



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

# MSU Tollgate Farm March 2022

## Upcoming Events

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- [MSU Tollgate Farm Hybrid HomeGrown Vegetable Gardening Series 2022: Next Session April 9th at 10 AM EST](#)
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**“Tollgate is a place where I can get my hands dirty, grow as a person, and give back to my community.” Volunteer, Angie Carter**

MSU Tollgate Farm could not run without the hard work and enthusiasm of our many volunteers. Tollgate is fortunate to have not only a large pool of volunteers, but a diverse group of people of different ages, physical abilities, backgrounds, and skills. We are forever grateful to all our volunteers, past and present, who have made MSU Tollgate Farm the gem it is today. As the spring approaches, we invite everyone to join us as volunteers.

Why volunteer at Tollgate? MSU Tollgate Farm provides visitors non-formal learning for children, families, and adults, offering the unique opportunity to experience agriculture hands-on in an urban environment. Located in the heart of

- [An Update on our 2022 Camp Season](#)
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## Opportunities & Spotlights

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- [MSU Tollgate Kid's Corner: Felted Wool Acorn Necklace Activity](#)
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Novi, Michigan, we provide visitors with experience they might not otherwise have in Metro Detroit. As a volunteer, you can help contribute to our mission by helping us provide high quality educational programming, beautiful gardens, vegetables, and so much more!

Although garden volunteers are always appreciated and make up most of our adult volunteer team, we also have opportunities in many other areas. One of our volunteers commented that “It’s a fabulous place to volunteer-so many varied opportunities to help out on the farm.” Volunteers at Tollgate can also volunteer with our sustainable agriculture team as they operate our Community Supported Agriculture Program and learn about agriculture in a hands-on setting. We also have opportunities to join our maple sugaring volunteers in harvesting and boiling sap to make maple syrup and sharing their passion and knowledge with visitors. Are you passionate about education? Volunteer with the education staff and help out on community events, school programs, and summer camps. We also have volunteer opportunities with Tollgate Farm’s 4-H Club. Volunteer opportunities can be one-time events like Maplefest or Pumpkifest, or long-term opportunities throughout the year. We can find any opportunity that fits your schedule and interest.

Volunteers at MSU Tollgate will quickly find themselves as part of the Tollgate Farm community. But don’t listen to us, listen to our volunteers, one of whom said: “the family of Tollgate volunteers make you feel welcomed and valued from the very start!”

Ready to volunteer at MSU Tollgate Farm? Join us on April 12th 7-8 PM EST via Zoom for our New Volunteer Interest and Orientation Meeting. This meeting is open to the public and we encourage individuals of all ages, physical abilities, interest level, and skill level to attend. Want to get a head start on the volunteer process? Volunteers 19 years and older are required to complete a volunteer application at Volunteer Central. When asked for the following categories, please indicate the program as Tollgate, volunteer status as Gold, and Specific event to volunteer at as Tollgate. There is something for everyone at MSU Tollgate Farm and we hope you can join our wonderful community of volunteers!

**REGISTER FOR THE VOLUNTEER MEETING**

## Give Green Day is TODAY! Support Under-Served School Field Trips to MSU Tollgate Farm

Schools and students in low-income and traditionally under-served communities often do not have the means to take field trips. Frequently, field trip costs are passed onto students and their families, fees that are difficult to cover for these families. Providing accessible programming for under-served communities is a priority as MSU Tollgate Farm works to create a more equitable and sustainable world. We place an emphasis on recruiting schools from Detroit, Southfield, Livonia, Hamtramck, Dearborn, Pontiac, and other higher needs areas. Want to help support this fund and provide financial support to low income and under-served communities looking to visit MSU Tollgate Farm? Donate today, on Give Green Day, to support this fund.



[GIVE HERE](#)



## Maplefest: Thank You!

Last weekend, we hosted Maplefest! Over 900 visitors came out to the farm to celebrate the magic of maple syrup production in Michigan. Together we explored the Sugar Bush, learned more about the syrup-making process in the Sugar Shack, dived into the history of maple syrup and sugar production, and, of course, enjoyed delicious treats along the way. Thank you all who came out!

A special thank you to all of our amazing volunteers! We are so grateful to have such dedicated and passionate volunteers who donate their time to make events like Maplefest possible.

