UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe Horticulture News

In This Issue

May 2016

Coordinator's Corner:

Greetings! We have been really busy gearing up for our Tahoe summer growing season! We are pleased to bring you some exciting projects, activities and workshops. Last month in April we held two great events in honor of Earth Day. On the south side of the Lake, we had a well attended talk on climate change by Bonnie Turnbull. On the north end of the Lake we had a summer kick-off of our phenology series at the Truckee Demonstration Garden. This month we will be back at the phenology work and will be coordinating a grow-out trial on strawberries! Yum!! Be sure to join us to take part in this project and to grow your own yummy strawberries.

We are gearing up for our 3rd annual June Day Jamboree & Plant Sale. The Jamboree/Plant Sale Committee have been putting in countless hours along with many other Master Gardeners propagating healthy, Tahoe-friendly plants. We are also busy getting ready for our series of public garden tours held around the Lake from mid-June to mid-August. We will have our first public garden tour at our 3rd Annual June Day Jamboree and Plant Sale. The event will be on Saturday, June 11th from 9 am -1 pm at LTCC. At the event, we will have informational booths, plants for sale and a tour of the Demonstration Garden. Please see the "upcoming events" section below for information on additional public tours. Also, be sure to sign-up for one of the Tahoe Friendly Landscaping Series held through Lake Tahoe Community College.

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We have a lot of great information to share with you this month. Use the **"In This Issue"** section to directly link to any of the articles. This will save you time in scrolling.

Sincerely,

Megan Suarez-Brand

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."

--Audrey Hepburn

UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe Plant Sale
Saturday, June 11th

Save the Date!

UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe

3rd Annual June Day Jamboree and Plant Sale!

When: Saturday, June 11th from 9 am to 1 pm

Where: Lake Tahoe Community College back parking lot next to the demonstration garden, One College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

What: Plant Sale!

- Free gardening educational booths
- Free gardening advice with UCCE Master Gardeners
- Free tour of the Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden
- Free live music with the Lake Tahoe Ukelele Players

For More Information: mesuarez@ucanr.edu, 530-723-9813

Learn it, Grow It, Teach it!

Become a UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe will begin recruiting for new volunteers this summer! We will be holding our next 11-12 week training in the fall of 2016. More details and information to follow. If you are interested and/or know someone who is please contact Program Coordinator, Megan Suarez-Brand at mesuarez@ucanr.edu or fill out the on-line interest survey.

Onion Phenology Part II: The Bermuda Onion

by: Dave Long, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

This is the second part in a phenology series on onions. Tahoe/Truckee is a little too far north and a bit too cold for the short day sweet onions, but sweet onions are big business in the southern states, and are key specialty crops in a variety of areas.

The Bermuda Onion - Progenitor of America's Sweet Onion

What began with the Wethersfield Large Red was just the start of the onion industry in the United States. The interest in the short day Bermuda Onion, a milder and sweeter yellow or white onion coincided with the drop in production of the Wethersfield Red, and a change in the palates of Americans away from the more crisp and pungent onions and towards a less pungent, sweeter onion. The sweet onions typically have higher moisture content and lower sulfur percentages than most onion types. The Bermuda Onion (and all sweet onions) benefited from better and faster shipping methods which compensated for the short storage times of the higher water content sweet onions. Some derivation of the Bermuda Onion had been grown on the Bermuda Islands since the 1600's, though as a local garden crop. Inexplicitly the seeds were always imported from the Canary Islands, which was the ultimate demise of the long term commercial viability of this onion. Clearly the Bermuda Onion had its own cache' during its time in the sun, with Mark Twain waxing elegantly over both the onion's taste and the locale. It is claimed that Ernest Hemingway, met Gregorio Fuentes, the inspiration for the main character in the Old Man and the Sea while Hemingway was headed to a Havana vegetable vendor looking to buy his beloved Bermuda Onion. During the height of this onion's popularity at the end of the 19th century the steamer SS Trinidad was bringing 30,000 twenty pound boxes of Bermuda

Onions to the US each week. Trade with the US nearly stopped during WWI, and a blight to the seed crop in the Canary Islands reduced the Bermuda Onion to a specialty crop. But Americans love of the onion was just starting, and Texas was to play a big role in modern onion cultivation.

Photo credit Texas Agrilife.

