

UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe November Newsletter 2024

November marks the end of fall and the beginning of the holiday season. As we transition to winter, your UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe reflect on the full season of community outreach we were able to provide this year so far. The Grow Your Own Garden Festivals reached over 1100 participants this spring. The 2024 Plant Sale sold out of plants, the El Dorado County Farmer's Market (Deborah Olivieri shown with her famous hydrangea bloom give aways) reached many South Lake Tahoe residents, and recently, at the Meyers Mountain Market Fall Festival, Master Gardeners enjoyed meeting our neighbors and offering advice and tips. Most elementary schools on the south and east shore now have regular participation by the Master Gardeners. This issue, read on to find out about how the fall events went. Check out the tips on winter care of containers, gifts for gardeners, and how fall color comes about!



Over the winter, Master Gardeners will continue outreach with local schools and begin planning for our 2025 activities. The Grow Your Own Festival date for South Lake Tahoe has already been set for May 31, 2025, with the Tahoe City event set for June 6. We will let you know as other events get planned and dates are set.

As always, your feedback, questions, and suggestions for this newsletter are welcome. Please **email me!**

Sandy Gainza
UCCE Master Gardener Volunteer, Newsletter Editor

UPCOMING EVENTS

- [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.](#)
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Master Gardeners Assist Home Schoolers with Gardening Projects

By David Long and Carrie Scarvie

Recently, seven home schoolers spent a morning at the Tallac Historic site planting onions and garlic. To prepare the beds for planting, the students (with some adult help) hauled in a few wheel barrows of compost, incorporating it into the grow beds. They cut all the corn stalks and bundled them for use as holiday decorations. They also cleared out the old squash and tomato plants.



While on site there was a brief lesson on the history of the Tallac Estates, with emphasis on the gardens and landscaped areas. For example, the area adjacent to the vegetable garden once was a fruit tree orchard, but now only has one remaining plum tree.

All elementary schools in South Lake Tahoe have greenhouses and most have gardens, which students help manage. Kids that are home schooled do not have access to those gardens. As a trial, the vegetable garden at the Tallac site is being made available to those students that are home schooled. While the trial is just now starting, it will continue through the spring and summer. Periodic work days will be scheduled for planting, maintaining and harvesting the crops. Over winter the students will help decide what to plant. There is interest in expanding the Tallac garden site to include an area just for the students to manage. This will allow the home schooled students the opportunity to learn gardening techniques and be able to harvest vegetables and fruits that they grow. The site is owned by the Forest Service and managed by Great Basin Institute, so the current trial will be closely monitored prior to considering any expansion project. If you are the parent of a home schooled student and you are interested in participating in future events like this, please contact Master Gardener [Carrie Scarvie](#).



Meyers Festival Celebrates Fall

By Jennifer Cressy

Fun was had by all at the inaugural Meyers Mountain Market Fall Festival on Saturday and Sunday, October 19 and 20. Master Gardeners partnered with South Tahoe PUD to host a leaf art collage activity to celebrate the change of seasons and beautiful botanical fall forest treasures. Over 100 children and their families participated. In addition, the event featured live music, food trucks, beer garden, local artisans, pumpkin patch,





Winter Tips for Containers and Container Plants

by Lisa Strand

Care for your containers! As temperatures drop you need to be aware of how to care for your containers and the plants that are living in them! Please read Lisa's tips and tricks [HERE](#).

Photo Credit: Lisa Strand. Cornus alba in resin pot can survive a Tahoe winter, as shown.



What's Good for the Gardeners Is Good for the Leaf Peepers!

by Jennifer Cressy

Why do trees change color in the fall?

Shrinking daylight is the primary trigger that influences fall color in the landscape. Fall is the time when deciduous trees and shrubs stop making food in cells which contain chlorophyll. Chlorophyll in leaves enables plants to turn sunlight into energy through a chemical reaction called photosynthesis. Photosynthesis enables plants to grow by manufacturing carbohydrates such as sugars or starches. In the spring and summer, chlorophyll in leaf cells is abundant, giving leaves their green color. In the fall, chlorophyll breaks down, revealing the other pigments (colors) present in the leaves. The yellow to orange colors are carotene and xanthophyll pigments. Carotenoids are always present in leaves, therefore the yellow and gold colors in the fall landscape remain constant from year to year. Some "leaf peepers" call these pigments the leaves' true colors.

Why do some leaves turn red in the fall?

Some deciduous trees and shrubs produce an additional chemical which is responsible for the red to purple anthocyanin pigment. Anthocyanins are produced from excess sugar in the leaves, trapped as nutrient transport slows.

Scientists also tell us that the weather affects the intensity, timing and duration of fall color. For example, bright sunny days with cool, but not freezing, nights stimulate an increase in anthocyanin, the red to purple pigment, and when we have a succession of such days, fall colors intensify.

What I've learned from research on this subject is that our gardens thrive in the same conditions which bring us the most vibrant fall color - a warm wet spring, a mild summer, and warm, sunny fall days with cool nights. What's good for the gardener is also good for the leaf peepers.

Watch this [short informative video](#), "*Understand how the presence of different pigments chlorophyll, anthocyanin, anthoxanthins, and carotenoids determine a plant's color*" to learn more.

Learn more about Fall color [HERE](#).

