Tahoe Friendly Plants

UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe
What is a Tahoe Friendly Plant?

A Tahoe Friendly Plant is either a native or adapted plant that fits well within our Tahoe ecosystem.

What is Native? A plant species is actually native to the ecoregion where it has evolved in concert with soils, climate, fauna and other members of the plant community. This process of adaptation and evolution is ongoing and helps to perpetuate species even as conditions change.

What is Adapted? Adapted plants are not native and not invasive but are able to thrive in the local climate and soil conditions.
Ease of maintenance...

Utilizing native and adapted plants in your garden will require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides and will ideally thrive in your Tahoe yards and gardens.

Of course we still need to follow the rule of right plant right place...
Right Plant Right Place

- **Fire Adapted Gardening:** Don’t plant any woody plants within the 0-5 ft zone of any structure. For the most part all the plants listed in this power point are ok but you should still always be cautious in that Zone 1 (0-5 ft area)

- **Plant groupings:** Arrange plants that have similar attributes to one another so that they are getting the right amount of water, sun and soil needs. Also, you can group for staggered blooms and colors.

- **Water needs/Irrigation:** have a plan on how and when you are going to water before putting anything in the ground.
Fire Adapted Gardening

Zone 1: 0-5 ft
Zone 2: 5-10 ft
Zone 3: 10-30 ft.
Full Sun

These plants need six hours or more in direct sunlight during the growing season. Less light will typically result in less growth and bloom production.
Arnica
Arnica chamissonis

Native Plant
Tolerates partial shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Heartleaf Arnica
*Arnica cordifolia*

Native Plant
Tolerates partial shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Aster, Western Mountain
*Aster occidentalis*

Native (4 to Tahoe) & Adapted Plant
Tolerates partial shade
 Needs medium soil moisture
Baby’s Breath
_Gypsophila spp._

Adapted Plant
Classic bouquet filler
Needs medium soil moisture
Bee Balm
*Monarda hybrids*

Adapted plant
Can tolerate partial shade
Fragrant flowers
Attracts hummingbirds
Needs medium soil moisture
Blanketflower
*Gaillardia aristata*

Adapted plant
Can tolerate partial shade
Needs dry to medium soil moisture
Blue Fescue
*Festuca glauca* 
(*F. cinerea*)

Adapted plant
Grass groundcover
Can tolerate partial shade
Good rock garden plant
Needs moderate to medium soil moisture
Blue Oat Grass
*Heliotrichon sempervirens*

Adapted plant

Tolerates regular shade

Needs regular soil moisture

Slow growing, clumping grass

2-3 ft. tall
Candytuft

*Iberis sempervirens*

Adapted plant
Tolerates regular shade
Good rock garden groundcover
Good companion with phlox
Fragrant flowers
Needs moderate to medium soil moisture
Catmint
*Nepeta spp.*

Adapted plant
Tolerates regular shade
Drought tolerant
Fragrant
Size variants 6” – 4 ft.
Cinquefoil
*Potentilla hybrids*

Native and Adapted varieties

Groundcovers to shrubs

Needs medium to wet soils
Coneflower
*Echinacea purpurea*

Adapted
Relatively easy to grow reaches 2 ft.
Drought tolerant
Attracts pollinators
Needs medium to wet soils
Coreopsis cultivars

*Coreopsis hybrids*

Adapted

Commonly called ‘tickseed’

Relatively easy to grow member of the sunflower family

Needs dry to medium soils (do not need amendments)
Daisy, Coulter’s
*Erigeron hybrids*

Native and Adapted
Shrubby flowers
Tolerates partial shade
Needs medium to wet soils
Daylily
_Hemerocallis hybrids_

Native and Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Many varieties and colors
Needs medium soil moisture
Delphinium
*Delphinium hybrids*

Native and Adapted

Needs medium to wet soil moisture

Many varieties and colors
Dusty Miller
*Artemisia hybrids*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Good groundcover
Fragrant
Self-sows freely
Light to moderate soil moisture
Blue Flax
*Linum lewisii*

