

Master gardeners teach techniques for Tahoe

Publisher's note: *This is one in a random series of stories about gardening in Lake Tahoe.*

By Kathryn Reed

People have been gardening in Tahoe for eons with varying degrees of success.

But 23 residents of the basin are masters at it.

This is the second summer for the UC Cooperative Extension Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners. While master gardeners have been around for some time, the concept is new to Tahoe.



A master gardener demonstrates a strategy for managing a gopher problem at the Evans Family Garden in the Angora burn area.
Photo/Provided

They've been busy. In 2013, 1,200 volunteer hours were logged and they made contact with 1,421 people at events, workshops and farmers markets.

"We are a little intimidated ourselves about being master

gardeners. People spend their entire career on one butterfly and we are trying to deal with all of Tahoe," Bonnie Turnbull, one of the master gardeners, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Our primary focus is educating people on science-based information. We are trying to make sure people are trying to take care of their environment."

They are doing this by having booths at events like Earth Day, the Tuesday farmers market that starts next month in South Lake Tahoe, and putting on workshops. All involved are volunteers.

Coming up June 7 is the June Day Jamboree: Vegetable Gardening Seminar and Plant Sale. The 9am-1pm event is at Lake Tahoe Community College's demonstration garden and costs \$15. (Call 530.543.1501, ext. 101 for info or to register.)

Topics include: Choosing What to Grow, Improving Your Soil, Planning Your Layout, Strategies for Extending the Growing Season, Summer Maintenance, and Harvest.

Part of the protocol of being a master gardener is not making a profit. Money collected should only cover the costs involved to put on a program.

Worm bins and composting were the popular topics at the South Shore Earth Day event.

"I think the only trouble is if people expect us to answer every question," Turnbull said. While an answer may not be immediate, the gardeners do have the resources to track down the information and get it to the person.

Issues they are interested in run the gamut from wanting to educate people about how flammable juniper is to knowing invasive weeds to proper watering to what veggies grow well.

Turnbull was picking asparagus, Swiss chard and spinach from her garden last month.

“You have to be flexible and willing to deal with disappointment,” Turnbull said of growing vegetables in the basin.

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Notes:

- More info about UCCE Master Gardeners Lake Tahoe is available online.
- The group is on Facebook.
- Here is a list of master gardener events for this summer.