



The Tollgate Farm News

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NOVEMBER 2014

2014 Ginger Meyer Award Dave Komraus



The Ginger Meyer Award Presented to Dave Komraus

Pictured Here, from Left to Right, Renee Cottrell, Roy Prentice, Dave Komraus and Kate Harper (Ginger Meyer's Granddaughter)

2014 Golden Shovel Award Anna VanHyfte and Denise Johns

The Golden Shovel Award was Presented to Anna VanHyfte and Denise Johns

Due to a technical difficulty, a photo is not available of the award presentation. We are deeply sorry for not capturing the moment. Congratulations to Anna and Denise.



Photos by Mike Janczarek

Tollgate Garden Volunteer Important Dates and Events

DEC	MEETINGS	
2	TGAC Meeting	7:00 PM
DEC	ACTIVITIES	
6	Rose Garden Mulching	9:00 AM

JAN	MEETINGS	
6	TGAC Meeting	7:00 PM
10	AGL Planning Meeting (tentative)	10:00 AM
15	TGV General Meeting	7:00 PM

No Tollgate Volunteer Meeting in December



from the Tollgate Farm Manager

GREETINGS

Roy Prentice

Greetings All,

October and early November has pushed us well on the way towards the conclusion of the 2014 gardening season. When we weren't dodging rain drops, we had a good turn-out for our last few Activity Days. The beds are now all snug for the coming winter. All of the volunteers that came to the farm did a wonderful job of felling frost flattened perennials and removing annuals. October work days were also devoted to cleaning up the Demonstration Garden. Thanks to all that made 2014 such a great year at Tollgate!



Photo by John Woodrich

Recognition Dinner: This year's volunteer recognition dinner, held on November 8th, was a great success! The event was supported by the **Americana Foundation** and **MSU Extension** and was very well attended. Over one hundred and forty volunteers and guests joined us for dinner, a presentation of the Tollgate gardening year and the awards ceremony.



Photo by Mike Janczarek



Photo by Mike Janczarek

We had so many guests for dinner that we filled the big barn for the presentation. The presentation that was put together by **Darretta Ferasin** and **myself** was a big hit as were the many door prizes. The food was really great too. This year our caterer incorporated lots of Tollgate products in the meal. Maple syrup, squash, carrots and other vegetables from the farm were all an integral part of the dishes. One of the highlights of the evening was the recognition of our first year volunteers who made the most visits to the farm during 2014. This year there were two volunteers that tied for the "Golden Shovel" award. This year's recipients, **Anna VanHyfte** and **Denise Johns**, gave very generously of their time. Along with the traditional gold painted implement, Anna and Denise also received a golden shovel pin provided by the Americana Foundation and their names engraved on a plaque hung in the Tollgate Volunteer Center.

Also awarded was the "Ginger Meyer" award. This award was presented to long-time Tollgate volunteer, **David Komraus**, for his many years of service to Tollgate. David is instrumental in many projects on the farm including managing the pond garden area, helping with many special events on the farm and serving as secretary for the Tollgate Garden Volunteers. The Ginger Meyer award was established to honor the memory of Ginger Meyer who, along with her husband Adolph, was instrumental in establishing the Americana Foundation and in donating Tollgate to MSU. The award, a silver bowl inscribed with David's name, was presented by Ginger Meyer's granddaughter, **Kate Harper**. David's name has also been inscribed on a plaque that will be hung in the Tollgate Volunteer Center. Both the golden shovel and Ginger Meyer awards are given annually. Thank you David, Anna and Denise for all that you do for the farm!

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers for another great year at Tollgate! I can't wait for winter to loosen her grip so that we can get going on 2015. It will be maple syruping time before we know it!

Roy



Notes from the President



*"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." —
Vincent Van Gogh*

To Season's End!!

Another great gardening season concludes as the slower pace and natural phase of the gardens' rest is upon us. It lends itself well as a time of reflection and thanks for our blessings. I extend my most sincere thanks to all the members who have given of their time, talents and support of our gardens and events.

A Big Thank You to:

- ❖ The Americana Foundation that has given generously to our efforts and provided us with a terrific meal at our recognition dinner
- ❖ Tollgate elected and appointed members that work tirelessly behind the scenes

Our elected members:

Sue Janczarek, Treasurer
David Komraus, Secretary
Peg Palmer, Vice President

Our appointed members:

Darretta Ferasin, Editor of the newsletter
Jackie Stengel chairperson of our education/speaker programs
Nancy Roggers chairperson for membership
Yvonne DeMattos, PR and Hospitality

- ❖ Area Garden Leaders
- ❖ Fall Fair, Open House, Quilting Bee and Plant Sale special teams
- ❖ Our friendly, fearless leader, Farm Manager, Roy Prentice

I am honored to continue to be a part of such a wonderful group of people and look forward to a new season with the Tollgate Garden Volunteers.

