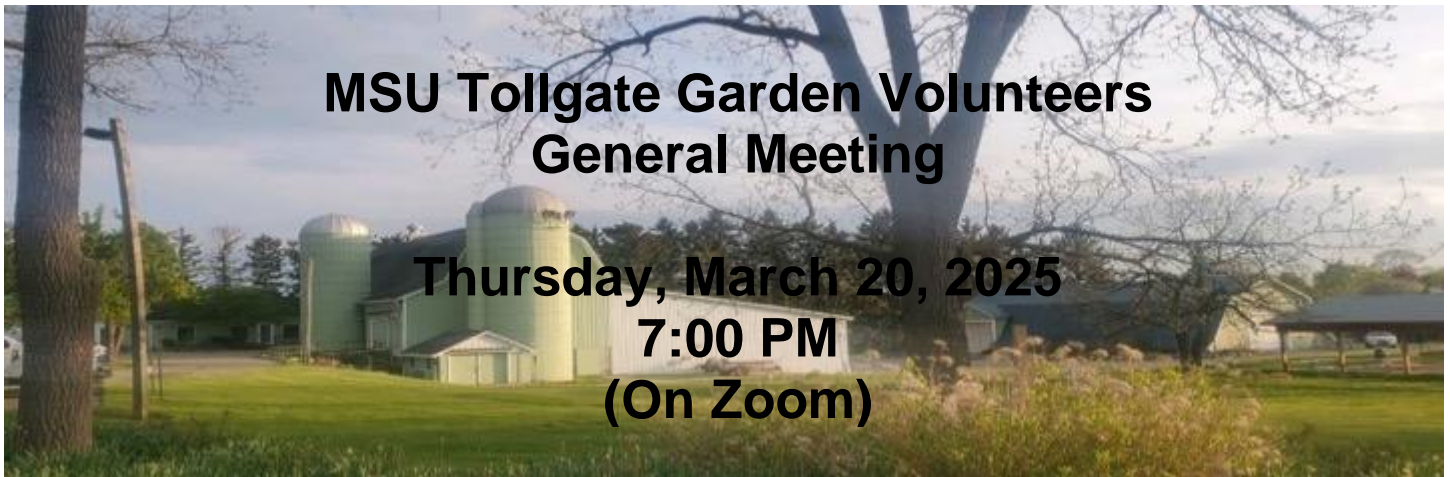


The Tollgate Farm News

VOLUME 31

ISSUE 3

MARCH 2025



MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteers General Meeting

Thursday, March 20, 2025
7:00 PM
(On Zoom)

Landscaping with Native Plants

Join the Tollgate Garden Volunteers and supporters to learn how to get started with native plant landscaping. Discover how to create a landscape design for your yard using native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and ferns. This **Zoom** presentation will include butterfly, pollinator, and bird-friendly gardens and the planning basics to successfully landscape your yard with native species.

Martha Holzheuer is the owner of [Nature Niche Nature Gifts and Supplies Store](#), a nature-focused store on the north side of Midland, Michigan. Martha spent about 15 years working as a landscape ecologist and an environmental consultant, specializing in threatened and endangered species protection and permitting, native plant design, invasive species management, wildlife habitat enhancement, and ecological restoration. Before that, she taught woody plants field labs while earning dual master's degrees in Terrestrial (Forest) Ecology and Landscape Architecture at the School of Natural Resources and Environment at U of M, Ann Arbor. Martha is a certified ecological restoration practitioner, a professional landscape architect, a certified ecologist and arborist.

Martha is a board member with both the Society for Ecological Restoration Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter and the Michigan Wetlands Association. She loves botanizing and gardening with native plants, nature photography and art, and helping people learn about and connect with nature.

Members resume in-person meetings at the Tollgate Conference Center in April.

TOLLGATE GARDEN VOLUNTEER IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS 2025					
MAR	MEETINGS		APR	MEETINGS	
4	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm	1	TGAC Meeting – Zoom	7:00 pm
20	TGV General Meeting - Zoom	7:00 pm	17	TGV General Meeting - Onsite	7:00 pm
MAR	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES		APR	WORKDAY ACTIVITIES	
1	Pruning (Cancelled for weather)		5	Rose/Pond	9:00 am
8/9	MapleFest – No Workday		12	Demo	9:00 am
15	Pruning & Grass Cut Back – all	9:00 am	19	Easter Weekend - Office/Heritage/Rain	9:00 am
22	Pathway/Demo Mulching	9:00 am	26	Children's/Xeriscape	9:00 am
29	Multi-Garden Work	9:00 am	26	New Volunteer Orientation TGV Pancake Brunch	9:00 am Noon

The Tollgate Farm News

FARM UPDATE FROM THE RESIDENT FARMER - *Destiny Pearson*

The farm has been buzzing with energy, especially after a wildly successful MapleFest weekend! The weather couldn't have been more perfect—clear skies, warm sunshine, and a gentle breeze set the stage for an unforgettable event. Families and visitors came out in record numbers to enjoy the sweet smells of boiling sap, delicious pancakes and maple syrup, and hands-on activities celebrating this special season. A huge thank-you goes out to all our incredible volunteers who made it happen, especially our maple volunteers. Your dedication and enthusiasm keep this tradition alive year after year. We truly appreciate your hard work, time and passion!

