

Spring planted bulbs extend growing season



Calla lilies, like Night Cap with its black flowers and the white blooms of Crystal Clear, are spring planted bulbs that thrive in full sun or part shade and can be cut to create an elegant display indoors.
Photo/Longfield Gardens

By Melinda Myers

Keeping your garden looking its best throughout the growing season and into fall is possible with the help of low maintenance spring planted bulbs. Plant them in spring among other annuals or perennials and watch as these bulbs brighten the garden, adding new life to your late season gardens.

Whether your gardens and containers are in full sun or shade you'll enjoy the attractive foliage and pop of color that dahlias, cannas, calla lilies, caladiums and elephant ears

will add to the landscape.

These easy care plants reward you with loads of beauty. Just plant, water and enjoy. Quality online retailers offer the greatest variety of color, shapes and sizes as well as planting and care instructions.

Grow dahlias in sunny areas with at least six hours of sunlight for the best floral display. Simply plant the tuberous roots 4- to 6-inches deep with the stem facing up after the danger of frost has passed.

Use dahlias in a cutting garden or as an attractive screen along fences and property lines. Use the shorter more compact border dahlias, like Gallery Pablo in containers on your patio, balcony or deck where you and the hummingbirds will enjoy their blooms.

Wait until the danger of frost has passed to plant cannas in a full sun to partially shaded locations. Plant the canna rhizomes horizontally 2- to 3-inches deep with the growing point facing up. Take advantage of their bold foliage and use cannas as a backdrop in the flower border or screen in the landscape. Use as a vertical accent in a large container or select dwarf varieties for smaller pots.

Calla lilies are another spring planted bulb that thrives in full sun or part shade. The speckled foliage adds color to the garden all season long. Include these 1- to 2- feet-tall plants in the front or middle of the flower garden or as a vertical accent or filler in a pot. And don't forget to cut a few flowers to enjoy indoors. The black flowers of Night Cap teamed with the white blooms of Crystal Clear create an elegant display.

Like the other bulbs, wait for the danger of frost to pass before planting them outdoors. Plant the knobby rhizomes two to four inches deep with the growing point facing up.

Add some color and plenty of wow factor to shaded areas with the foliage of caladiums and elephant ears. These tropical beauties thrive when soil and air temperatures are warm. Wait for the danger of frost to pass and the soil to warm, 65 to 70 degrees, before planting them in the garden.

Use caladiums to brighten containers, dress up window boxes or edge a shady pathway. The colorful leaves stand out amongst the greens of shade gardens. Team variegated varieties with complimentary colored begonias, coleus or impatiens.

Include elephant ears in the garden or containers. Their large heart shaped leaves give a tropical feel to the patio, deck or pool area. Consider planting one, two or more to create an impressive welcome for guests or a bold statement in the landscape. They pair nicely with caladiums, coleus and other shade loving plants.

Make this the best season yet with the help of spring flowering bulbs. You'll enjoy the variety and late season color these easy care plants provide.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of gardening experience and has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening".

Spring break profitable for Tahoe vacation rentals

By Emily Starbuck Crone, NerdWallet

Move over, Marriott. Hotels were once the default lodging option for travelers, but in recent years, demand has boomed

for vacation rentals in private homes. And travelers aren't the only ones who stand to benefit from this trend; homeowners who rent out their house can turn a handsome profit, especially during peak times like spring break.

Just how much can homeowners pocket in popular areas? To find out, NerdWallet asked HomeAway, one of the largest facilitators of private for-rent properties, to provide data for its most in-demand U.S. spring break destinations, along with nightly rates during that time and year-round. A NerdWallet analysis found that in some spring break hot spots, homeowners can pay off between three and four months of their mortgage by simply renting out their home for two weeks in March – a common spring break period and one when many homeowners are quite possibly traveling themselves.