## Join our Team for an Unforgettable Summer!

Come join our amazing summer camp team and positively impact the lives of the youth that we serve, as you spend your summer teaching, playing, and learning in the great outdoors. Summer Camp is currently looking for experienced candidates for our Summer Camp Educational Leader, Garden Kitchen Leader, and Communications Leader Positions.

Interested in an interview? Don't delay and apply for one or more of these positions today!



[JOIN OUR TEAM AND HAVE AN UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER!](#) ☀️

[LEARN MORE](#)



## MSU Tollgate Farm Summer Specialty Camps: Register Now!

Sign up now for our specialty camps for the slightly older campers ready to take on new challenges! [Financial aid process available](#). Questions? Email Ellen Koehler at [koehle43@msu.edu](mailto:koehle43@msu.edu).



**Winged Wonders Camp: July 11-14: Ages 10-13**  
For the first time since 2019, Tollgate will take summer camp on the road to Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners, MI. Through interactive hands-on learning, become an ornithologist and explore wild and domestic birds and their amazing feats as we hike fields and forests at Tollgate and the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. Gather Monday and Friday at Tollgate for farm-based birding adventures. As field scientists, travel by bus to camp out under the stars at KBS Tuesday-Thursday where you'll meet raptors up close and personal, make new friends, and have lots more fun! For ages 10-13. For a recap of our 2019 Winged Wonders Traveling Camp, check out our [blog](#).



Also still available this summer, Vet Science Camp: August 1-5: Ages 12-14 and Outdoor Adventure Camp: August 15-19: Ages 12-14

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Spaces are Filling for Teens Ages 13-19 to Serve as Stewards and Stewards-in-Training at MSU Tollgate Farm Camp This Summer!

To be a steward means to take care of something or someone. Tollgate Farm stewards care for campers, the farm, the earth, and each other. The stewards program for ages 13-19 builds teens up as they develop resiliency and gain life and leadership skills. Farm stewards form relationships, overcome challenges, and have fun while serving as mentors to campers and assistants to camp staff. What better way to spend part of the summer?

"I most look forward to spending time with the kids and making sure they have an enjoyable camp experience because I remember how much I loved Tollgate when I was a camper!" - Tollgate steward



[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Tollgate Night Hikes Return!**



Night Hikes on the Farm offer visitors the opportunity to explore nighttime on the farm with several fascinating natural science topics. Register for one or more in the series. Fun on the farm for all ages!

### **Sounds in the Darkness**

April 15 - 8 p.m.

Nighttime in the woods is often filled with the sounds of animals announcing their presence. Some seek mates, others warn off competitors, and many are seeking food. We will explore these sounds and see “Who’s Calling” on a stroll around the Tollgate landscape.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## **Hybrid Evenings in the Garden Returns Spring 2022**

Evenings in the Garden is a hybrid lecture series on gardening and environmental topics hosted by regional experts.

**Saturday, March 26, 1:00pm- 3:00pm ET:  
Enduring Perennials with Janet Macunovich  
IN-PERSON PRESENTATION ONLY**

Planted once, enjoyed for years. Learn tricks to grow them: preparing the bed; choosing perennials for particular sites; what to buy, where; displaying them beautifully; adapting standard maintenance to perennials; special maintenance - dividing, winterizing. This class will be equal parts classroom presentation and outdoor demonstration.

Janet Macunovich is a professional gardener, author and educator who has been designing, planting and maintaining gardens and landscapes for nearly 40 years. Since 1989 she has authored nine books, developed and presented seminars and workshops, hosted radio shows and written weekly gardening columns that have helped gardeners in the U.S., Canada, England, Europe and Brazil.

**Thursday, March 31 6:30pm- 8:30pm ET:  
Smart Gardening to Keep Pests Manageable with Dr.  
Nate Walton  
VIRTUAL ONLY**

Garden pests eat our fruits and veggies, ruin our flowers, and sometimes are just plain gross! Fortunately, they are not very smart. By learning about their life cycles, behaviors, and natural enemies, you can implement tactics in your garden to outsmart these pesky critters.