The influence of Texas on the American love affair with the onion, actually starts in 1889 Del Mar, California when the Del Mar Hotel, owned by "Colonel" Jacob Taylor burnt to the ground. Taylor an early developer of Del Mar packed what little he had and set out to develop a farming community in Demmit County in south Texas. Part of the development's attraction was the proposal to grow strawberries and onions - both crops being transplanted from California. By 1899 Taylor had started construction of a dam on the Nueces River. With water for irrigation and cheap land, many small farming operations settled in the area. In an effort to capitalize on the then popularity of the Bermuda Onion, Taylor arranged for the same Canary Island onion seed used for Bermuda Onions to be delivered to area farmers. While the onion was a success the strawberries were not. To further the marketing of the onions from Demmit County the Taylor development became the Bermuda Colony and eventually Bermuda, Texas. By 1917, in part due to limitations in shipping from Bermuda because of WWI, Bermuda Texas was shipping 7000 rail cars (20-40 tons/car) per year of the Texas Bermuda Onion. Following WWI as onion prices dropped dramatically and the reliability of the Canary Island seed became problematic the town of Bermuda was no more. Texas sweet onions however were just coming into their own.

Click here to continue reading.

Garden Workshop Series
Strawberry Phenology and Grow-out Trials

By: Jennifer Lenstrom, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

May 31, 2016 at 5:30 pm at the Truckee Demonstration Garden

Contact Ericka Kay at erickarkay@gmail.com to sign up

June 1, 2016 at 5:30 at the Historic Tahoe Hatchery, Tahoe City

Contact Alison Toy antoy@ucdavis.edu for details and to sign up

The purpose of the UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe Phenology and Grow-out Trial is to determine the suitability of the strawberry cultivars being evaluated to the weather and climate conditions found in the Truckee/Tahoe region. To facilitate the evaluation we are asking Master Gardeners and public gardeners with an interest in science reporting and with special interest in growing strawberries for personal consumption to assist.

Those participating will receive instructions on the history and cultivation techniques related to strawberries. ***Each participant will have the opportunity to receive at no cost several strawberry plants that they will be asked to grow in their home gardens.*** During the course of this study, those participating will be able to obtain assistance in cultivating the plants, including information on plant maintenance and pest management. The project is expected to take a minimum of two growing seasons.

Each participant is expected to provide information on garden location, garden conditions at the time of planting, proposed methods of cultivation and periodic updates related to plant growth and development. Transmittal of information is expected to be done via online forms.

The cultivars proposed to be evaluated are:

Earliglow: This is an outstanding early season June bearing cultivar that is popular with home gardeners and is often recommended for beginners. Our plants are from Nourse Farms.

Allstar: This is considered one of the best tasting mid-season cultivars, and is often recommended for beginners and home gardeners. (MG Note: this cultivar was originally listed by the USDA as being a late variety, that growers reported as being a mid-season variety). Our plants are from Nourse Farms.

Sparkle: This cultivar is considered a late, mid-season to late season cultivar, which does well with cooler temperatures. Sparkle is an old standby maybe even an heirloom. Productive even in cold climates. Our plants are from Nourse Farms.

Seascape: This is a Day Neutral or ever bearing variety. Developed by the University of California for commercial growers. Our plants are from Nourse Farms.

Fort Laramie: Released by the USDA's Cheyenne Wyoming Research Center Fort Laramie is extremely cold hardy. It is very vigorous, producing many runners and daughter plants. Fruit is on the large size, bright red with pink to red interior and very aromatic. A proven producer in Tahoe for one or two years.

Alpines: Alpines do not generally develop outstanding flavor and aroma until fully ripe. Alpine strawberries are a very good consideration for growing in containers, and planters. Those cultivars that do not produce stolons (like the two we have) were sometimes called bush alpine strawberries.

Reine des Vallees (Queen of the Valleys): An extremely old cultivar of the European F. vesca semperflorens known for famous taste and color. This plant has small berries that are held aloft often above the leaves. The plant is fairly long lived, forming a dense cushion of leaves. Seeds are viable and true to the cultivar, another option for propagation. Plants are from Michael Wellik's Strawberry Store.

Mignonette: Another old cultivar of F. vesca semperflorens perhaps more widely known and available than other alpine varieties. The berries are small with little taste until fully ripe. You can propagate from seed or dig up after a few seasons and replant the divided crowns. Plants are from Michael Wellik's Strawberry Store.

We hope that you will consider joining us on this project while enjoying the fruits of your work.

