



Peony, *Paeonia spp.*, is a beloved perennial known for its large, fragrant blooms and lush foliage. Blooming in late spring to early summer, peonies come in a range of colors, including pink, white, red, and yellow. Native to Europe, Asia, and western North America, they thrive in full sun and well-drained soil. With minimal care, peonies can live for decades, making them a long-lasting addition to any garden. You can read more about peonies and their care [here](#).

Article and photo by: Melanie Fuhrmann

The Oakland Gardener

June 2025

Monthly Plant Feature

Plant Strawberries This June—Enjoy Sweet Harvests by Summer's End!

Article by: Pat Wilson

Photo by: Melanie Fuhrmann

Think it's too late to grow strawberries this year?
Think again! If you plant **day-neutral or everbearing strawberry transplants** in June, you can still enjoy fresh, homegrown berries by **late**

summer and fall. These varieties don't follow a strict fruiting season like June-bearers—they'll keep producing berries throughout the warm months, making them perfect for late spring or early summer planting.

By June, **Michigan soil will be warm and workable**, which is ideal for fast root establishment. There's still **plenty of growing season left** for plants to thrive before winter hits. Even if the first year's yields are modest, your plants will develop **strong root systems** and return even more vigorously next spring.



Strawberries (*Fragaria* × *ananassa*) are low-growing perennials in the rose family. They're easy to grow and **thrive in garden beds, containers, raised beds**, or even **hanging baskets**. With just **sunlight, mulch, water, and basic care**, you'll enjoy flavorful fruit with minimal effort. They're also fun for kids to grow and pick, attract pollinators, and are endlessly useful in the kitchen—for **snacking, jams, desserts, or freezing**.

Best Strawberry Transplants for June Planting

For mid-to-late spring plantings in Michigan, choose day-neutral or everbearing varieties that fruit continuously through the growing season such as:

- **Seascape** – High-yielding, with large, juicy berries and good heat tolerance.
- **Albion** – Firm, sweet berries with excellent disease resistance and strong summer production.
- **Tristar** – Small, intensely sweet berries perfect for snacking and containers.
- **Evie-2** – Vigorous and productive, great for cooler climates like northern Michigan.

How to Plant and Grow

Plant strawberry transplants promptly in a **sunny spot** with **6–8 hours of sun** and **well-drained, fertile soil**. Strawberries prefer **slightly acidic soil** (pH 5.5–6.5) with good nutrients and drainage. Before planting, it's helpful to **test your soil** (**MSU Extension Soil Test**) and amend as needed.

For containers, use pots at least **12 inches wide and 8 inches deep**, filled with quality **potting soil** mixed with compost and perlite. For ground beds, mix compost or aged manure into the soil to boost fertility and drainage.

Space plants 10–12 inches apart, and make sure the **crown** (where roots meet leaves) is **level with the soil surface**. Water thoroughly after planting and keep the soil evenly moist.

Apply mulch, like straw or pine needles, to conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and protect developing fruit.

Unlike June-bearing varieties, **do not remove flowers**—you want these to fruit right away! With consistent care, your first berries will appear in **6–8 weeks**, usually by **early to mid-August**, and continue until the **first frost**.

Enjoy the Fruits of Summer

Strawberries planted in June can still bring a generous harvest and **months of enjoyment**. Whether planted in a garden or a container, they'll provide **bursts of sweetness**, brighten your space, and reward your efforts with every bite. Don't wait—**plant now and savor the flavor of summer!**

Extension Master Gardener News

MSU Tollgate Farm and Educational Center

Article by: Renee Cottrell

Photos by: Renee Cottrell and Melanie Fuhrmann



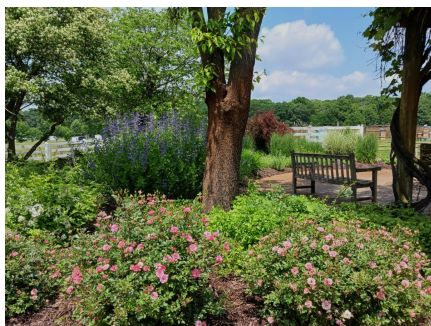
MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center

is a 160-acre farm located in an urban environment at 12 Mile and Meadowbrook in Novi. The farm

features over **twenty demonstration gardens**, each themed to highlight a different aspect of horticulture including a PAR garden (Plant-A-Row for the Hungry). For over 30 years, the gardens have been maintained and funded by the Tollgate Garden Volunteer organization (TGV).