Dr. Nate is an MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator based in Leelanau County. He has a PhD in Entomology from Michigan State University and teaches local residents about insects, pest management, and



environmentally friendly gardening.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



## It's Time for Another Starry Night on the Farm: June 10th, 6 PM – June 11, Noon

Ages 6 and older with their adult, come join us for an astronomical adventure. Explore nighttime on the farm with the Oakland Astronomy Club as we investigate connections between astronomy and agriculture. Camp overnight under the stars as you enjoy astronomy games and activities, s'mores around the campfire, night sky viewing, the Star Lab, morning animal chores, a farm fresh breakfast, and a walking model of the solar system. A fun way to celebrate the end of the school year and the advent of summer!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### 2022 Hybrid HomeGrown Gardening Series: April 9 - Sustainable Methods for Veggie Gardeners - MSU Extension Community Food Systems Educator Kristine Hahn

This session will show you that growing vegetables sustainably is easy and fun just in time for your spring crops! Simple and basic sustainable methods for growing vegetables including three season growing, cover crops, mulch, and pest and disease management will be discussed and demonstrated when possible. All sessions are virtual. Select sessions including July, August, and September are hybrid sessions where participant can come to the farm or choose to zoom in from home. Recorded sessions are provided to registrants. Sign up for individual sessions or the full series.

#### Upcoming Sessions:

**May 14 - Bring Eden to Our Communities with Edible Forests (Hybrid)** Naim Edwards, Director of Detroit-MSU Partnership for Food, Land, and Innovation, MSU Extension Specialist

**June 11 - Phenomenal Phenology: Seasonal Changes, Plant Biology and Observation in the Garden** MSU Extension Consumer



MSU TOLLGATE FARM

## HOMEGROWN GARDENING

A series designed for families and individuals to explore the joys of home vegetable gardening

**July 9 - Adaptive Gardening for Health and Wellbeing: Special 2-hour hybrid workshop from 10 am - noon - Michigan Horticultural Therapy Association Therapists Mary Machon and Cathy Flinton**

[REGISTER HERE](#)



## **Perspectives: Culturally Responsive Place-based Education Series: Next Session on April 7th from 6:30 - 8:30 PM EST**

Formal and non-formal educators are invited to join us for this virtual panel discussion series to explore ways to better incorporate the perspectives of the many communities we serve. Educators will have a chance to deepen their teaching practice in an online space for open conversation and community.

**April 7th: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. ET**

**A Latinx Lens: Incorporating Latinx Perspectives through Place-Based Education**  
How can formal and non formal educators better incorporate Latinx perspectives and voices into our place-based teaching and learning? Where are the intersections of action-oriented place-based education and the Latinx community? Join us for a panel discussion moderated by Marisol Teachworth of GOAL Line in Detroit with panelist Antonio Cosme, member of the beekeepers' cooperative called Southwest Beetroit, an organizer with Black to the Land, founder of Southwest Grows, and Detroit Leadership and Environmental Education Program (D-LEEP) Education Coordinator for the National Wildlife Foundation.

Register for one or more sessions. Recorded sessions are available to registrants. SCECHS are available for teachers. Fees help cover costs and provide stipends for panelists. Group discounts are available for 10 or more.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## **MSU Tollgate Farm Visits 2022: Educational Programs for School and Community Groups**

This spring, join us at MSU Tollgate Farm for the unique

opportunity to experience agriculture hands-on in an urban environment. Whether your 4 years old or 80 years old we have an educational program to you! MSU Tollgate Farm are interactive, educational, and fun and allow visitors to get to know life on the farm up close and personal. This spring, join us for Spring into Farming, Embryology, and Plants and their Partners. [Financial aid process available](#). To learn more about MSU Tollgate Farm visits or schedule an in-person farm visit for your class or group, click the button below or email Ellen Koehler at [koehle43@msu.edu](mailto:koehle43@msu.edu).

REQUEST A FARM VISIT



## Tollgate Goat Meat For Sale

We have a small amount of our pasture-raised goat meat available for purchase on our website! All of our animals are pasture-raised right here on Tollgate Farm in the heart of Novi. The goat meat has been selling fast. Get yours before it's gone! The photo here shows a delicious curry one of our staff made with goat stew meat. Questions? Email our Livestock Coordinator, Scott Markwart at [markwar6@msu.edu](mailto:markwar6@msu.edu)

VISIT THE FARM STORE

## Save the Date: Pumpkinfest October 8-9th 2022

Spring is arriving soon, but we are thinking about fall! Save the dates and join us for our 8th Annual Fall Harvest Festival, Pumpkinfest, October 8-9th, 2022.