Summer 2016 Public Garden Tours Announced...

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe will be presenting a series of garden tours at five public gardens in and around the Tahoe Basin. We will be partnering with local organizations, garden clubs and non-profits to host the tours. The purposes of the tours are to:

a.) Introduce others to these gardens;

b.) Collect information on these gardens that can be distributed to other interested groups or individuals; and

c.) Consider using the collected information to develop a brochure or e-app for use by visitors to the Tahoe/Truckee area.

All of the tours will be co-hosted by other organizations as discussed below.

June 11th. Tour of the LTCC Demonstration Garden is co-hosted by the LTCC Demonstration Garden Committee and is being done in conjunction with the UCCE Master Gardener's Plant Sale. This Master Gardener led tour is about 30 minutes in length providing information on the history of the garden and highlighting many of the floral elements, erosion control methods and BMP aspects. The two tours are scheduled for 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM. The tour is free and open to the public. Contact David Long for more information, davidmlong@earthlink.net.

July 16th. Champagne Garden Tour of the Tallac Estates is co-hosted by the Tallac Association and the Lake Tahoe Garden Club. This approximately 2 hour tour starts at 10:00 AM on the rear lawn at the Great Hall. On-site parking is being provided. The tour includes exploring one or more of the site's buildings, and a walking tour visiting the key landscaped elements, including the vegetable garden, and water garden. A brief history of the site and current management components will be presented. The tour is free. Participation is restricted to Master Gardeners, members of the Garden Club and guests. Those attending will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire on the tour at its conclusion. Champagne and refreshments will be offered for sale. Proceeds go to the Tallac Association, Garden Club and Master Gardeners. Contact David Long davidmlong@earthlink.net for more information. Details on sign-ups will be found in the June Newsletter.

July 30th. The Tahoe City UC Davis Environmental Field Station Demonstration Garden is hosted by Lake of the Sky Garden Club, and is one of the stops for the Club's annual Garden Tour of Tahoe City. The full Tahoe City Garden Tour costs $25.00 and includes an additional 7 locations. Tours of the demonstration garden are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The Demonstration Garden tour can be self-guided, with excellent signage or docent led. Contact David Long davidmlong@earthlink.net for more information. Tickets for the Lake of the Sky Garden Tour can be purchased by contacting Judy Carter at 916-837-3432 or dird@sbcglobal.net.

August 13th. The Truckee Demonstration Garden (Annual Edible Garden Tour) is being cohosted by Slow Foods Lake Tahoe, which manages the Garden. The tour is open to Master Gardeners and the general public. A $5.00 donation is suggested for the tour of the Demonstration Garden alone. The tour of the Demonstration Garden will include a discussion on the history of the site, operational objectives and presentation of the longer term goals for the garden. Demonstrations or review of current on-site projects are planned. The site tour begins at 9:00 AM and is the initial stop for the Edible Garden Tour. The Slow Food Lake Tahoe (SFLT) Edible Garden Tour is 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, beginning in the Truckee Demonstration Garden in the Truckee Regional Park. Cost is $15 for non-member (SFLT members) and $10 for members. Join us for this tour of local, high-Sierra edible gardens. Get inspired by gardens of all shapes and sizes - from a beginner container garden to a high production permaculture greenhouse. Participants will leave with ideas for their own garden space and a few resources to get started! Contact Slow Foods Lake Tahoe info@slowfoodlaketahoe.org to sign up and for more information on the Edible Garden Tour ticket purchases.

August 30th. The Thunderbird Lodge Garden and Architectural Tour. This is a private tour of the George Whittell Jr. estate, known as the Thunderbird Lodge and is being offered by the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society. This docent led tour will explore both the gardens and the architecture of the site, as well as how the personality of George Whittell has infused those elements. The tour is limited to 25 individuals, and is restricted to Master Gardeners and their guests. Cost is $39.00 per person. There is limited on-site parking, with private car shuttle providing transport from off property parking to the meeting place. The tour starts promptly at 9:00 AM. Contact David Long at davidmlong@earthlink.net for more information. Details on reserving a space on the tour will be provided in the June and July newsletters.

Garden Tips- Growing Vegetables from Seeds

by Janet McDougall, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

Growing vegetables can be fun. It can also be frustrating. But in any case, growing vegetables provides a wonderful experience for us as we learn from our successes and mistakes.