Photo credit: Kathleen Maston



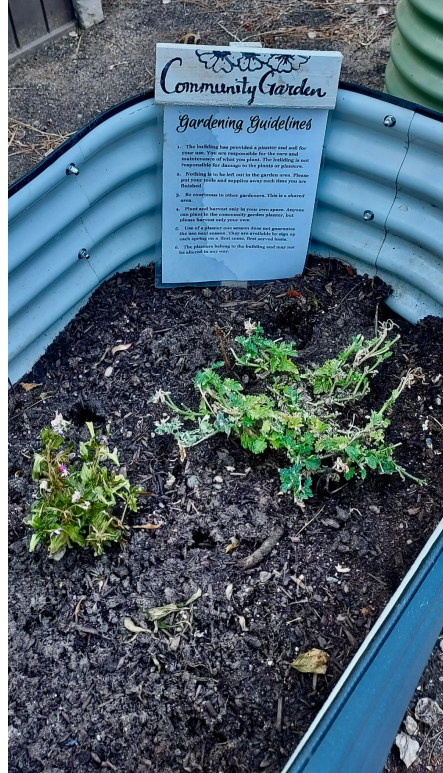
Gardening Can Be Enjoyed At Any Age!

by David Long

It is always fun to discover new gardens in our area. While most are personal backyard gardens, several support the community, either as a demonstration garden, a remembrance garden or a display type garden in commercial areas.

The small container garden at the Tahoe Senior Plaza in South Lake Tahoe offers apartment dwellers the opportunity to grow vegetables or flowers for their own use. The garden consists of eight galvanized water trough-type raised beds, plus several large flower pots that residents sign up for on a seasonal basis. The beds and pots are provided by the management of the Senior Plaza. As with many community type gardens, courtesy and consideration of other gardeners is essential. Each gardener provides their own plants, seeds, and tools and is responsible for keeping their area tidy and well maintained. Providing this type of amenity to the residents builds community and friendships, while providing an activity that promotes good health and eating habits. For seniors, these social and health promoting activities are especially important. Master Gardeners are always welcome to provide information on container gardening or to help a new resident gardener to get started!



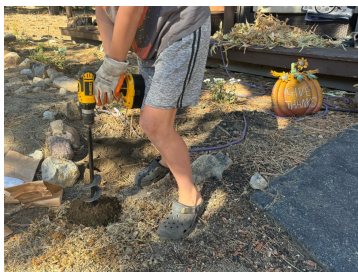


Gardening Guidelines Help Promote Community Use

Gardeners Gift and Tool Guide for Holiday Gift Ideas!

by Sandy Gainza

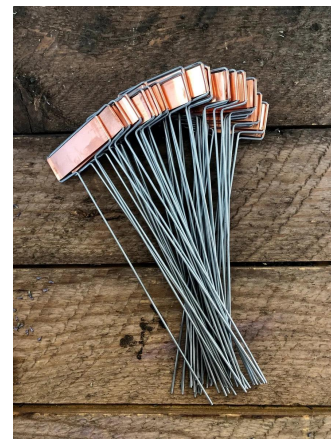
Here are a few ideas for gardening gifts from our Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners. While the UCCE Master Gardeners cannot make brand recommendations, check out this list of useful tools and gardening gadgets as you shop for the gardener in your life.



Carrie Scarvie recommends an auger like the one shown for planting bulbs. She has found this tool makes mass planting easy. It attaches to her drill. She purchased hers for about



Annie Christy likes to protect her young trees from wind and animal damage with these metal tree wrappers.



Faith McSparran loves copper plant "name tags" that you can write on over and over again

\$20.

I (Sandy) recommend getting a small shrub rake with an extendable handle, such as the one shown.

You can use it year round to clear needles, leaves, and debris away from drains, tree and shrub trunks, or out from under decks. Some of these have adjustable fan sizes from narrow to wide.

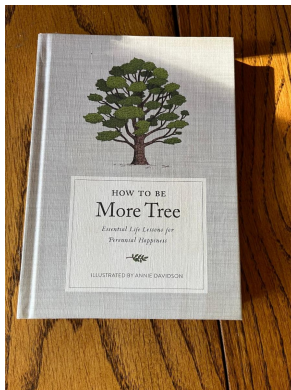
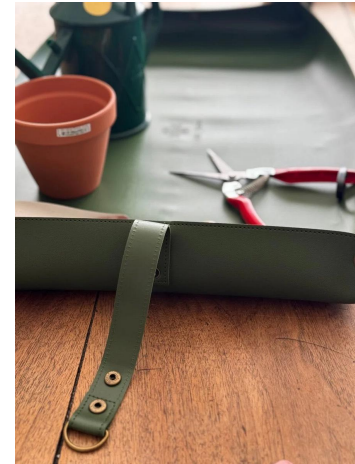


Christy also hopes Santa will bring her a “Hori Hori” style garden knife (shown above). The knife has one smooth and one serrated edge and some brands even sell one for left handed gardeners (the serrated edge is on the right hand side of the knife).

Below, Lisa Strand's handy pick mattock, for jobs that need more than a trowel, but less than a full size pickaxe!



with a china marker. She also would love to get a potting tray such as the one shown below. Faith would jump for joy if Santa brought her a food dehydrator that reduces food waste, but as she told me, it is a pretty expensive investment!



An informative book celebrating the wisdom of trees and what they can teach us about everyday life from basking in the sun to weathering the storm.

- Vicki Schussel

November Tips for Tahoe Gardeners

Last month we published a comprehensive fall guide written by UCCE Master Gardener Jen Cressy. I urge you to review her tips, as this month is really a continuation of tasks that you may or may not have had a chance to get to yet (*Here is a link to [Jen's detailed list from last month's issue](#)*).

Additionally, Master Gardener Lisa Strand found a [great three minute video](#) from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority on how to shut down your irrigation system and winterize your home. Replacing broken pipes or sprinkler valves can get expensive and leaks waste precious water.



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