Extension Master Gardeners use their horticultural knowledge and skills to help maintain the educational display gardens. They engage in garden planning, implementation, and maintenance. Volunteers may also support the Sustainable Agriculture fields, classes, plant sales, special events, and informal learning opportunities.

Scheduled Saturday workdays are March to November from 9 am to noon. Workdays are a group format overseen by the Farm Staff and/or experienced volunteers. Individual assignments can be arranged on other days of the week upon request. There is no registration needed to attend the workdays.



Whether your interest is in roses, pollinator gardens, vegetable gardening or just enjoying time spent in the gardens on your own or with a group of other gardeners, this is your place! Tollgate volunteers are friendly people from diverse backgrounds who readily share their gardening knowledge. In addition to the garden activities, the TGV group sponsors monthly meetings with a garden focused speaker eligible

for MG education, January to October. Please consider becoming a TGV member to support the gardens.

For more information on how you can become a MSU Tollgate Garden Volunteer check out "Volunteering" on the MSU Tollgate web page:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/tollgate/volunteering/garden-volunteering> or contact Destiny Pearson, Livestock Manager, at 248 347-3860 ext. 251 or

MSU Tollgate Farm gardens are free and open to the public for self-guided tours Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to dark. The site is closed on Sundays and Holidays. If you have an organization that would like a guided tour you can contact the office at 248-347-3860 ext. 251.

Gardening Tips and Tricks



Proper Raised Bed Care

Article by: Liz Will

Photo by: Stock - alle12

Taking good care of your garden beds is one of the most important things you can do for a successful growing season.

Whether you're growing vegetables, herbs, or flowers, healthy beds set the stage for healthy plants.

Let's walk through a few practical tips to keep your garden beds thriving all season long.

1. Start with a Clean Slate

Before planting anything, it's worth taking the time to clean up your beds. Pull any weeds, roots and all, before they get a chance to compete with your plants for water and nutrients. Remove any dead plant debris from last season and take a moment to check your soil level. If your bed has settled, go ahead and top it off with compost or fresh soil mix.

2. Feed the Soil, Not Just the Plants

Healthy soil is alive! It's full of microorganisms, fungi, and nutrients your plants need. One of the best ways to care for your garden beds is by feeding the soil. Work in a few inches of compost each spring (and again in the fall if you can). You can also use an organic slow-release fertilizer. If you're growing heavy feeders like tomatoes, squash, or corn, they'll need a little extra nutrition throughout the season. Plan to side-dress with compost or a balanced fertilizer every 3-4 weeks.

3. Watering Wisely

It's easy to overwater or underwater a garden bed, especially when the weather gets unpredictable. A general rule of thumb is to give your beds about 1 inch of water per week, more during hot spells. It's best to water early in the morning to minimize evaporation and prevent fungal issues.

Drip irrigation or soaker hoses are great options for raised beds. They target the roots directly and keep foliage dry. But even hand watering can be effective if you're consistent and mindful.

A quick and easy test to see if your plants need water? Stick your finger a couple of inches into the soil. If it feels dry, it's time to water.

4. Mulch for Moisture and Weed Control

After planting, adding a layer of mulch around your plants not only makes things look neat and tidy, it helps your plants out in several ways. It keeps moisture in, keeps weeds out, and helps regulate soil temperature. You can use shredded leaves, straw, pine needles, or shredded bark. Just keep mulch a few inches away from plant stems to prevent rot.



5. Check in Regularly

Proper bed care isn't a one-time task.

Walk your garden often and look for signs of pests, nutrient deficiencies, or stressed plants. The more you observe, the quicker you'll catch problems before they get out of hand.