Native
Partial shade
Self-sows freely
Blue flowers
Dry to moderate soil moisture
Foxglove
*Digitalis hybrids*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Attracts pollinators
Grows to 2-3 ft tall
Needs moderate soil moisture
Fuschia, California
Zauschneria californica

Adapted
Needs dry to moderate soil moisture
Attracts hummingbirds
Gayfeather
*Liatris spicata*

- Adapted
- Self sows freely
- Attracts pollinators
- Needs medium to wet soil
Geum
*Geum chilense*

- Adapted
- Drought tolerant
- Needs good drainage
- Reaches 1-2 ft. tall
- Needs moderate to medium soil moisture
- Many colors and varieties
Gilia (Star or Scarlet)
*Ipomopsis aggregata*

Native
Tolerates partial shade
Often difficult to grow
Biennial
Needs low to moderate soil moisture
Commonly called skyrocket
Globeflower
*Trollius*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Needs moderate to medium water
Hops
*Humulus*

Adapted

Fast growing perennial vine

Can grow up to 15 ft.

Needs mediums soil moisture
Iris, Hartweg’s
*Iris hybrids*

Native & Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Needs mediums to wet soil moisture
Japanese Blood Grass
*Imperata cylindrica* ‘Rubra’

- Adapted
- Drought tolerant
- Clumping grass
- Good fall color
- Needs medium soil moisture
Joe-Pye Weed
*Eupatorium purpureum*

Adapted
Attracts pollinators
May be hard to find locally
Tolerates part shade
Needs moderate to medium soil moisture
Lamb’s Ear
*Stachys byzntina*

Adapted

Very competitive

Drought tolerant

Tolerates part shade

Needs dry to medium soil moisture

White soft leaves with pink flowers

Good border plant to keep out rabbits and other garden pests
Larkspur, Mountain
*Delphinium glaucum*

Native & Adapted
Sun to part shade
Needs wet soil moisture
Can grow 3-4 ft. tall
Blue flowers
Lupine
*Lupinus* spp.

Native & Adapted
Tolerates part shade
Needs dry to medium soil moisture

Native species: *Lupinus brewers* is a good native groundcover option. Commonly called brewer’s lupine.
Mallow
Malva alcea

Adapted
Easy to grow
Needs good drainage
Drought tolerant
Needs moderate soil moisture.
Pennyroyal
Monardella odoratissima

Native
Foliage herb
Difficult to grow
Needs dry soils
Can be toxic to dogs if ingested
Many medicinal properties for humans
Penstemon, Azure
*Penstemon hybrids*

Native & Adapted
Good rock garden plant
Needs dry to medium soil moisture

*P. heterodoxus* is a good groundcover
Peony

*Paeonia hybrids*

Adapted
Doesn’t transplant well
Tolerates partial shade
Fragrant flowers
Requires well drained soil and needs wet soil
Phlox, summer
*Phlox hybrids*

Native & Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Needs dry to moderate soil moisture
Pincushion flower
*Scabiosa caucasica*

Adapted
Low growing plant
Blooms most of summer
Needs well drained soil
Needs moderate to medium soil moisture
Pink, Chinese
*Dianthus chinensis*

Adapted

Tolerates partial shade

Thrives in light, well draining soil

Good groundcover

Needs moderate soil moisture
Poppy, California
*Eschscholzia californica*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Drought tolerant
Reseeds easily
Annual
Needs medium soil moisture
Poppy, Oriental
*Papaver orientale*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Primrose
*Primula spp.*

Adapted

Plant in organically enriched, well drained soil

Needs medium soil moisture
Red-Hot Poker
*Kniphofia uvaria*

Adapted
Attracts birds
Drought tolerant
Needs dry to medium soil moisture
Saxifrage
*Saxifraga bryophora*

Native
Tolerates partial shade
Good rock garden plant
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Sea Holly
*Eryngium amethystinum*

Adapted
Drought tolerant
Prefers dry well-drained soil
Can handle poor to moderate soil moisture
Sibbaldia
*Sibbaldia spp.*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Good rock garden plant
Needs medium soil moisture
Snow in Summer
*Cerastium tomentosum*