In many other top spring break destinations, homeowners can pay more than three months of homeownership costs from just two weeks of renting in March. After Breckenridge, the top spot is Miami, then Las Vegas, followed by South Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Polar experiences – broken teeth, wild bears

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Douglas Stoup has emerged unscathed from close encounters with polar bears and plunges into icy crevasses.

The polar adventurer from Olympic Valley can't say the same for an unfortunate incident with a chocolate bar during a 2007

expedition in Antarctica.

Like the polar bears and crevasse falls it was the sort of mishap that's always a threat when your job involves skiing to north and south poles.

"I actually chewed on a piece of chocolate and broke one of my teeth and had to pull it out with a needle-nosed pliers," Stoup said. "So that was not fun."

Read the whole story

Mountain bike rides for youth in Tahoe City

The Tahoe XC Junior Mountain Riders Program provides children with an opportunity to experience and grow in the sport of mountain biking.

Weekly club rides focus on developing strong, responsible riders through instruction, practice, and fun in a healthy, supportive environment.

The six-week program runs April 18-May 23 from 4-5:30pm. Cost is \$45 per child. The drop-in rate is \$10 per child.

Rides are open to any child, age 7-11 who rides a geared mountain bike. Younger riders may be considered if they are experienced on dirt and capable of keeping up. Riders should have prior experience riding at least an hour and a half on dirt. Email andrews@tahoexc.org with questions and to sign up.

Actors sought for LTCC's rendition of 'Cabaret'

Lake Tahoe Community College is having auditions for the Tony Award-winning musical "Cabaret" on April 4 at 7pm in the Duke Theatre.

Community members and student actors, singers, and dancers of various ages and types are welcome to audition. Actors are required to sing pieces from the show.

This multiple Tony-winning musical is a classic of musical theater and has been revived on Broadway numerous times. The setting is 1930, and Cliff Bradshaw, an American writer, visits Berlin to search for "something to write about." After meeting a few people and securing an apartment, he visits the seedy Kit Kat Klub, where the emcee, performer Sally Bowles, and a raucous ensemble takes the stage nightly to tantalize the crowd and encourage them to leave their troubles outside. As life in pre-WWII Germany grows more uncertain, will the decadent allure of Berlin nightlife be enough to get them through their dangerous times? This legendary musical contains some of the most memorable songs in musical theatre history, including: "Cabaret," "Wilkommen," "The Money Song," and "Maybe This Time."

Rehearsals are Monday through Thursday evenings beginning April 6. Performances are June 10-19.

For more information, call 530.541.4660, ext. 240.

Junior Giants taking a swing at SLT youth



Junior Giants is making its South Lake Tahoe debut this year. Photo/Provided

By Jessie Marchesseau

This summer, South Lake Tahoe youth will have the opportunity to participate in a new, free, non-competitive baseball program.

The city has been chosen to host one of nearly a hundred Junior Giants baseball leagues across Northern California, Nevada and Oregon. The program, designed to provide a safe and positive outdoor activity for children, is fully funded by the Giants Community Fund with San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey serving as the program's commissioner.

However, this is not your average baseball league. The Junior Giants program focuses just as much, if not more, on building character as it does on playing baseball.

There will be skills, drills and baseball fundamentals, but each week of the eight-week season will also have another theme, one focused on important life lessons. Players will learn about topics such as leadership, confidence, teamwork, bullying, reading and healthy lifestyles. They will complete take-home projects and have the opportunity to earn prizes and Giants swag. Families will even have opportunities to attend San Francisco Giants games at AT&T Park.

The Giants Community Fund ensures the program is free for each and every child by providing all the necessary equipment for the league, from pitching machines and bases, to gloves, hats and T-shirts. In addition, they provide books and materials for the weekly programs as well as prizes and incentives such as school supplies, backpacks, water bottles and Giants bobble heads.



There is more to the youth program than playing baseball. Photo/Provided

The non-competitive aspect also makes Junior Giants different from most baseball leagues. Games will have no umpires, no score-keeping and no winners or losers. Every child will get

to hit, everyone will get to field. The goal is to take the stress out of the game, creating a more positive and fun experience.