With a little weekly attention and a focus on feeding the soil, your garden beds will reward you with healthy, beautiful plants all season long.

Gardening Deep Dive

Tips for Growing and Maintaining Cut Flowers in Your Garden

Article by: Melanie Fuhrmann

Photos by: Melanie Fuhrmann and Stephanie West Photography



A well-maintained cut flower garden can bring beauty to your landscape and fresh bouquets into your home all season long. Unlike ornamental flower beds, cut flower gardens are grown with harvesting in mind—which requires thoughtful planning and care. By selecting the right plants and following a few essential maintenance steps, gardeners of all experience levels can enjoy an abundant supply of healthy, harvest-ready blooms.

Start with the right foundation

Choose a sunny, well-drained location—most cut flowers need at least six hours of sunlight per day. Ensure the area has easy access to water, and space your plants 8 to 12 inches apart to promote airflow. Planting in rows can simplify maintenance and harvesting.

Healthy soil is also essential. Remove weeds before planting and consider a soil test to identify nutrient deficiencies. Starting with good soil will help your plants thrive all season.

Choose flowers suited for cutting



Not all flowers are ideal for cutting. Look for varieties with long, sturdy stems and repeated blooms. For a well-rounded bouquet, choose from several flower categories:

- **Line flowers** like snapdragons and gladiolus provide height and structure.
- **Mass flowers** such as zinnias, dahlias and sunflowers serve as focal points.
- **Filler flowers** like statice and strawflowers add texture and fullness.
- **Interest flowers** such as celosia or cosmos introduce unique shapes and visual flair.

Check the plant tags or seed packets for information about height, spacing, bloom time and whether the flower is a good candidate for cutting.

Maintain for maximum blooms

After planting, regular maintenance is the key to success:

- **Pinching:** For some varieties like zinnias, cosmos, or marigolds, pinch off the growing tips early to encourage bushier growth and more blooms.
- **Deadheading:** Regularly remove faded or “spent” blooms to signal the plant to keep producing flowers. If you leave spent blooms on the plant, it will shift energy toward seed production instead.
- **Support systems:** Use flower netting, stakes or horizontal lines to support tall or top-heavy plants, especially in windy or rainy weather.
- **Watering:** Aim for about one inch of water per week. Drip irrigation or soaker hoses are ideal for keeping foliage dry and reducing disease risk.



Harvest wisely

For the best vase life, cut flowers in the early morning when they're fully hydrated. Use clean, sharp tools and cut stems at an angle. Strip any leaves that would sit in water and place the stems in a clean bucket of cool water immediately. Keep cut flowers in a shady spot until you bring them indoors.

A little extra attention goes a long way in producing vibrant, long-lasting flowers that brighten both your garden and your home.

Gardening for Health and Wellness

Growing an Herb Garden

Article and Photos by: Jamiel Dado

When it comes to gardening, I am very much a flower person. I have great admiration for those

who use their outdoor space to grow vegetables to be enjoyed by their family and friends, but that is not my journey. My one exception to this rule is when it comes to herbs. I find that they aesthetically work with my vision in a way that tomatoes and the like do not. Also, I appreciate the small footprint that an herb garden takes up, leaving more room for flowers. In fact, even if you find yourself with no room for any type of garden, you probably still have enough space for herbs.



What to grow

When it comes to selection, you find that there is no shortage of variety to choose from. Interestingly though, whatever you choose, chances are you will be growing some form of **Mint**. Basil, Rosemary, Thyme, Sage, and Oregano are all members of the Mint family. That said, when it comes to what you decide to grow, it is helpful to consider how often you use different herbs. I have grown herbs in the

past that I thought would be fun, only to have them go to waste because I never had any good personal use for them.

Where to grow

Whether you decide to grow your herbs in the ground or in containers, it is important to find the correct place for them to grow successfully. Although there are herbs that do well in the **shade** the majority enjoy full sun conditions to thrive. In order for a location to be considered “full sun”, it must receive six or more hours of sunlight a day. If you are unsure how much sun parts of your garden get daily, you can “**sun map**” the area by keeping track on an hourly basis what sections are receiving light. This is most important if you decide to plant your herbs in the ground. Container gardens have the added bonus of being quite mobile when they need to be.

