



May 2024

May is the month when Tahoe gardeners finally begin to see the start of the spring growing season and the rewards of winter planning. This month join us for the first of three **Grow Your Own Garden Festivals**, or make a plan to come to one of two events in early June. You will learn about the best practices for growing food in our climate, and also be able to purchase plants specifically selected for this year's season. Read on for more information about the **Grow Your Own 2024 Garden Festivals**.

There are a number of plant sales this month around the region. In Carson City on May 11, the Greenhouse Garden Project is hosting a **Mother's Day Plant Sale**. May 18 is a native plant sale hosted by the **Douglas County (NV) Master Gardeners**. Our own **Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe Plant Sale** will be held on Saturday, June 29 to provide you with the best selection of Tahoe native and native adapted plants when you can be certain growing conditions are ideal. Read on for more details about the Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe plant sale.

This month you can find us at the South Tahoe Public Utilities District "Gardening Through the Seasons" seminar, held on May 14 (6-730 pm) in South Lake Tahoe, at the showing of the documentary, "Common Ground" at Sunnyside resort on May 14, and Saturday, May 18 at the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day at South Tahoe Middle School in South Lake Tahoe (11 am - 3 pm). See below for more on all of these events.

Additionally, your Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe will host a second showing of "Common Ground" (see below) at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Wednesday, May 29 at 4:30 pm. There is no cost and no preregistration is required.

May is Nevada Fire Preparedness Month! For resources on hardening your home and landscape, **click here**.

Your feedback is important to us. Please contact **me** with suggestions and requests!

Sandy Gainza
UCCE Master Gardener Volunteer, Newsletter Editor

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Grow Your Own
Garden Festivals kick**

off May 31!

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe, Slow Food Lake Tahoe and the UC Davis Environmental Research Center know how to grow food successfully in the Lake Tahoe area and they would like to share their knowledge with you! Hands-on workshops on growing vegetables curated for our high elevation climate will be hosted by the Master Gardeners. *Plants can be purchased online or at the festivals.* Garden tours will be offered at all festivals. Tables staffed by local community organizations, food for sale, and a plant sale are also features of these FREE events. **Yes, all festivals are FREE.** These three celebrations of gardening will highlight growing your own food at home or at community gardens around the Lake Tahoe area. Participants can preorder seedling sets or seeds to pick-up at the event. **Purchase preorders** at Slow Food Lake Tahoe's [website](#). A list of seed and plant varieties is available [HERE](#). Click on each date to see the list of events for each location. We look forward to seeing you at one or all festivals!

Friday, May 31, 4-7 pm

**Host: Tahoe Environmental Research Center
2400 Lake Forest Road Tahoe City CA**

Saturday, June 1, 11 am-2 pm

**Host: Slow Food Lake Tahoe Gardens
8000 Estate Drive, Truckee CA**

Saturday, June 8, 11 am-2pm

**Hosts: Great Basin Institute and UCCE
Tallac Historic Site
1 Heritage Way, South Lake Tahoe CA**

Register for any event at the [Slow Foods website](#).

FREE GROW-YOUR-OWN
AN EDIBLE GARDENING FESTIVAL

A 2024 community event celebrating the joys and benefits of edible gardening in high elevation regions

Fri, May 31st - Tahoe City, 4pm - 7pm
Sat, June 1st - Truckee, 11am - 2pm
Sat, June 8th - South Lake Tahoe, 11am - 2pm

Master Gardener Q&A - Gardening Demos
Kids' Activities - Seedling Sale

RESERVE YOUR HIGH ELEVATION SEEDLINGS

Squash & Pumpkins	Onions & Leeks
Edible Flowers	Leafy Greens
Peas & Beans	Microgreens
Radishes	Tomatoes
Potatoes	Peppers
Beets	Carrots

All ages and ability levels welcome!
FREE to attend with pre-registration
SlowFood.LakeTahoe.org/events

Slow Food LAKE TAHOE UC DAVIS GREAT BASIN



Tahoe Environmental Resource Center hosts "Common Ground" screening on May 14

Kick off the popular Grow Your Own High Elevation Gardening Series with TERC, the UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe and Slow Food Lake Tahoe. Join us at Sunnyside Restaurant & Lodge for a night of fun and community! Bring your friends and family for a special movie night under the stars. We'll be screening "Common Ground", a film featured at last year's 9th

Tahoe Film Fest that celebrates the power of growing your own food and regenerative farming. Delicious snacks will be provided. Dinner and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the evening at a 20% discount.

[Click here to register!](#)

Late Breaking News: If you cannot make it to Sunnyside on May 14, you can catch the film on Wednesday May 29 at the South Lake Tahoe Library at 4:30 pm.. No charge and no preregistration required.



PLANT SALE

UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe

Saturday, June 29
Cowork Tahoe Parking Lot
3079 Harrison Ave,
South Lake Tahoe, CA.



11 a.m. Plant Clinic

12 -1:30 p.m. Plant Sale

(cash or check only please)

Curated selection of Tahoe native and native adapted plants. Come early, plants sell fast!



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources UC Master Gardener Program



cowork tahoe

- [Click here to discover UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County events.](#)
- [This link will take you to the complete list of UCCE Central Sierra events.](#)
- [Click here to discover UCCE Master Gardener of Placer County events](#)
- [Click here to discover UCCE Master Food Preserver of Central Sierra events.](#)
- [Click here to see a list of University of Nevada Extension events.](#)

**STPUD/Master Gardeners
present "Gardening Through
the Seasons" Series**

Save the date! The spring workshop for the 2024 "Gardening Through the Seasons" series will be held at South Tahoe Public Utilities District office boardroom on **May 14 from 6 to 7:30 pm.**

This event is **free.** The address is 1275 Meadowcrest Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA.