“The main thing is we want every kid to have the opportunity to play regardless of their income level or skill level,” Junior Giants coordinator Bailey West said.

West has been working closely with Lauren Thomaselli, recreation manager for the city and the South Lake Tahoe commissioner for the Junior Giants, in getting the program set up. South Lake Tahoe is one of only four communities chosen to join the program this year. West said the Junior Giants try to choose new communities where they find a strong parks and recreation partner, but also where they see a population of kids who wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to participate.

Practices will be once a week after 5:30pm and games will be on Saturdays. This schedule is designed to make it easier for working parents to shuttle their kids to and from events, and to participate themselves.

Since the program is so reliant on adult volunteers to coach, assist and act as team parents, West said they try to offer plenty of services and incentives to them as well. The Giants Community Fund provides free training, supplies and regional coaching clinics for adults willing to serve as coaches. There is even a day at AT&T Park where the San Francisco Giants honor the Junior Giants coaches.

Thomaselli estimates they will need 10 to 12 adult coaches willing to dedicate two to three hours per week to their teams. The number of kids is only limited by the number of coaches available.

“It is free, it is fun, it's a great way to get your kids outdoors and surrounded by a positive message and learn the fun game of baseball,” Thomaselli said.



The program targets youth who may not otherwise have a chance to play baseball. Photo/Provided

The Junior Giants is open to boys and girls ages 5-13 and will have both t-ball and baseball teams. The season will run from June 15 to Aug. 6, culminating in a season finale celebration with a family barbecue, baseball games and awards ceremony.

Players, coaches and volunteers may **register online** or in person at the following locations:

- South Lake Tahoe Recreation & Swim Complex, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Until June 1, Monday-Saturday, 8am-6pm

- Boys and Girls Club, 1100 Lyons Ave.

March 23 and April 6, 4-5:30pm

- Boys and Girls Club, Bijou School, 3501 Spruce Ave.

March 31 and April 28, 4-5:30pm.

Opinion: Calif. needs to rethink county government

By Joe Mathews

Wherever you live in California, your county probably doesn't fit you.

Many counties are too small; 24 of the 58 California counties have populations less than 140,000, the population of my hometown of Pasadena. Some counties are too sprawling; it can take more than three hours to get across Riverside and San Bernardino counties.



Joe Mathews

And in the big metropolitan regions where most of us live, counties—which are supposed to be the state's form of regional government—divide our communities, instead of uniting them. The Bay Area is sliced up between nine counties. The capital region around Sacramento includes four counties. Greater Los Angeles is a mash-up of five counties, with no clear geographic divides between them. I dare you to drive through four neighboring cities in four different counties—Yorba Linda in Orange, Chino in San Bernardino, Corona in Riverside, and Diamond Bar in Los Angeles—and tell me when you cross from one county to another.

It has become commonplace in California to complain that our state is simply too big to work effectively as one entity, and

to suggest, via ballot initiative (as in venture capitalist Tim Draper's "Six Californias" scheme) or petition to the Legislature (as the North State counties are doing) that we be split up into a number of different states. But creating new states would require congressional approval, making these ideas non-starters.

Instead, we could redesign our counties all by ourselves, without Washington's help.

The heart of the problem is that California's antiquated design, with its 58 counties drawn haphazardly more than a century ago, doesn't make sense today, if it ever did. Indeed, the way that our counties divide us up is part of a larger fragmentation in California, where the problem is not big government but so many small and stupid governments—more than 6,000 in total, with 480 cities and thousands of special districts that few Californians know anything about.

This fragmentation of regions is not merely a problem of having untidy maps that make little sense to the people who live on them. Research shows that regions that are split up among many governments—as California's are—have less affordable housing and more sprawl, congestion, and segregation than those with more consolidated regional governance.