How to grow

If growing from seed, it is helpful to check on the packet whether you can direct sow or if you should have started them earlier inside. You will find that many herbs can be started outside with no trouble at all. If patience is a virtue that you are short on, then by all means visit your local plant nurseries to grab some that already have had a head start. I tend to buy small plants because I am somewhere in the middle on the patience scale. As far as watering goes, it is best to follow the individual herbs instruction that they come with. Thyme, Rosemary, and Oregano appreciate less **watering** than Basil, but be careful not to overwater, no one likes that.



Harvesting

You might find that even though you have been routinely using your herbs throughout the gardening season, you still have very luscious and overgrown plants in the fall. This is of course a good problem to have, but no one likes to waste, so what to do? Well, you'll be happy to know that there are a couple of

ways to save them for future use. You can of course **dry** them, which can be accomplished by hanging them, microwave or oven, or even using a dehydrator. Or, if you prefer, you can freeze them to use as you would fresh herbs in recipes. Rosemary can easily be spread out on a cookie sheet till frozen, then transferred into a baggie for long-term storage, and Basil can easily be chopped up and frozen in ice cube trays with some water that can be then stored in a baggie as well.



Smart Gardening is MSU Extension's campaign using earth-friendly messages to help gardeners make smart choices in their own backyards. The goal is to equip gardeners with a "tool kit" of research-based knowledge to use immediately at home. Whether choosing plants, using garden chemicals, fertilizer or applying water, gardeners need to understand the long-term impacts on their communities. For more Smart Gardening information click [here](#).



Ask Extension

Call the MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline at 1-888-678-3464 (Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to noon)

Upcoming Events

St. John's Episcopal Church Native Plant Sale

Looking to get into the world of native plants or just wanting to expand your collection? Then make your way to St. John's Episcopal Church on Sunday, June 8th for an exciting plant sale! Plants are provided by the Michiganansense Natives and are only \$5 a plant! Sale takes place from 9 AM-1PM on the front lawn of the church at 26998 Woodward Ave. This is a great opportunity to start transforming your garden into the nature-loving wonderland it deserves to be!



Rochester Garden Walk



**Celebrate our 25th Year Presenting the Glorious
Gardens of Rochester
Thursday, June 19, 2025**

This year, the 25th annual Rochester Garden Walk is offering a wonderful selection of private gardens to satisfy the most discerning and curious gardeners. These picture-perfect gardens will inspire walkers with ideas they can incorporate in their own gardens. This event is co-sponsored by the Rochester Garden Club and The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm. This year's event takes place Thursday, June 19 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit our website for more information about this event



Northville 31st Annual Garden Walk

Country Garden Club of Northville

Six Charming Gardens, Vendors.
Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 9am-4pm.
Advance \$15. Tickets available June 9th-
Gardenviews, 117 E. Main and
EventBrite.com. Day of event \$20. Tickets

sold ONLY at Eventbrite.com and in the Green Space (Corner of Wing & Cady St.) behind Northville Library. Proceeds support community scholarships and local/national horticultural organizations.

734-788-9935 cgcnorthville@gmail.com

**Visit our
Website**

Wednesday, July 9, 2025 – Rain or Shine
GARDENS OPEN: 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM & 5:00 – 8:30 PM

Garden Stories 2025

Troy Garden Club's
50th garden walk!

Garden Walk Tickets:
\$15 in advance / \$18 day of walk
Purchase Advance Tickets at:

Auburn Oaks Garden Center
Bordine's Rochester Hills
Piechnik's Greenhouse & Garden Gate
Telly's Greenhouse
Troy Historic Village
Uncle Luke's Feed Store

Online Tickets:

For purchase information,
Visit the TGC website:
www.TroyGardenClubMI.com

Facebook & Instagram:
Troy Garden Club MI

NOTE:

*On garden walk day, Wednesday, July 9,
garden walk tickets will be sold
ONLY at the
Troy Historic Village.*

Free Raffle:

For ALL garden walk ticket holders
at the Troy Historic Village
on garden walk day

Free Admission: Midsummer Arts & Crafts Boutique & Plant Sale at
the Troy Historic Village – 60 W. Wattles, just west of Livernois
Open Wednesday, July 9, 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM



Garden Stories 2025 general information: 248-321-8291

Woman's National Farm & Garden Association, Inc.