With spring in the air, we're eagerly anticipating the arrival of our newest farm additions—chicks and baby goats! There's nothing quite like the joy of seeing newborn animals take their first steps, and we know our visitors will love meeting them. March is also bringing the return of our Spring Break Camp, running during the last two weeks of the month. Kids will have the chance to explore nature, learn about farm life, and get their hands dirty with fun outdoor activities. The farm will be filled with laughter, learning, and plenty of springtime adventures!



As we embrace the new season, we're also gearing up for Garden Work Days to start back up soon. These days are a fantastic opportunity for volunteers to dig in, plant, and help cultivate our beautiful farm spaces. With the new season comes some change. Our beloved staff member Carmen will be stepping away from her position on the farm, but we are thrilled that she will continue to be part of our community as a garden volunteer. Her passion and dedication have made such a positive impact, and we're grateful she'll still be sharing her talents with us. Moving forward, our new volunteer contact will be Janice Recinos, her email is recinos1@msu.edu. Exciting times are ahead, and we can't wait to share this season's farm adventures with you all!

Photo provided by Destiny Pearson

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT - *Renee Cottrell*

"The beautiful spring came; and when Nature resumed her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also."
- Harriet Ann Jacobs- American abolitionist, autobiographer (1813-1897)

Spring is coming! It may be slow or it may come in a rush of warm temperatures! We are ready and planning to do our March pruning and mulching and wait for the soils to warm and dry before the bulk of our gardening begins in April. Please see the activity calendar and join us for the group work activities on Saturday mornings!

We would love to expand our membership and active gardeners:

- The Tollgate Garden Volunteers welcome any interested gardener; you need not be a Master Gardener to join.
- Bring a guest/ friend to experience a Saturday activity and all the Tollgate gardens have to offer.
- Group, Team and individual garden experiences are available to fit a variety of personal schedules.
- Support from experienced members and TGAC to orient and guide your volunteer experience.
- Many gardens on site fit gardening interests of all types.
- **Saturday, April 26 - New volunteer orientation at 9am and Pancake Lunch for all TGV members at Noon.**

Reminders:

AGL's/Garden Teams - Consider sending in your garden plans/budgets this month if you have special work items this season that may need staff or equipment to accomplish or need to get approval for mail order purchases. The next approval meeting is at the April 1st TGAC meeting. The sooner we know the sooner we can confirm approval and schedule requested work.

Check out the other articles in this issue for the latest news and we hope you Zoom in for the membership meeting on March 20th at 7 pm. In person meetings will begin in April!

Thank you for being a Tollgate Garden Volunteer.
Renee Cottrell, President TGV, Rmcottrell4@att.net

The Tollgate Farm News

PAR Report - Kathryn Fitzpatrick



The official first month of spring is here! Flora and fauna alike are starting to emerge and enjoy the sun. We have established a schedule for spring - [PAR Spring Schedule Sign-Up Genius](#). There are still slots available in March and April to help start transplants, water on weekends, and harden transplants in the greenhouse. We will also be direct sowing collard greens and renovating an additional 4 beds in the garden at the end of the month. This is also the time to clean out the shed and get our tools in order. It will be especially nice to check

out our new tools. We usually need to evict a few mice as well.



We are adding a metal garden table to help us with preparing carrot tape for planting, as well as hosing down and cleaning carrots, turnips, radishes, and kohlrabi. It will also serve as a nice place to cure onions. A wooden bench will be added and along with our purple chairs and umbrella should provide a nice resting spot in the garden. Another great addition will be some fantastic signage graciously prepared for us by Caitlin Splawski and Melanie Fuhrmann. Thank you!

If there are any volunteers looking for a Thursday morning opportunity, we hope to add a second workday every week, starting in June, and it will be highlighted in my weekly emails.

Hope to see you in the garden or the greenhouse very soon, Kathryn Fitzpatrick

Photos provided by Kathryn Fitzpatrick

NURSERY NOTES - Peg Palmer



It's *finally* March, with the anticipation of Spring just around the corner! It has been a much colder winter than recent years, so the Nursery team has been crossing our fingers that our mulched-in pots have survived these extreme conditions.

With Spring comes the PLANTS WANTED list! We use our experience to develop this list to provide guidance on plant varieties and quantities needed to fill the Nursery for the Spring Sale. Look for the *Plants Wanted* list later this month!

We rely on YOUR PLANT DONATIONS along with those that we can divide from Tollgate's gardens to stock up for the sale. We are overwintering a good number of pots this year, but the extreme cold temperatures of this winter may result in high losses. We're hoping for lots of great plants during our Spring donation window that begins **Saturday, April 12!**



We also have a NEW, convenient DROP OFF location for your plant donations - look for the YELLOW DOOR at the SE corner of the Nursery and follow the directions that will be provided with the PLANTS WANTED list and posted in the Nursery. THANKS for supporting the Nursery!

