram we feature a staff member or volunteer. The last month we have featured Mary Wilson, the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program State Leader.

[READ MORE](#)

MEET OUR STAFF



Mary Wilson:
MSU Extension Master Gardener Program
State Leader

Interested in Volunteering at Tollgate?

We are grateful and appreciate our volunteers at MSU Tollgate Farm. Would you like to volunteer at Tollgate?



Check out the steps to become part of the Tollgate volunteer team.

[LEARN MORE](#)

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center
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