Future dates are: June 18 (summer) and August 27 (fall). Time and place are the same.



What the heck is a Snow Plant?

by **Sandy Gainza, UCCE Master Gardener**

If you wander through the forests here in the Tahoe Basin, you may see a bright red columnar plant growing out of the ground near a pine tree. This could be *Sarcodes sanguinea* Torr., commonly known as a snow plant.

The snow plant has no chlorophyll, and cannot photosynthesize. It is "mycotrophic"; it gets its nutrition from fungi beneath the soil. The plant subsists on mycorrhizae, strands of cells (mycelia) which are also tapped by the root systems of conifers to supply nutrients and

water. For that reason, you will most likely find snow plants near conifers. While most of the snow plant exists underground, the inflorescence begins to grow this time of year and may reach about a foot in length. The flowers along the stem have five petals and are closely spaced.

Last summer, a snow plant decided to grow in the middle of my patio, which is made of pavers. A lump appeared to grow out of nowhere over the course of three weeks. I called Tom Bork, a local landscape contractor and plant expert, to help me dig it up, identify it, and reset my pavers. Here are a few photos of that excavation. Snow plants rarely grow back in the same location, according to Tom, so I may have better luck keeping my patio level this year.

For more information (with better photos) on the snow plant, see this informative [US Forest Service article.](#)



This root pushed up through We dug it out to about 18"

Pavers being reset!



Pruning Deciduous Trees, Tahoe Edition

By Lisa Strand, UCCE Master Gardener

Here in the Tahoe Basin, so many of our gardening tasks happen later than in the rest of California. Pruning while trees are dormant, in much of the state, means February. Not so

in the Tahoe Basin! Depending on the winter's weather, we need to add a couple months to that. So if you haven't pruned your deciduous trees yet, it's probably that time!

Taking saws, loppers, and even handheld pruners to trees that provide beauty, shade, and even summertime fruit can be an intimidating task. Many new and experienced gardeners alike fear ruining or even killing a perfectly healthy tree. Yet by breaking down the process into a few steps and rule-of-thumb guidelines, you too can train your own trees to a healthy and beautiful state.

First, determine which season you should prune your deciduous tree(s):

Most trees will benefit from dormant season pruning, including but not limited to Apple, Cherry, Dogwood, Maple, Pear, and Plum. These are best pruned towards the end of their dormant season, ideally when you can see where buds have formed but before they've started to push out new growth.

Some popular trees and shrubs bloom on old wood: you'll see flowers first, then they'll leaf out. Dogwood, Forsythia, Lilacs, Redbuds, and some Hydrangeas should be pruned post-bloom as to not spoil those early springtime flowers.

Once it's time to prune, clean your sharpest loppers & pruners in a 10% bleach-water solution and follow these steps:

1. Remove dead, damaged, diseased branches. After doing so it'll be easy to see the structure of the tree. **Side-note:** this pruning task can be done at any time.
2. Remove any waterspouts, also known as suckers - vigorous shoots that emerged from older wood.

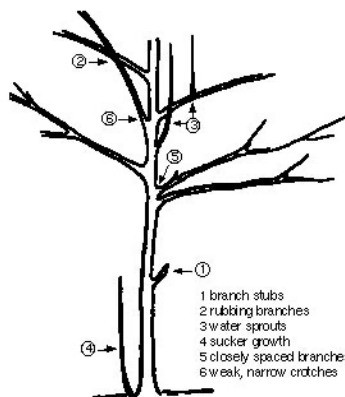
For many ornamental trees that are looking healthy and are in a shape that pleases you, you may be finished! For fruiting trees and/or ones that need additional taming or invigorating, keep going:

3. Remove or reduce the length of branches that are growing in the wrong direction. Branches that cross other branches and/or are crowding out the center of a tree are candidates for removal, as are branches that are getting too close to structures or power lines.
4. Reduce the length and positioning of remaining branches based on your goals. This is the step that will be much more specific to the type of tree you're pruning, and to cover all options would lead to much longer article! Some rules of thumb: for fruit production, you'll want to remove roughly 20% of the previous year's growth. For ornamentals, you'll focus on the look and size of tree you want, you should generally not prune more than 33% of the previous year's growth.

Our colleagues in Marin County put together a fantastic overview: [Click Here!](#)

If you are growing a fruit-bearing tree, this [in-orchard video demonstration](#) in Santa Clara County provides detail in how to prune for fruit production.

And of course if you'd like to run your pruning questions by a local Master Gardener, send us an online request including the type(s) of tree you need help with and we'll circle back just as soon as we can!



Issues to watch for when pruning trees

May Tips for Tahoe Gardeners

Master Gardener Annie Christy shares her May to do list:

Time to get digging! Plant perennials, cool season annuals and shrubs.

Transplant and divide perennials while still dormant or just emerging.

Bulbs need to keep their leaves to create energy for next year. Cut off after they turn brown.

Clean up leaves and debris so plants can breathe and grow.

Time to cut off winter perennial and grass stems for new growth.

Cut rose stems down to nodes with five leaflets. To improve circulation and prevent disease, remove a few branches from the center.

Deep water trees, shrubs and containers once or twice this month.

If you haven't already, test and pressurize your irrigation system. Run all of your stations **while you watch**. Be prepared to fix leaks, move drip irrigators to appropriate spots and adjust sprinkler heads; snow may have damaged your system. If you don't have a "smart" controller, make sure you don't water when temperatures drop below freezing.

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