Photos provided by Peg Palmer

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AGL Information

Thank you to all the AGLs who have already sent in budget requests. You will get an email confirmation once TGAC reviews your budget. Our next TGAC meeting to approve your budget is April 1 (NO Fooling). If you need help with budgeting, or completing the form, please contact me.

The plant label project is underway after a slow start due to equipment issues. On March 1st, several garden volunteers came in to help. Special thanks to Destiny for getting the engraver running and the time she's spent studying ways to improve the process. Additional thanks to Dave Komraus who devised another way to hold the labels in place while engraving...it's a thumb saver!

Please use the links below if you still need a form or assistance.

Marilyn Alimpich
masoleil@sbcglobal.net

[2025 Garden Budget Planner](#)
[Tollgate Label Template Excel Version](#)
[Tollgate Label Template Word Version](#)

Hellebores - An Early Bloomer



[Common Hellebore Problems](#)

Photo provided by Renee Cottrell

The Tollgate Farm News

Membership Update March 2025

*Thanks to everyone who renewed
their membership this month!*

Linda Belanger
Suzanne Bolton
Judy Culkin
Tom Culkin
Lisa Drew
Irene Fahey
Garret Frost
Susan Gerber
Gayle Gullen

Deb Kearney
Cecile MacDonell
Ann MacLean
Janine McKay
Janice McNulty
Denise Reinhelt
Judie Tomaszewskil
Jeffrey Zabel
Kathy Zhong

*Our TGV name badges, featuring a
new button design for 2025, are
being made for every active
member. These will be in the
Volunteer Center, ready for
distribution by April 1. As of March
1, 2025 about 60% of our members
have renewed (100 members).*

*Please take a moment to renew
your 2025 membership and receive
your new button for the season!*

Thanks! Teresa Larosa
tlrrehab@gmail.com

[2025 TGV Membership Form](#)
[2025 Member Levels Reminder](#)

Member Spotlight

Will return with 2025 Activity Days

Links to Forms & Other Info

[Tollgate 2025 Activity Calendar](#)

[Garden Orientation PDF](#)

[Tollgate Garden Web Pages](#)

[Other Tollgate Garden Volunteer Info](#)

MSU Tollgate Volunteer Sign-In:



Or [MSU Tollgate Volunteer Sign-In](#)

NOTE: If you are unable to access or print any necessary forms from the links, please notify Renee, who will arrange to provide copies. Copies will also be available at all in-person TGV meetings.

Take a Tollgate Picture

Send photo files in separate emails, if necessary, to Judy Warren, Tollgate Calendar Editor, at TGFarmPhotos@gmail.com

Photos are also appreciated for the monthly Farm News. Photo files can be sent to: Napowell77@gmail.com



Photo provided by Renee Cottrell

The Tollgate Farm News

MAPLEFFEST 2025



Top & bottom right photos provided by Roy Prentice
Bottom left photo by Kurt Westermann

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MAPLEFEST 2025



Top photo provided by Kurt Westermann
Middle photo by Cindy Prentice
Bottom photo by Roy Prentice

The Tollgate Farm News

Activity Days: January - October

- Activity Day hours are 9:00 am – Noon, unless otherwise noted on the Activities section of the first page of the newsletter and the full year calendar (see Links page).
- Volunteer Activity Day and Meeting Information will be communicated by email.
- Active members will continue to get email reminders of these activities.
- Lunch will be provided on scheduled workdays.
- We strongly recommend you bring your own tools for your garden activities. All tools borrowed from the Tool Shed should be cleaned and sanitized with the wipes provided, prior to returning the items to the Tool Shed after use.

Tollgate Garden Advisory Committee (TGAC)

Volunteer Liaison – Destiny Pearson

248-347-3860 Ext.251 pears278@msu.edu

President..... Renee Cottrell

Vice President Marilyn Alimpich

Secretary..... Theresa Bridenbaugh

Treasurer..... Karen Harris

Membership

& Hospitality..... Teresa LaRosa

Communications Kathy Johnson

Programs..... Jackie Stengel

Farm News Editor Nancy Powell

Event Coordinator.....Lori Heiden

- The TGAC meets monthly virtually **on Zoom on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM**. All Tollgate Garden Volunteer members are welcome to attend and should contact Destiny Pearson for meeting link.
- Contact information for individual TGAC members and Area Garden Leaders (AGL) are available by contacting Renee Cottrell at rmcottrell@att.net to have message or contact forwarded for response. Contact info can also be found in the Garden Binders in the Volunteer Communication Center.
- Tollgate Volunteer Membership is renewed annually. The 2025 Tollgate Garden Volunteer membership is valid from **January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025**.

- For membership questions or to update your current membership information, email Teresa LaRosa at tirrehab@gmail.com
- For general Tollgate information and questions, contact Destiny Pearson or see Website: <http://tollgate.msu.edu/volunteering/>
- TIP: If you aren't getting The Tollgate Farm News email, check your SPAM folder

MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center



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