There are a few things to keep in mind when growing vegetables from seed:

1) Growing Medium: Seeds should be started in a very light mix. Good seed starting mix can be purchased at many local Tahoe stores and is very inexpensive. You can also make your own.

2) Heat Mat: For many plant varieties, heat can really help the germination process, and a heat mat will heat the soil to help the process along. If you use one, just be sure to keep the plastic dome lid on while the seeds are germinating to trap the moisture and heat. Once the seedlings are up and roots have been established, the heat mat should be turned off to prevent the roots from burning. The dome should also be removed to allow the soil to begin to dry out slightly.

3) Grow Lights: Using a growing light can significantly speed up the growing process. If you use one, be sure to keep the light very close to the seedlings (approximately 1-3 inches) to prevent the plants from becoming leggy. As the plants grow, raise the light up slightly to accommodate their growth. Keep in mind that different plants will grow at different rates, so it is best to keep plants that will grow at the same rate under one light. (For example, don't grow green beans that grow tall quickly, with zucchini that will stay shorter for a longer period.) The light should be left on about 16 hours a day.

4) Transplanting Seedlings: Once true leaves are established, transplant seedlings into larger pots (or into a sheltered outdoor raised bed if possible). When transplanting, be sure to provide a light liquid fertilizer. Feed your plants a light dose of fertilizer about every 10-14 days through the growing process.

5) Hardening Off: It is critical that you harden off any plants that are started indoors. Begin by placing your plants outside in the shade, gradually moving them into more light. It is also very important that plants have the opportunity to sway in light wind to help strengthen their stems. You can also place the plants in front of a fan indoors to help with this process.

Bugs are Incredible-- The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Part I: The Good (Pollinators --Bees)

By: Bonnie Turnbull, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

This is the first piece in a mini-series on gardening and integrated pest management.

Bugs. ICK! Annoying flits circling your eyes. That tickle on your skin after dark. The whine of a mosquito. Stingers.

Okay. I agree--to a point. Who could love a mosquito--an insect which kills a million people a year? I keep my distance from big spiders, too.

But after that things get complicated for me. No bees? I'd be hand-pollinating my squash one blossom at a time. If I poisoned every caterpillar that chewed the tender innards of my cabbage, I'd lose all those dancing white butterflies. Like I said, complicated...

It's a recent fascination for me. What changed my heart and mind was my kindergartner. She cavorted through the yard with homemade butterfly net seeking "fairies." To her, those tiny creatures were fairies. My first instinct was to correct her and then, I remember deciding, why? Why aren't they fairies? They both live in their own tiny communities, inside a world of flowers, each with their own personality.

What really surprised me, was how many she found as she grew. She showed them to me, at first trapped inside her "bug box" and later in her photos. On my own, all I saw were the butterflies and grasshoppers and she taught me to look closely at the wonders of that unseen world. Together we found the mites that were sickening my beans. A few years before, I might have assumed they needed more water.

This article series is an invitation to you to get to know your tiny garden companions. The vast majority of the insects you will find in your yard are either benign or helpful. So I encourage you to get out your hand lens, go outside and look closely. Soon, you will start to notice that they are everywhere (sorry if that ruins your sleep). At our house, we don't call them fairies any more, but I do affectionately call them The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.

Part 1: The Good (Pollinators--Bees)

1600 species of bees live in California alone. Though you know something about (non-native) honey bees, and something about bumble bees, you probably have never even noted other kinds at all. But their names inspire the imagination--leaf-cutting bees, long-horned bees, carpenter bees, ultra green sweat bees, wool carder bees, and cuckoo bees.

They can be just a few millimeters or a few centimeters long. They can be green, grey, black, blue, or yellow with patterns of dots or stripes. They can be long and slender, fat and round, fuzzy or metallic. Our native bees will seldom bother you. In fact, my daughter has learned to pick up and pet some of the slow, fuzzy ones in our garden.Their first instinct is always to fly away and males cannot sting at all. Bees get a bad reputation because we confuse them with yellow jackets (wasps) which aren't the same creature at all.

Before the historical clearcutting of Tahoe, (The Bad AND The Ugly!) large trees grew farther apart. Wildflowers and their pollinators inhabited the sunny meadows in between. Now, much of that habitat is gone and with it, those interconnected webs of life. Our landscaping does not usually substitute at all. This is true nearly everywhere in the world and bee populations have plummeted.