Save the Dates:

There is the remaining mounding of the roses activity **December 6th** and we will begin our membership meetings in the New Year!

All members interested in joining/forming Garden Teams should save the date (tentative at time of printing) **January 10th at 10:00 AM** for the Area Garden Leader/Teams meeting. Information on the gardens and volunteer teams will be presented with opportunity for teams to get an early start on planning.

Enjoy your Thanksgiving and Holiday Season.
Thank you for being Tollgate Garden Volunteers.

Renee Cottrell, TGV President



Renee Cottrell and Roy Prentice Preparing for the Recognition Dinner Presentation



Plant a Row for the Hungry



John Woodrich

PAR Garden Produce Final Count for 2014	Total Pounds
Beans	401
Beets	273
Cabbage	626
Cantaloupe	10
Carrots	173
Cucumbers	229
Garlic	109
Okra	1
Onion	250
Peppers	11
Potatoes	124
Summer Squash	63
Tomato	298
Winter Squash	238
Grand Total	2806

Note: There were no apples to harvest this year.



Tollgate Calendar 2016

If you have been out and about taking photos of your favorite places at Tollgate please consider submitting your photos for the 2016 calendar. All of the photos in the calendar are photos taken by you, our volunteers (and farm manager & family)!

Without your contributions the calendar would not be possible.

Photos can be given to me or Roy on a memory stick. Please label it with your name so I know who the photos are from and so I can return the memory stick to you. Or, you can e-mail them to me at:

tollgatemembership@gmail.com.

- Photos need to be in landscape format
- Photos are due by **December 31, 2014**



NURSERY NOTES

NOVEMBER 2014

2014 has been a great year for Tollgate's nursery! Starting with a hugely successful plant sale (a pleasant surprise given the damage done by the unusually cold winter and the challenges of a cool, late spring), many hands made light work as the dedicated nursery team was joined by many Tollgate volunteers on potting and division days, working the plant sale, weeding and watering this summer and heeling in the pots for winter. As a result of all this focus, the nursery not only looks great, but we're hoping that strong, healthy plants will over-winter well.

A few weeks ago, a twelve foot section of overhead wooden trellis was installed in the nursery. This is the first step in a multi-stage project to build an attractive structure that will provide partial shade for the entire nursery. This structure provides multiple opportunities – filtering the strong summer rays will benefit even full-sun specimens, more efficient overhead irrigation will be possible, and more options will exist to deter those pesky critters that use the nursery as an all-you-can-eat buffet! And there are “people” benefits as well, as those working in the nursery will also enjoy filtered sunlight and the pleasing aesthetics of the completed project! See more photos of the build on the following page.



As you may know, the proceeds from the annual Spring Plant Sale provides major funding for all Tollgate Gardens, so growing our plant sales is the primary goal of the Nursery Team. Since nursery stock is primarily sourced from plants found on the Tollgate property or from the home gardens of our members, we typically don't have the latest “hot sellers” available. The nursery team is looking at the possibility of purchasing plugs (small plants grown from seeds) or liners (plants propagated from cuttings) as a new pilot project to introduce new and popular varieties to the nursery. **Deb Kearney** will be leading this project, with a kick-off meeting in January (immediately following the AGL Planning meeting that is tentatively scheduled for 10:00 AM Saturday, January 10th). If you are interested in joining this group, or want to learn more, please contact Deb Kearney (debkearney2001@yahoo.com) or Peg Palmer (pegpalmer@mi.rr.com).

Tollgate's nursery is a great place to learn and really make a contribution to the farm! Nursery team members are each responsible for one or more “rows” in the nursery. “Row Captains” are responsible to research plants in their row(s) to ensure correct labeling (botanical and common names), gather cultural information to create “plant tags” and guide shoppers on plant sale days, update row inventory periodically and maintain (weed/water/cutback/etc.) the row throughout the season. The entire nursery team also meets periodically to share concerns, discuss nursery business and plan future activities.

