

Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners



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Welcome to Our First Lake Tahoe Basin Master Gardener Newsletter!!

The Lake Tahoe Basin welcomes 17 newly- certified UCCE (University of California Cooperative Extension) Master Gardeners! The new volunteers have completed 50 hours of training, passed the certification exam and pledged their time as volunteers to the Lake Tahoe community!

The Lake Tahoe Master Gardener (LTMG) program also includes three volunteers that were trained in prior years for a total of 20 community members serving the entire basin in both

California and Nevada. We are currently setting up an office in South Lake Tahoe, where we will be fielding phone and email questions, and planning a slate of workshops and educational programs for 2013. The LTMG will educate the community on research-based home horticulture and gardening information around topics including: food gardening and edible landscaping; proper use of fertilizers to protect Lake Tahoe water quality; native and adaptive plants to use in place of lawn; and efficient irrigation methods and systems specific to the area. And that's just a taste of the wide variety of information that LTMG is anxious to bring to the community!

Contact the LTMG at:

Email: laketahoemg@ucanr.edu

Phone: (530) 543-1501 x101

Webpage: http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/LTMG/

and don't forget to Like us on Facebook at [Lake Tahoe Master Gardener](#)

Upcoming Events

Master Gardener office will open starting June 1st and will be open from 12-3PM every Saturday. Our office is located at 870 Emerald Bay Rd., Suite 108 in South Lake Tahoe. Call us at 530-543-1501 x101.

We will be available to answer your questions at:

- The Farmer's Market in South Lake Tahoe on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month
- Keep Tahoe Blue's Summer Kick-Off Event - June 22nd
- Lake Tahoe Historical Society Garden Tour - July 27th
- Conservation Landscaping Tour - August 11th

Planning Your Tahoe Garden and Landscape

by Carolyn Meiers



In the Lake Tahoe basin we have an average of 120-150 days between the last frost in the spring and the first frost in the fall. When you factor in an average 80 "growing" days, that allow for the air to be truly warmed for plant growth, all gardeners need to get serious, especially when we often have a very short spring. Planning ahead is important!

Before the plants are purchased, start to think as an artist would. A pleasing garden includes art design elements of line, shape, color, texture and contrast. Fragrance and trickling water from fountains are bonuses not possible on the artist's

canvas.

Draw a rough sketch of what you envision, and keep the above elements in mind, along with the names of plants you'd love to have. If you see something you like in a magazine or even someone else's garden, try it. Gardening is never really a finished work of art. It's constantly being changed and refined by the gardener and by Mother Nature. A plan will help cut down unnecessary buying mistakes, but don't stress about the finished project. ([continue reading...](#))

START WITH YOUR SOIL!

by Dana Olson

It is especially important when gardening in the Lake Tahoe basin that you start with thinking about your soil. Before planting, before even buying your plants, give your soil some attention. One of the most overlooked areas of the garden is what plants depend on as their lifeline. The soil is one of the most important building blocks of a healthy garden and needs to be cared for even more than the plants that are rooted in it.



A great way to learn about your soil characteristics is by getting a soil test. This is a quick and inexpensive way to check the levels of important nutrients and pH in your soil. These tests should be done every few years and will help you amend your soil so that your plants are getting everything they need to thrive. A soil test will tell you what nutrients are abundant and what are lacking. This will help you add what is needed and take out the guesswork. It also helps you to not OVER fertilize your soil which causes the excess nutrients to leach into ground water or run off landscapes and pollute local waterways. The pH is a measurement of the relative acidity of the soil. Depending on what you wish to plant, you need to determine what pH is appropriate for the soil. Soils in Tahoe tend to be acidic, which is not suitable for many plants. Knowing the pH of your soil will help you adjust the soil to be most appropriate for the plants you are growing.

[\(continue reading...\)](#)

What is Edible Landscaping?

by Lynne Brosch

Edible landscaping is merely the use of food plants as part of your landscape. You may want to try adding them into established flower beds or starting a new raised bed with both flowers and vegetables. You may see them in the front yard among the shrubs or in the back yard with the perennials. The fun of edible landscaping is the exciting new textures, colors and usefulness of plants in your landscape.



This is not a new idea in landscape design but one that is having a revival. Some of you may remember hearing of the "Victory Gardens" of World War II. With the government rationing of foods and the lack of transport from farm to market people were encouraged to plant their own gardens. Almost 20 million people planted gardens in backyards, empty lots and even on rooftops. Everyone pooled their resources and shared their successful crops to provide food for all in the name of patriotism. [\(continue reading...\)](#)

Go Native

by Lynne Brosch

Our first in a monthly series on native plants for our landscape will focus on *Ribes nevadense* also known as Sierra Currant or Mountain Pink.



This is an excellent bushy shrub that grows 3-6 feet high and requires little care. It is important to plant the currant with substantial afternoon shade which allows it to grow under pines along the edge of a yard. *Ribes nevadense* has dense drooping pink to red flower clusters which are especially attractive in the spring and then later the dark blue berries. It will turn yellow in the fall. It does not require a lot of water but should definitely be watered during the height of summer or during long dry periods. Prune your currant

in the spring cutting off any dead or broken branches and rake out the dropped leaves and other debris that may have collected over the winter.

The genus *Ribes* includes gooseberries and currants. Other native currants found in the Tahoe basin are the wax currant, alpine currant found mostly above 7500 feet and the sticky currant found at mostly at 8500 feet and above. There are several other varieties of currant in California but these are the the only native currants found in the Tahoe basin.

Information sources: Backyard Native Plants, Lesley V. Higgins;
Home Landscaping Guide for Lake Tahoe and Vicinity, John Cobourn, et. al.; Plants of the Tahoe Basin, Michael Graf; Native Treasures, M. Nevin Smith.

311 Fair Lane
Placerville, California 95667
(530) 621-5528



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