Come enjoy the beautiful setting of this history 160 acre farm and take a wagon ride to the pumpkin patch to pick your perfect pumpkin. Food, music, farm animals, educational exhibits, and children's activities all make for a fun fall outing for all ages.

Pumpkinfest is our biggest fundraiser at MSU Tollgate Farm. Proceeds help support educational programming and support schools and individuals who might otherwise not be able to attend programs and camps.

If you're interested in helping Tollgate's mission through a sponsorship or donation, please email Ellen Koehler at [koehle43@msu.edu](mailto:koehle43@msu.edu).

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Don't Miss the Fun! Sign up Now to be a Pumpkinfest Volunteer

Every great event has a team of great people who make it happen. Pumpkinfest has a wonderful team of staff and volunteers who love the Farm and who love to help. There are so many different supporting roles where Tollgate visitors would appreciate your help.

For adults and youth 16 and older, we would like to invite you to consider volunteering in one of the many roles available for this event. Volunteer positions include wagon ride helper, children's strawland attendant, cider pressing helper, sound board operator, food concessions, volunteer headquarters hospitality, welcome center greeter, fishing helper, volunteer musicians, and more!

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

## News and Announcements

### An Update on our 2022 Camp Season

**Winter Camp Reflection:** Thank you for an amazing 2022 Wild Winter Camp experience! Campers were able to learn about the winter

season, tapped a maple tree, started the first seeds of the season as they planted kale in their very own milk jug greenhouse, explored insulation as they made their own amphibian insulated winter home, and so much more! To view the exciting adventures these campers had during the 2 days of Wild Winter Camp visit the camp blog here.

**Spring Break Camp:**  
Camp and Waitlist FULL

**Summer Camp:** All camps are full except speciality camps.

**CAMPS WITH WAITLISTS:** Green Science Adventure Camp, Wild Animal Camp, Nature's Engineers, Earth Explorers Camp, Sprouts Camp, Horse Camp 1: Equine Science, Horse Camp 2: English Riding, Splish Splash Water Camp, Horse Camp 3: Western Riding, and Chopped Food Camp.

If you would like to add your child to an available waitlist email [mundsara@msu.edu](mailto:mundsara@msu.edu) with the following information:

Name of the camp(s) you are interested in, camper name, age, and grade, and a phone number to reach you.

We look forward to seeing your camper(s) at the farm!



## The 2022 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Season Begins

We've officially kicked off the 2022 season! While the temperatures are still a little chilly, the greenhouse is a balmy 70 degrees, and the greenhouse is slowly filling up with vegetable seedlings. Onions, leeks, scallions, kohlrabi, herbs, and our first round of peppers are all starting to emerge from their plugs!

Registration for the 2022 Summer CSA is full, but if you're interested in being on the CSA contact list, email the CSA team at [msue.tollgatecsa@campusad.msu.edu](mailto:msue.tollgatecsa@campusad.msu.edu).

[LEARN MORE](#)

## The New Prentice Family Agriculture Education Award

The Prentice Family Agriculture Education Award is a new award to recognize the

outstanding efforts of a volunteer committed to agriculture education and/or farm operations. Nominated volunteers should have a clear commitment to the farm's mission, "MSU Tollgate Farm strives to cultivate life-long learners and leaders with the skills and knowledge to create a sustainable world" as embodied in one or more of five focus areas. These focus areas include teaching, diversity, equity, and inclusion, industry promotion, capacity building, or operations.

Any MSU Tollgate volunteer, staff member, or program participant may nominate an individual for the award. This award will be presented on a yearly basis when qualified nominees are put forward. The review period will be from July 1st to June 30th with the award presented at the August 20th Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Thank you to the Americana Foundation for their support and suggestion for naming this award. Both the Americana Foundation and the Prentice Family have shown uncommon commitment to the mission of MSU Tollgate Farm and advocacy for agricultural education. To learn more about this award or nominate a volunteer, click the button below.



[LEARN MORE](#)



## Spring Showmanship Training Beginning

The arrival of spring is an exciting time for our 4-H members. Lambing is now complete and more births are anticipated. Goat kidding is expected soon and eggs are in the incubator! This means that the 4-H kids are now beginning to work with the new arrivals in preparation for the Oakland County Fair. Whenever the lambs are out on halters, the goats are always keenly interested in the process.