Grand Prize-winning art by Jiwoo Park,
5th grade, Leonard Elementary School, Troy

Seminar | Roses 101: The Essentials for Growing Beautiful Blooms

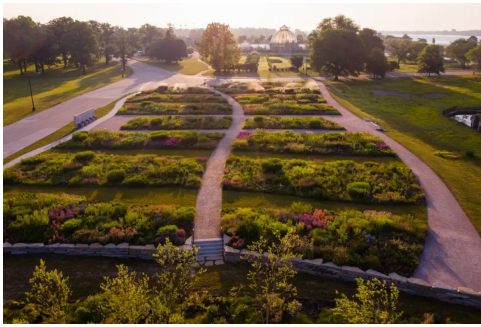
June 14 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Free | All Locations



Discover the fundamentals of rose care to achieve show-stopping blooms in your garden.

[Click here for Event Details](#)

Visit our



Detroit Garden Weekend: Enjoy a Curated Mix of Unique Programs in Michigan

Photo: Oudolf Garden Detroit by Ryan Southen

Detroit's vibrant garden scene blossoms in the late spring with the Garden

Conservancy's Detroit Garden Weekend, a three-day celebration, June 13-15, that invites garden lovers to immerse themselves in horticulture and landscape design. This unique event—presented in partnership with Oudolf Garden Detroit—offers an exploration of diverse gardens, from a grand public space to the grounds of a Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece, to rare glimpses at intimate private retreats as part of the Garden Conservancy Open Days™ program.

[Click here to learn more about this event!](#)

News You Can Use



Common Flower Visitors in Michigan

May 19, 2025 - [David Lowenstein](#), [Ruth Marcy](#) and [Nate Walton](#), Michigan State University



Scholarship applications now open for MSU Extension's fall online Foundations of Gardening course

[Sarah Rautio](#), [Ruth Marcy](#) and the [Michigan State University Extension](#) consumer horticulture team
- May 21, 2025

Learn the science behind great gardens this fall with a gardening course from [Michigan State University Extension](#). The

Extension

Many species of bees and butterflies visit flowers for pollen and nectar. This document describes features and behaviors unique to 5 groups of bees and 5 butterfly species. These signs can be downloaded and used in your garden to highlight common pollinators.

[Download](#)

next [Foundations of Gardening course](#) runs from Sept. 2-Nov. 18, 2025, with live sessions taking place on Tuesday evenings from 6-8:30 p.m. The online format enables you to participate from home with a variety of learning materials, including videos, readings and webinars.

[Read More](#)

Box tree moth quarantine covers 13 southern Michigan counties

[Jeremy Jubenville](#), [Heidi Lindberg](#), [David Lowenstein](#) and Jaden Gimondo, [Michigan State University Extension](#) - May 15, 2025

The Box Tree Moth Interior Quarantine that was established in 2023 has been updated through the growing seasons and as the pest has been found in a larger geographical region. It has only had minor changes from the 2024 to the 2025 growing season.

[Read More](#)

Michigan Wild Bee Identification Cards

[Bert Cregg](#), [Michigan State University Extension](#), Department of Horticulture and Department of Forestry - April 01, 2025

Bees and other insects are important for pollination of many of Michigan's agricultural crops as well as the wild plants that keep our ecosystems functioning at their best. Michigan is home to more than 460 species of bees, and they can be found throughout the state from deep within our cities to the deepest reaches of wilderness.

These bee identification cards can help you learn about bees that you might see visiting flowers in your neighborhood. They can be printed or downloaded for viewing wherever you may go.

[Download](#)

MSU Tollgate

Bowers Farm

**Gardening in
Michigan**

MSU Extension

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