"The excessive competition triggered by political fragmentation encourages local jurisdictions to pursue socially and economically undesirable policies," wrote the University of Minnesota's Myron Orfield and Baris Dawes in a paper delivered last month at Chapman University in Orange. "Cities steal malls and office parks from each other, fight tax incentive wars for auto malls, and zone out the poor for fiscal advantage in a process rife with haphazard planning and NIMBY biases. ... With jobs scattered like buckshot, transit, a cleaner environment, and basic opportunity for lower-income Americans become harder, not easier, to accomplish."

The good news is that, in recent years, there has been more thinking in California about how to remake local governments, including counties. Some of the best of this thinking is summarized in retired Silicon Valley executive Thom Bryant's book, "California 2.0".

"California 2.0" shows that our biggest challenges are regional: environmental systems, infrastructure, economic development, transit, and housing. And the book points out that the state already divides us into regions for certain ways of collecting data or governing us; California has 10 biodiversity regions, nine water regions, 15 air basins. But our counties don't match up with these regions.

So "California 2.0" argues for consolidating counties so that each region of the state would be one county. There would be 19 in the author's ideal structure, though "California 2.0" suggests that even the old Spanish military's 10 territorial districts would fit California better than today's 58 counties.

If California were to embrace regionally consolidated government, it would be following a trend. France has been consolidating and empowering its regions, and some metropolitan regions, notably Toronto, have consolidated urban and suburban governments.

Such regional counties would need more power to devise regional solutions to the state's most pressing problems: schools, traffic, and housing. And, as "California 2.0" argues, they'd need expanded boards of supervisors and elected county executives to improve democratic accountability.

And if California politicians are to be taken seriously as they lead a one-state war on climate change, they'll need to embrace truly regional counties to make any progress. Today's state regulations on climate are unlikely to show much in results, in part because they require coordination between our

fragmented local governments. But if we had counties that actually fit our regions, California might have a fighting chance of saving the world.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Brain's tolerance for pain may decide how far we push ourselves

By Ian McMahan, Outside

If you've ever experienced that sensation of powering up the last hill of a long run—when your legs feel like cement and your lungs are heaving, you've probably wondered how much your body can actually take. Could you dig deeper, even when your legs are telling you to stop?

Your own stopping point may have as much to do with your tolerance for suffering as physiological strength. We are accustomed to thinking that our limits are physical and that the way to get stronger is by pushing harder and going longer.

But the brain's tolerance for pain may play a significant role in how far one can push into that dark place.

Read the whole story

Rising seas to displace millions on coasts

By David Perlman, San Francisco Chronicle

Millions of Americans living along the nation's coasts will be forced to move inland by the end of the century as sea levels rise and storm surges become more frequent in this era of global climate change, a team of demographers foresees.

And nearly 700,000 coastal residents in the Bay Area would be forced to move from their low-lying neighborhoods under the most extreme conditions, the forecasters say.

According to their study, published last week in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, America's coastal areas, where as many as 13.1 million people will be living, could be prone to flooding by 2100. In the Bay Area, 250,000 people living in low-lying parts of San Mateo County would be forced to move, and in San Francisco some 33,000 would be affected, the researchers calculate.

Their forecasts, they say, indicate that that if sea levels rise 3 feet by the end of this century, many sections of America's coastal lands will be underwater and a total of 4.2 million people will have been forced to move toward higher ground.

And if the oceans rise by as much as 6 feet, the drowning lands will have sent 13.1 million Americans moving to higher ground, the demographers say.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· Late-Nite Productions presents a free show with Drinking With Clowns from Reno. A Latin Funk Experience is happening March 26 at Whiskey Dicks Saloon in South Lake Tahoe for those 21 and older. Doors open at 9pm

· Alpine Meadows' annual Snow Golf Tournament is April 9. More info is **online**.

· Tahoe Expedition Academy in Kings Beach has opened enrollment for the school's series of summer camps that blend outdoor adventure with academic and artistic learning. For more info, go **online**.

· Truckee Police Department's awards ceremony is March 24 at 4pm at Truckee Town Hall.

· According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nevada ranks 11th highest in the nation for the number of workers belonging to a union.