Adapted

Good plant for rock gardens, groundcover or as edging

Drought tolerant

Needs well drained soil
Speedwell, Pink Wooly
*Veronica incana*

Adapted
Good groundcover
Drought tolerant
Needs dry to medium soil moisture
Stonecrop
*Sedum spp.*
Native and adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Attracts pollinators
Succulent perennial
Groundcover varieties available
Easy to grow
Can sustain dry soils
Strawberry, Mountain  
_Fragaria virginiana_

Native  
Tolerates partial shade  
Good groundcover  
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Sulfur Buckwheat
Eriogonum umbellatum

Native
Drought tolerant
Good rock garden plant
Needs little to moderate soil moisture
Sweet William
*Dianthus barbatus*

Adapted

Good rock garden plant

Attracts butterflies

Many cultivars available

Needs moderate soil moisture
Wallflower, Siberian
*Erysimum hieraciifolium*

Adapted
Tolerates partial shade
Good groundcover
Needs medium soil moisture
Yarrow
* Achillea hybrids *

Adapted
‘Moonshine’ is not aggressive and requires less maintenance than other varieties
Tolerates partial shade
Attracts butterflies
Drought tolerant
Needs dry to medium soil moisture
Partial Shade

These plants can survive in an area with filtered sun instead of direct sun. If plants do get direct sun it is usually early or late in the day.
Alumroot or Coral Bells *Heuchera spp.*

Native and adapted
Attractive foliage and flowering groundcover
Needs wet to medium soil moisture
Black Snakeroot
*Cimifuga (Actaea) racemosa*

Adapted
Needs moist, well drained soils
Bleeding Heart

*Dicentra hybrids*

Adapted

Tolerates shade

Self-sows freely

Needs medium soil moisture
Campanula, Bellflower
*Campanula hybrids*

Adapted

Full sun in cooler climates

Will spread once they start growing

Needs moderate to regular water.
Cinquefoil, Spring
Potentilla neumanniana

Adapted
Full sun in cooler climates
Will spread once they start growing
Needs moderate to regular water.
Columbine
Aquilegia hybrids

Adapted
Attracts hummingbirds
Needs well drained soils with medium soil moisture
Common Thrift
*Armeria maritima*

Adapted

Good rock garden plant

Needs wet to medium soil moisture
Cranesbill
*Geranium himalayense*

Adapted
Good rock garden plant
Self-sows freely
Needs moist to well-drained soils
Creeping Buttercup
*Ranunculus repens*

- Adapted
- Sun to shade
- Easy growing groundcover
- Needs regular soil moisture
Herman’s Pride
*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*

Adapted
Partial shade to full shade
Good rock garden plant and groundcover
Drought tolerant
Needs regular soil moisture
Jacob’s Ladder
*Polemonium occidentale*

Native
Attracts butterflies
Needs regular soil moisture
Lady’s Mantle
*Alchemilla mollis*

Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Good groundcover
Needs medium soil moisture
Ligularia, Ragwort
*Ligularia dentate*

Adapted

Needs moist soils
Maiden Grass
*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'

Adapted
Sun or partial shade
Needs regular to moderate moisture
Meadow Rue
*Thalictrum*

- Adapted
- Likes winter chill
- Protect it from wind
- Attracts butterflies
- Needs regular soil moisture
Meadowsweet
*Filipendula*

Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Monkshood
*Aconitum hybrids*

Native & Adapted
Partial shade to shade
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Plantain Lily
*Hosta hybrids*

Adapted
Partial shade to shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Rhubarb, Ornamental
*Rheum*

Adapted
Grows extremely well in Tahoe
Tolerates sun and needs regular water
Strawberry, wood

Fragaria vesca

Adapted
Good rock garden plant
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Thimbleberry  
*Rubus parviflorus*

Adapted
Needs good drainage
Needs medium soil moisture
Drought tolerant
White flowers with red berries
Deciduous groundcover
Thyme
*Thymus hybrids*

Adapted
Drought tolerant
Attracts pollinators
Fragrant and needs little to moderate soil moisture
Shade

