

## UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe September 2024

The UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe are very excited to introduce our new program coordinator, Haley O'Mara. Haley will coordinate our program from her office in Placerville, but also plans to spend time here in the Lake Tahoe area, meeting our cadre of Master Gardeners and helping us expand our community outreach. We are very excited about her coming onboard, and hope you will take a look at her [biography here](#).

September is time to enjoy the last of your summer crops and begin to look ahead to the fall. We have some information on harvesting and planting garlic, events planned around our region this month and next, and some tips for September garden chores.

September is also National Emergency Preparedness Month. With all of the fires raging locally, please take the time to make your landscape fire safe. See the events below for more resources.

As always, your feedback, questions and suggestions for this newsletter are welcome. Please [email me!](#)

**Sandy Gainza**  
UCCE Master Gardener Volunteer, Newsletter Editor

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities** is hosting a Firewise Workshop on Thursday, **September 19 from 6-7:30 pm** in STPUD's Board Room. All community members are invited to this free event to learn about the Firewise Program and navigate its application process. For info or to RSVP, [CLICK HERE](#).

Hope to see you there!



Master gardeners will join South Tahoe Public Utilities District personnel at this year's FireFest at South Tahoe Middle School on Saturday, September 28 from 10 am to 2 pm. Learn how to protect your home and landscape from fire.

- [Click here for a list of UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County events.](#)
- [This link will take you to the complete list of UCCE Central Sierra events.](#)
- [Click here to learn about UCCE Master Gardeners of Placer County events.](#)
- [UCCE Master Food Preservers of Central Sierra events are listed here.](#)
- [University of Nevada Extension events are found here.](#)



## Have you thought about growing garlic?

Garlic is a crop you CAN grow here in the Tahoe Basin. Take a look here at German Extra Hardy Garlic bulbs, photo courtesy of Jonny's Seeds.

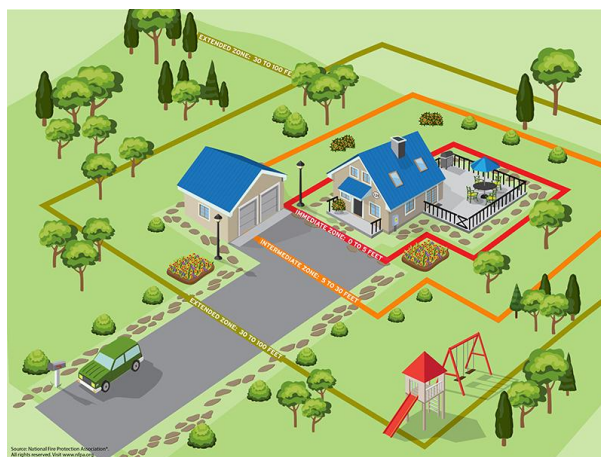
David Long, veteran Master Gardener and passionate advocate for Grow Your Own, writes about how to harvest and plant garlic. [Read more HERE.](#) (Article will download)

## Is Your Garden Wildfire Ready?

by Natasha Stott, Lake Tahoe Resource Conservation District

Living in a fire prone area such as Lake Tahoe can be daunting. Luckily there are many resources available to help homeowners and communities who live and garden within the Tahoe Basin.

This includes information to help guide landscaping and gardening techniques, so that your garden can still be your beautiful place of refuge and fire resistant at the same time! The Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Program, facilitated by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, works to educate and prepare neighborhoods for wildfire within the Tahoe Basin. Their work includes assisting neighborhoods in becoming fire adapted. The most important aspect of being



wildfire prepared is creating and maintaining defensible space around your property. Gardening and landscaping techniques are a big part of this. A home with good defensible space reduces the chance that the structure will ignite when a wildfire comes. A common misconception is that defensible space means that garden spaces and the areas around a home need to be barren of plants. This is not the case; your beautiful gardens can be maintained to align with the key elements of good defensible space! Review our new **Living With Fire Defensible Space Guide** which outlines how to create defensible 'zones' around a property.

The 'Zone 0' space is the 0-5 feet of space closest to a structure. This is the most important zone and should be ember resistant. Plants should be low to the ground, properly watered, with low flammability.

In 'Zone 1', 5-30 feet from a structure, you should maintain plants and trees so that they are "lean, clean and green". Actions to help this include:

1. Pruning trees so that dry, overhanging branches do not encroach upon a home if they were ignited by embers,
2. Recognizing the spacing of trees and plants to reduce ladder fuels when a fire is spreading.
3. Properly watering plants to reduce the chance of being a fire hazard.
4. Using a fire resistant mulch as well as fire resistant species to improve how defensive your garden is against wildfire.

'Zone 2' is the defensible space zone 30-100 feet. Observe any dry or dead vegetation at 30 feet or more away from your home. Consider removing any excess vegetation or starting a conversation with your neighbors if this space spills over into the properties adjacent to yours. Check out our guide to see how your home and garden compare with the outlined zones. Lake Tahoe residents are also encouraged to use the 'Landscaping' publications on our website as they can provide more in depth information on this subject including; combustibility of mulches, "fire scaping" landscaping techniques, and plant selection guides. The Fire Adapted Communities Program is currently developing a new and improved up to date planting guide.

If you are interested in becoming a Fire Adapted Community, please visit our **website** ([tahoelivingwithfire.com](http://tahoelivingwithfire.com)) for more information. You can also contact **fire@tahoercd.org** directly to become involved!

## September Tips for Tahoe Gardeners

- Start backing off on fertilizing, deadheading and pruning. Let your garden gradually slow down and enter winter dormancy. The Lake Tahoe Basin encompasses several climate zones. In the colder areas of USDA zone 6a, first frost may occur early in September. New growth is more susceptible to frost damage.
- As you stop deadheading, watch for seed formation on your perennial and vegetable plants. Save a few seeds to plant next year! Here are some seed saving tips from Master Gardener Melissa Guthrie from 2022.
- You can still plant shrubs and trees on into October. Keep in mind that the new additions may experience leaf drop or early dormancy. That is okay. Next spring, they will recover if you have planted shrubs and trees hardy to our climate.
- Keep irrigating, although with shorter days and cooler temperatures, you can safely reduce your watering schedules until the rain and snow begin. If you did plant new shrubs, be sure to water them. By the end of this month or by mid-October, it will be time to winterize your irrigation system. More on that in the October news.
- Check on your vegetable garden and plan to protect your remaining crops from

early frost by using plastic, frost cloth or other covers on cold nights. You can extend your annual color beds and containers by using frost cloth as well.

- Protect your container plants from squirrels who will be looking to store their winter cache of green pine cones and other food. Bird netting pinned with landscape pins can help keep them out. You can also try deterrent sprays or spreading ground hot pepper around the area bothered by squirrels.
- Continue to be vigilant about fire danger; the fall season with it's dry windy days is especially known for spreading sparks. Keep the five foot barrier around your house free from woody vegetation and pine needles.
- Lawn care this month? Check out [this page](#) on our website for detailed fall lawn care tips.

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