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Spotlight on a Lake Tahoe Public Garden:
Truckee Demonstration Garden

by Ericka Kay, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

This is the second in a series on public gardens in Lake Tahoe. Each newsletter we hope to highlight a new "public garden, demonstration garden, public space that exemplifies a Tahoe-friendly landscape."

No one knows exactly when the Truckee Community Garden was started, but we do know it has been in the Truckee Regional Park for around 20 years! Despite being a well-intentioned project, the garden has suffered through many periods of inattention and neglect.

Around 2008, a group of passionate gardeners and local farm advocates organized a grassroots garden revitalization project. With several hundred dollars and a very large donation from CATT, the garden fence was built along with new garden beds and an irrigation system.

In 2010 Project MANA received a grant through Nevada County and was able to hire a part time garden manager. Having a vested employee and a bit of funding really improved the garden's impact on the community. Its notoriety grew, participation numbers increased and food production was a success. After the grant money ran out, programming became more difficult and once again the garden suffered a lack of community engagement.

In 2014, Slow Food Lake Tahoe took over the garden and is attempting to re-envision the space once again, by changing the model from a "Community Garden" into a "Demonstration Garden." The core purpose of the space is the same as it has always been - to share gardening with our community and inspire more local gardens to thrive in our unique high-altitude climate. The mission of the Truckee Demonstration Garden is to cultivate a community committed to local food production and increased local food security, through education and demonstration of high-altitude gardening techniques.

The goals of the Demonstration Garden are to:

- Educate the community on sustainable, high-altitude gardening techniques.
- Encourage food security and self-reliance by growing fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs.
- Inspire the spread of more home gardens throughout the local community.
- Provide food for donation and charity.
- Promote a vibrant community space.

The garden offers public workshops on a variety of subjects. Ericka Kay, UCCE Master Gardener managed the Demonstration Garden in 2015 and will be returning in the 2016 season to organize garden workshops and events.

We are currently looking for people to present workshops in the garden.

The public is encouraged to attend garden workshops. To stay up to date on our events and workshops like us on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/truckeegarden/?fref=ts) and check out the Slow Food Lake Tahoe website http://www.slowfoodlaketahoe.org/.

Flower Power-Sunflower

Sunflowers - Helianthus annuus

An American Original

The unmistakable sunflower is truly an American original, being an all-purpose impressive flower for any garden having adequate sun and space for this plant. If you're looking for jaw-dropping giant plants and flowers that will make your neighbors envious; or want to attract bees, birds and butterflies; or want another tasty food crop; or love complex mathematical equations that occur in nature then you must grow Helianthus. Except for the three or four species endemic to South America, all the 60 plus species of sunflowers are natives of North America.

Some are perennial, some are multi-branched, with multiple flower heads but most are annuals, and many including Helianthus annuus, have a single stem and single flower head. Helianthus tuberosus is a multi-stemmed perennial that is often grown for its edible tubers under the name Jerusalem Artichoke. The Helianthus group also can be an invasive or problem weed in many agricultural settings. Helianthus annuus is the common domesticated species and has dozens of recognized cultivars - from Johnny's Seeds dwarf Sunny Smile F1 hybrid (6-20 inch height) to the Mammoth Russian Sunflower is 9-12 ft. tall!

Grown in the Americas for thousands of years as a food, medicinal plant, materials plant (dyes) and for ritualist symbolism, the seeds and plants were taken to Europe by early explorers and botanists. In Europe, especially Eastern Europe, many of today's lineages were developed. Since about the 1800's interest in the flowers for the cut flower trade (Van Gough's paintings) led to further varietal developments, including those having no pollen (pollen falling from vased flowers would stain rugs and table clothes and dust the furniture). If grown as a food crop the size of the flower head and seeds are a consideration, with many of the taller fertile varieties your prime choice.

The plants have serrated or coarsely toothed leaves that are alternate in position. The stem is hairy with the hairs stiff and prickly. The flower head is actually a disk of many flowers (each seed has its own 5 petalled flower) with the flower head "petals" being modified asymmetric fused ray petals. The arrangement of the seed flowers on the disk maximizes the number of seeds within the disk diameter. That arrangement can be shown as an equation known as Fermat's Spiral.