These plants can survive and germinate under low light conditions. Most of the shade plants can tolerate partial sun. Shade plants also tend to need a little more water. If possible, try and keep snow around them as long as possible which can help with limiting water needs.
Astilbe, False Spirea 
*Astilbe spp.*

Adapted 
Needs medium soil moisture 
Prefer rich organic soil 
Also commonly called False Goat’s Beard
Bracken, Fern  
*Pteridium aquilinum*

Native
Summer & fall deciduous
Partial to full shade
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Lily of the Valley
Convallaria majalis

Adapted
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Lungwort
*Pulmonaria*

Adapted

Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Monkeyflower
*Mimulus spp.*
Adapted and native
Tolerates partial sun
Groundcover
Needs wet soil moisture
Solomon’s Seal
*Polygonatum*

Adapted
Partial to full shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Spiderwort
*Trdescentia virginiana*

Adapted
Sun or shade
Self sows freely
Attracts butterflies
Needs medium soil moisture
Sweet Woodruff, Bedstraw
*Asperula odorata*

Native
Flowering groundcover
Needs medium soil moisture
Virginia Chain Fern
*Woodwardia virginica*

Adapted

Needs medium soil moisture
Wood Fern  
*Dryopteris*

Adapted  
Partial to full shade  
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Deciduous Trees & Shrubs
Aspen  
*Populus tremuloids*

Native

Full sun

Gorgeous fall colors

Spreads by root suckers, forms groves (be careful not to plant near sewer lines)

Needs regular soil moisture
Birch
Betulla spp.

Adapted

Check zones for individual species

Needs regular soil moisture
This plant is a high fire risk. It should not be planted within Zone 1 (0-5 ft) and Zone 2 (5 – 10 ft) of your home or structure.

**Bitterbrush**  
*Purshia tridentata*

Native
Sun
Attracts birds, beneficial insects & pollinators
Drought tolerant
Needs low soil moisture
Reduce & separate individual plants
Keep free of pine needles and dead branches
Bittercherry
*Prunus emarginata*

Native

Needs moderate soil moisture

Limit next to structures

Moderate growth rate

Often forms thickets so will need to be maintained

Sun or part shade

This plant should not be planted within Zone 1 (0-5 ft) of your home or structure.
Bittercherry
*Prunus emarginata*

Native

Needs moderate soil moisture

Limit next to structures

Moderate growth rate

Often forms thickets so will need to be maintained

Sun or part shade

This plant should not be planted within Zone 1 (0-5 ft) of your home or structure.
Blue Elderberry

*Prunus emarginata*

Native

Full sun to part shade

Attracts birds, beneficial insects and pollinators

Needs regular water

Herbaceous growth dies back to the ground every winter
Burning Bush
*Euonymus alatus*

Adapted
Attracts birds
Good fall color
Drought tolerant
Needs moderate to regular water
Butterfly Bush
*Buddleja*

Adapted
Sun or light shade
Moderate to regular water
Cherry, flowering

*Prunus*

Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Spring flowers
Moderate water
Fragrant flowers
Chokeberry
Aronia melanocarpa

Adapted
Partial sun to sun
Fall color and berries
Medium to wet soil
Drought tolerant
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Chokecherry
*Prunus virginiana*

Native

Berries

Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.
Cinquefoil
*Potentilla fruticosa*

Native and adapted
Sun to partial shade
Flowering
Medium to wet soil
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Creambush, (oceanspray)  
*Holodiscus discolor*

Native  
Sun to partial shade  
Flowering  
Dry to medium soil moisture  
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.
Creeping Snowberry
*Symphoricarpos mollis*

Full sun to shade
Occasional deep watering
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.
Dogwood

*Cornus*

Adapted and native

Partial shade

Large variety of shrubs and trees

Regular water

Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.
Golden Currant
*Ribes aureum*

- Sun to partial shade
- Flowers and berries
- Medium to dry soil
- Moisture
- Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.
Golden Chain Tree
Laburnum x watereri ‘Vossii’

Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Yellow chains of flowers
All parts poisonous
Medium soil moisture
Hawthorn, Washington

*Laburnum x watereri* ‘Vossii’