This system of subdividing the nursery responsibility so that “many hands can make light work” has been a critical factor in improving the nursery operation – so it is important to maintain the “many hands” part of the equation! If you are interested in joining the nursery team to learn and ensure our continued success in this critical Tollgate activity, please contact Peg Palmer (pegpalmer@mi.rr.com) or Renee Cottrell (rmcottrell4@att.net).

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Photo by Peg Palmer

Eagle Scout Candidate Launches Tollgate Nursery Renovation

An Eagle Scout candidate, **Josh Fernquist**, led a team to build a wooden shade structure over the nursery recently. This shade structure is Phase I of the Tollgate Nursery renovation. Subsequent phases will put shade over the entire nursery as other Eagle Scouts come looking for projects. The current shade house will be replaced by two of these wooden structures.



Happy
Thanksgiving

2014 Volunteer Recognition Dinner



Photos by Renee Cottrell

2014 Volunteer Recognition Dinner



Photos by Darretta Ferasin

Tollgate Farm Birdhouse Update

By Tom Gray

Many Tollgate Farm staff members, volunteers, and visitors have noted the growing number of birdhouses along the edges of the western fields of the farm. These houses are the result of an interest **Chet Tarczynski** and **Tom Gray** turned into an active and continuing project several years ago. Initially, some old birdhouses in need of repair were brought into the farm shop and rebuilt or replaced. Repair, replacement, and even relocation in some cases continue to be done as required each year. Research was done to determine the recommended size, configuration, and location of bird houses including the placement and configuration of the entrance holes. The initial project objective focused on houses for Bluebirds and Wrens.

With help and encouragement from the farm manager, **Roy Prentice**, the number of birdhouses grew to 41 this year with 25 sized for Bluebirds and 16 for Wrens. Each summer periodic non-disruptive observations at a distance are made by Chet and Tom to determine the condition and apparent occupancy of the houses.

This year's season-end survey and house maintenance by Chet and Tom indicated very favorable results with 100% of the Bluebird houses showing they had been occupied and 14 of the 16 Wren houses. Observation at a distance during the summer revealed the "Bluebird house" occupants included: Purple Martins, Swallows, and Baltimore Orioles as well as Bluebirds but the exact number of each species was not able to be determined. Examination of the nest remains in the houses did not help establish the exact species but showed a wide variety of nest sizes, configurations, and materials utilized. More accurate in-season surveys would be required with care not to disturb the nesting birds to determine the exact number of the various species.

Future bird house projects being considered by Chet and Tom include an Osprey nesting platform. The farm does provide an optimum location. Ospreys have been sighted flying over the farm.



TOLLGATE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Activity Days

Activity day hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM unless otherwise noted on the Tollgate Garden Volunteer Important Dates and Events listed on the first page of the Tollgate Farm News or by the Area Garden Leader (AGL).

Lunch will be provided - veggie alternatives are available upon request.

This schedule does not exclude you from working independently on the site. However, on non-scheduled days, your efforts will need to be self-directed with guidance from the garden area clipboards located in the Volunteer Communication Center.

If you aren't getting
The Tollgate Farm News
e-mail, Check your
SPAM folder

**Volunteer Activity Day and
Meetings Information**
248-347-3860 ext. 400

Garden Tools Available for Use at Tollgate

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

List of Suggested Gardening Implements to Bring from Home as Needed

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

TOLLGATE GARDEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Farm Manager

Roy Prentice - 248 347-3860 ext. 251
e-mail - prentic1@msu.edu

President	Renee Cottrell
Vice President ...	Peg Palmer
Secretary	Dave Komraus
Treasurer	Sue Janczarek
Membership	Nancy Roggers
PR	Yvonne DeMattos
Fall Fair	Dennis Roggers
Programs	Jackie Stengel
Hospitality	Yvonne DeMattos
Farm News Editor	Darretta Ferasin

For membership questions or to update your current membership information send e-mail to:

tollgatemembership@gmail.com

MSU Tollgate Gardens Volunteers
For general information and questions
Contact Roy Prentice

- The Tollgate Gardens Advisory Council next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 2, 2014 at 7:00 PM** in the Tollgate Office Building. All Tollgate Gardens Volunteer members are welcome to attend.
- Listings to contact individual Council Members and Area Garden Leaders are available at all general meetings and in the Volunteer Communication Center.
- Tollgate Volunteer Membership is renewed annually. The 2014 Tollgate Garden Volunteers membership is from **December 1, 2014 to November 30, 2015.**

THE TOLLGATE FARM NEWS

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