The cultivation of sunflowers, even in Tahoe is quite simple though successfully reaching maturity can be a roll of the dice. While starting indoors for transplanting after the threat of frost has passed is an option, sunflowers generally do not transplant well and can go into a funk for several weeks before showing renewed growth. Direct sowing into a prepared bed is a more common approach, but some protection (birds, chipmunks, squirrels, skunks, and raccoons) of newly planted seeds should be considered. This could be done with groundcovers, hardware cloth, hoop house type coverings, or flagging. Smaller sunflower varieties are good in

containers or planters. Once sprouted the seedlings are susceptible to rabbits, deer, inchworms and for newly emerging plants, earwigs. Mature plants with flower heads are a target for aphids. Mature flower heads with seeds attract birds, squirrels, chipmunks and the occasional bear.

Plant seeds about 1 inch deep, 12-18 inches apart in rows 24 inches apart. Over seeding is an option with thinning occurring while plants are less than one foot tall. Soil should be well draining, with plenty of organic matter, and high fertility. Germination takes 7-14 days at the optimum soil temperature of 70-75F. Germination stalls out with soil temperatures below 50F. From sprout to mature plant takes 60-110 days at temperatures above 60F and plenty of sun - depending on variety. The growing plant does not tolerate dry soil so regular watering is important. Side dressing with a fast acting fertilizer is beneficial during the mid-stage growth.

If grown for cut flowers, remove the flowers during the cool morning hours, using a sharp knife or shears. Place cut stem in water as soon as practical. If seed production is the goal, allow the head to dry on the plant, until the "petals" shrivel and the head droops. Remove the flower head and hang in dry area until seeds are easily removed from disk. Store seeds in dry location before sealing in air tight container. If roasted seeds are your objective, take air dried raw seeds soak them for at least 12 hours (alternately you can bring to boil then simmer for 10 minutes), in a single layer place on a cookie sheet and bake at 400F for 15-30 minutes, until completely dry and have a slightly browned appearance. In need of salted sunflower seeds? Prepare as above but with salt added to the soaking water. I recommend that you test a few seeds during the roasting period every 3-4 minutes to make sure they are fully dry and roasted. Damp or wet seeds are prone to mold.

Lastly, the name helianthus refers to the sun, but how the sun affects this flower's name is open to discussion. Is it the sun like flower disk and rays that call the sun into mind or is it the impressive size and shape of the flower? Or is it the claim that the flower head track the sun? This latter, called phototropism, is a bit misunderstood by most people as it relates to the sunflower. Do sunflower plants track the sun? The answer is yes, but it is only the immature flower heads that track the sun. Once the flower disk starts to open, the heads stop following the sun, and uniformly will look and stay looking eastward.

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Tahoe Trees & Plants: Woods Rose

Woods Rose--*Rosa woodsii*

Woods rose grows throughout the western states and portions of British Columbia. Within the Sierra Nevada Mountains it is generally found growing as thickets on moist sites under coniferous forest. Woods rose is a stout deciduous shrub which generally obtains heights between 3-6 feet. The reddish brown stems are armed with numerous bristles. The flowers which are usually solitary at the ends of branchlets are 1-2 inches wide and vary in color from pink to red. Flowers bloom from June to July. At maturity the sepals and other flower parts fall away leaving behind the bare reddish rose hip (fruit).

Woods rose will grow in dense thickets and has deep spreading roots, making it a good plant for slope stabilization and erosion control. Additionally, the attractive blossoms and fruit make it a good choice as a screening plant in landscape plans. The fruit of Woods rose are a valuable food source for a variety of birds and other wildlife found in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Woods rose may be propagated from either seed, vegetative cuttings or suckers. Seed may be collected during the fall months. Seed should be cleansed of any residual pulp and allowed to dry. Seed may be directly

planted and allowed to "over winter" in the soil. However, for better results seed should be pretreated by cold stratification to break dormancy and sown in the spring when soil temperature and moisture are more favorable. Stratification may be accomplished by mixing the seeds in moist sand and storing them in plastic bags in the refrigerator for 3-6 months. Seeds should be planted approximately 1 - 1 1/2 inches deep in well-drained soils in sunny locations.

Watering requirements will vary with the weather, nature of the soil and the age of the plant. Seedlings and younger plants may require weekly applications of water during the first growing season. Once plants become established less frequent applications of water will be necessary. When under water stress, plant growth will slow and older leaves will yellow and wither prematurely. If these conditions occur, increase the frequency of water applications.