Adapted
Sun to part shade
Good specimen tree for spring flowers and fall color
Moderate soil moisture
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Honeysuckle
*Lonicera*

- Adapted
- Attracts birds
- Sun to partial shade
- Moderate to regular water
- Fragrant flowers
- Drought tolerant
Maple
_Acer spp._

Adapted
Shade to full sun
Moderate to regular water
Check zones for individual species
Maple, Vine  
_Acer circinatum_  

Adapted  
Shade  
Attracts birds, pollinators & beneficial insects  
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Mock Orange, California
*Philadelphus lewisii*

- Native
- Light shade
- Moderate water
- Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Mock Orange, Sweet

*Philadelphus coronarius*

Adapted
Partial shade
Must have good drainage
Needs moderate to regular soil moisture
Mountain Alder

*Alnus incana 'tenuifolia'

Native
Sun to partial shade
Small tree
Needs wet soil
Mountain Ash
*Sorbus spp.*
Native and adapted
Partial shade to shade
Small tree or shrub
Medium to wet soil
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Mountain Whitethorn
*Ceanothus cordulatus*

Full sun to light shade

Little or no water

Drought tolerant

High fire hazard

Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects.

This plant is a high fire risk. It should not be planted within Zone 1 (0-5 ft) and Zone 2 (5 – 10 ft) of your home or structure.
Nine Bark
*Physocarpus capitatus*

Native
Sun to partial shade
Moderate to regular soil moisture
Fragrant white flowers
Drought tolerant
Attracts birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects
Oak
*Quercus spp*

Native & Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Needs moderate soil moisture
Fall color
Plum, Purple leaf or Flowering
Prunus cerasifera ‘Atropurpurea’

Adapted
Sun to partial shade
Good specimen for tree fall color
Needs medium soil moisture
Rose, Rugosa
*Rosa Rugosa*

Adapted
Disease resistant
Naturalizes
Needs medium soil moisture
Rose, Woods
*Rosa Woodsii*

Native
Establishes quickly on disturbed sites
Needs medium soil moisture
Attracts birds
Serviceberry  
*Amalanchier hybrids*

Native & Adapted  
Sun to shade  
Needs medium soil moisture  
Attracts birds
Sierra Current
*Ribes Nevadense*

Native

Sun to partial shade

Flowers & berries

Needs dry to medium soil moisture

Attracts birds, beneficial insects and pollinators
Sierra Gooseberry
*Ribes roezlii var. roeslii*

Native
Sun to partial shade
Flowers & berries
Moderate soil moisture
Good fall color
1-3 ft tall
Snowberry
*Symphoricarpos spp*

Native & Adapted
Sun to shade
White berries
Medium soil moisture
Attracts birds, beneficial insects and pollinators
Spiraea
*Spiraea hybrids*

Adapted
Partial shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Flowers

**Flowers**
Spiraea, Mountain
*Spiraea densiflora*

Native

Full sun to light shade

Needs medium soil moisture

Flowers

Attracts birds, pollinators and beneficial insects
Spiraea, Western
*Spiraea douglasii*

Native
Full sun to light shade
Needs medium soil moisture
Flowers
Attracts birds, pollinators and beneficial insects
Twinberry
*Lonicera involucrata*

Native
Partial shade to shade
Needs medium to wet soil moisture
Attractive berries
Drought tolerant
Attracts birds, bees & butterflies
Viburnum
*Viburnum hybrids*

Adapted
Sun to part shade
Flowers & berries
Attracts birds
Needs medium soil moisture
Western SandCherry
*Prunus besseyi*

Adapted
Can handle a lot or a little of everything
Ideal plant
Needs moderate soil moisture
Can be drought tolerant
Willow
*Salix*

Native & Adapted
Part to full shade
Ideal plant
Needs wet to medium soil moisture
• UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Friendly Gardening Program, http://ucanr.edu/sites/mglaketahoe/Tahoe_Friendly_Garden_Program/


• South Tahoe Public Utility District, Water Conservation Program. http://stpud.us/waterconsv/


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https://ucanr.edu/sites/mglaketahoe/Tahoe_Friendly_Garden_Program/