The goat showmen will also start to work with the goats and newly arrived kids after kidding is complete as preparation for showmanship.

Interested in joining the Tollgate 4-H Club? Find more information on their website below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[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

Oakland County  
**Youth & Families**

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension March 2022

TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE PREPARED IN EMERGENCIES

Teaching children to be prepared in emergencies  
By Michelle Neff

Even children who are not yet reading can be involved in preparing for an emergency. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has one source of materials, [Ready, Wiggly](#), which targets children ages 2-8. They offer four books in both English and Spanish; each 20-page book addresses a particular natural disaster. Whether the topic is [tsunami](#), [hurricane](#), [earthquake](#) or [winter weather](#), these books follow super-dog Brandy Wiggly as she helps her family prepare for that emergency. Children learn basic information about the specific disaster being addressed, the best way to respond during and after that type of emergency, and items to include in an emergency kit for family members and for pets. Having a family communication plan for emergencies that children and parents complete together is strongly recommended. Pages in the book are very interactive and teach important concepts via coloring, matching, word search, mazes, hidden pictures, decoding and similar activities. A link to the CDC's Ready, Wiggly website is provided at the end of each book for parents who wish to access other educational materials or learn more about disaster preparedness.

In addition to the four books, the website offers simple and useful forms that can be downloaded, printed, and completed with your child. These include a [family communication plan](#), an [emergency kit checklist](#), a [pet emergency kit checklist](#), and a [backpack emergency card](#). During an emergency, very young children may be upset and unable to remember important information needed to contact their parents or caregivers. The backpack card lists essential information about the child including any special needs, medical conditions or known allergies, and provides vital information for contacting their parents or caregivers.

After using these materials, parents and other caregivers may want to explore additional disaster preparedness materials available from other organizations. The [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) has two children's books that feature a pair of mice, Trinka and Sam, who experience emergencies. In ["The Rainy Windy Day"](#), available in English and Spanish, the emergency is a hurricane while in ["The Day the Earth Shook"](#), available in English and Japanese, an earthquake occurs. These books are designed to help young children and their families talk about their feelings if they have experienced a similar emergency or live in an area where hurricanes or earthquakes are common. At the back of each book is a guide to help parents and caregivers use the storybook with children.

## Opportunities and Spotlights



### Japanese Outreach Initiative: Host Families Needed for MSU Tollgate Farm Japanese Coordinator

MSU Tollgate Farm is excited to announce we are being considered to host a Japanese Coordinator from the Japan Outreach Initiative. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and Laurasian Institution designed the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI) as a grassroots opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of Japan by sending Japanese Coordinators to conduct community outreach activities about Japan in the Midwest and Southern regions of the U.S.

Now MSU Tollgate needs your help to find a host family for an adult Japanese Coordinator. Host families would provide housing and assist the individual in transitioning to life in U.S. A \$500 stipend is available to defray utilities and housing costs. The JOI program covers the cost of a car, insurance, and living expenses for the coordinator. Japanese language proficiency is not required. Commitment length is flexible, but preferably 6-months or 1 year. Multiple host families will be needed for the coordinator during their 2 years at Tollgate. Become a host family and create a bond that spans continents!

Interested? Learn more about the JOI program below or contact MSU Tollgate Farm Director, [Mike Mathis](#).

LEARN MORE

MSU Tollgate Kid's Corner: Felted Wool Acorn Necklaces

Looking for a fun and educational activity to do with your kids? We've got you covered with our seasonal activity in MSU Tollgate's Kid's Corner. Can you find acorn tops in a park, in your neighborhood, or at a nature center? Use the acorn tops to make a felted wool necklace!

[GET THE ACTIVITY](#)



## Have you Herd? Goat Shout-Outs are the Perfect Way to Send A Special Message

Looking for a unique way to send a message to a friend or family member? Let the the MSU Tollgate goat herd help you out. 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 "Congrats on your promotion, you are the GOAT!" 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](#)

## Rent MSU Tollgate Farm for your Next Event

The MSU Tollgate Conference Center and historic barn are available for your next business meeting, bridal or baby shower, private luncheon, or wedding. Our event catering staff are available to meet all of your needs. If you are looking for a unique venue, Tollgate is the perfect choice for your special event or business meeting! Interested? Give us a call at 248-347-3860 ext 235.

[LEARN MORE](#)



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