Container grown plants are available at local Tahoe nurseries. Such plants would allow for a more rapid establishment of Woods rose than any of the previous mentioned methods. Container grown stock should be planted in holes which are twice as wide and 6 inches deeper than the root mass. The roots should be extended positioned so that they are not curled or twisted. Backfill the hole half way with soil and then fill with water. The water will help settle and firm the soil around the roots eliminating air spaces and provide good root-soil contact. After the water has drained, finish backfilling the hole such that the upper level is even with the soil surface. Tamp the soil to eliminate air pockets and prevent settlement. When completed, the root collar should be level with the solid soil surface. Form a shallow saucer around the plant by building a ridge of soil around the edge of the hole. This will contain the water and allow for a deeper penetration of the water. Applying a mulch around the plant will help retain the soil moisture and thus reduce the watering needs.

Reference information provided by: Plants of the Lake Tahoe Basin (University of Nevada Cooperative Extension & NRCS)

Vegetable Spotlight: Asparagus

By: Dave Long, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

Asparagus--Asparagus officinalis

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe recently started a comparative phenology and grow-out trail with citizen gardeners in the Truckee area, looking into the identification of asparagus cultivars suitable for home gardeners in the Tahoe/Truckee area. The Truckee Demonstration Garden organized the event which included hands on planting techniques. Each participant received several cultivars to try. This study is expected to take two or three growing seasons. During this time the gardeners will be reporting on how their crops are progressing and will be provided assistance if problem arise.

If you are looking for a hardy perennial to add to your Truckee/Tahoe edible landscape or want an easy to care for element for your vegetable garden, consider the Asparagus. Asparagus, is a low maintenance (after getting established) plant that can provide a delicious seasonal treat from the garden for 15-25 years! If you do consider adding this interesting plant to your garden, select the site as carefully as you would for a tree, since once established the root crowns will send up edible shoots, or when not harvested, fern like fronds for years. This native to the most of Europe, the Mediterranean and western Asia was once assigned to the lily family, though taxonomic revisionists now have placed asparagus into its own family, the Asparagaceae, which includes the familiar asparagus fern house plant and the lace fern used in the florist trade to add greenery for bouquets (neither are true ferns).

Egypt is where the first records (~ 5000 BC) are found related to asparagus as a food. Domesticated asparagus grown as a crop is reported from Macedonia around 200 BC. The later Romans seemed to have elevated the plant to near mystical levels as a component in the Feast of Epicurus, and as a medical herb helpful for sexual fatigue. Its role as an aphrodisiac pops up throughout the middle ages. It is claimed that asparagus tips were served to Madame Pompadour (1721-1764) under the culinary title "points d'amour." Its appearance in the United States is a bit muddled with reports indicating early English colonists brought the plants over and Thomas Jefferson later growing it at Monticello. The other version being that commercial asparagus growing in the US begins in the middle of the 19th century.

California leads the nation in asparagus production, accounting for nearly 50% of all asparagus grown in the US. Primary growing regions are in the Central Valley, Monterrey County, and surprisingly Imperial County. Stockton in San Joaquin County holds an Asparagus festival each spring. China is the world leader in asparagus production by a wide margin. In the Tahoe area, gardeners do grow this fern like plant and there are unconfirmed reports that stands of asparagus gone wild can be found streamside in the Glenbrook area, an escaped relict from Glenbrook House days.

Click here to continue reading.

Upcoming Workshops & Events…

May 3rd: Tree Mortality in the Lake Tahoe Basin--Causes and Consequences with Patricia Maloney of UC Davis TERC, Tahoe City for Environmental Sciences, Incline Village, http://terc.ucdavis.edu/events/upcoming-events/. (Free)

May 7th: Monarch Butterfly & Native Plant Workshop, 1 pm to 4 pm at the Washoe Nursery, pre-registration required, michelle_hunt@fws.gov. (Free)

May 31st: Strawberry Phenology Workshop, 5:30 pm at the Truckee Demonstration Garden, Truckee Regional Park. More info to follow. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners, Tahoe Food Hub and UC Davis TERC.

June 4th: Tahoe Friendly Landscaping: Remove your lawn the easy way and Design a water-wise garden, 9 am to 12 pm, LTCC. ($) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, South Tahoe Public Utility District and LTCC Connect Ed.

June 7th: The Power of Pollinators: educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners & Sierra House Growing Dome.

June 11th: June Day Jamboree and Master Gardener Plant Sale, 9 am to 1 pm at LTCC parking lot near demo garden. Plants will be available for purchase. There will be Master Gardeners on hand to answer questions and make recommendations. We will also be giving a tour of the LTCC Demonstration Garden (Free/ $ plants)

June 14th: Lake Tahoe Basin Invasive Weeds Identification Workshop, 1 pm to 4 pm at USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Register online at http://ucanr.edu/laketahoeweedcourse.

June 14th: Vermiculture workshop, 5:30 pm at the Truckee Demonstration Garden, Truckee Regional Park. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe & Tahoe FoodHub.

June 18th: Tahoe Friendly Landscaping: Drip Irrigation Basics, 9 am to 12 pm, LTCC. ($) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, South Tahoe Public Utility District and LTCC Connect Ed.

June 21st: Firewise Landscaping: Educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

June 25th: Tahoe Friendly Landscaping: Garden Installation and Care, 9 am to 12 pm, LTCC. ($) UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, South Tahoe Public Utility District and LTCC Connect Ed.

July 5th: Educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

July 16th: Public Garden Tour at Tallac Historic Site, please see above for additional details.

July 19th: Educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

July 30th: Lake of the Sky Garden Club: North Shore Garden Tour--(http://californiagardenclubs.com/content/lake-sky-garden-club) ($)

August 2nd: Plant Propagation: educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

August 16th: Educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

September 13th: Planting Fall bulbs: educational booth at the South Lake Tahoe Farmers Market, 9 am to 12 pm, American Legion. (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe.

September 13th: Phenology workshop, 5:00 pm at Truckee Demonstration Garden, Truckee Regional Park. Bring a bib and more info to follow! (Free) Sponsored by UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, Tahoe FoodHub & UC Davis TERC.

Horticultural Review & Notes....

by Dave Long, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

Podcast: *You Bet Your Garden hosted by Mike McGrath from Public Radio Station WHYY in Philadelphia*

Finding something interesting to listen to on long drives was the reason for me to download a couple podcasts of this popular radio show hosted by author and radio personality Mike McGrath. The podcasts are basically archived shows, selected because of interesting topics or calls made to the show from listeners. Mike's background is in organic growing which has a

strong presence on the show. The typical format is a series of calls from average gardeners asking questions, which Mike tries to address. At about the midpoint of the show Mike will take time to focus on a single topic which is the title aspect for that particular show. "Growing Scrumptious Garlic" was a podcast that caught my eye. The discussion takes the majority of the remaining time on the show which lasts around 50 minutes. In the time allocated Mike goes over the basics of the plant, growing techniques, and varietal characteristics. The key here is that there is only enough time for basic information.

While the call-in show may claim a nationwide audience (though not broadcast on the west coast), the vast majority of listeners are from the eastern US, with calls, questions and responses reflecting that fact. Discussions of soils, pests, weather patterns, and suggested horticultural solutions are a bit foreign to a western listener. Still listening in on questions from perplexed weekend gardeners is entertaining in of by itself. The free downloads from iTunes made the investment of listening time worth the cost - but not by much. So I'm still looking for relevant content for western or high altitude gardeners.

Live Streaming Radio: *Homestead Radio Hour hosted by Phyllis Boorinakis and Julia Boorinakis Harper on Public Radio Station KVMR in Nevada City California*

A bit closer to Tahoe but covering much more than gardening is the quirky Homestead Radio Hour hosted by a mother daughter team of Phyllis Boorinakis and Julia Boorinakis Harper. The show is promoted as backyard farming and urban homesteading for those who wish to be as self-sufficient as possible, without large amounts of land or time. The one hour per month show (1-2 PM on the third Friday of the month) typically covers one or two topics or events, with guests in the studio to discuss the topic or event. While the website indicates pod cast of archived shows are available - I have not yet found a listing for any podcasts. The website does have a few 15 minute shorts that cover a number of topics from beekeeping to food preserving. A liberal dose of garden and food production information and tips are included in the shorts.

[redacted]

Sincerely,

Megan Suarez-Brand, Program Coordinator & UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe Contributors: Alison Toy, Dave Long, Bonnie Turnbull, Janet McDougall and Jennifer Lennstrom

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe strive to meet the horticulture needs of the Lake Tahoe Basin Community, we are pleased to extend research-based information to fellow gardeners on home horticulture. Our Master Gardener volunteers receive training and certification from the University of California Cooperative Extension and provide practical scientific gardening information.

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