

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Luigi

Looking for a mature, calm, yet active companion? Luigi is a handsome 7-year-old German shepherd and hound mix.

He is in the prime of his life, without those crazy puppy habits, yet he is still quite playful. Luigi will make a great addition to just about any household.

Luigi is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

Earth Day activities planned for S. Lake Tahoe

Mother Earth will be the center of attention in South Lake Tahoe on April 29 in the annual Earth Day celebration from 10am-3pm at Bijou Community Park.

The free event will include an array of educational booths, vendors, and an area where children can make recycled-themed arts and crafts. Sacramento's Ideateam will provide a funk-and-soul soundtrack.

Earth Day recognizes, celebrates, and promotes the region's unique beauty while educating the public about local environmental issues. Learn about ways to counteract global climate change through recycling and composting, alternative energy, water conservation, sustainability, and reducing one's ecological footprint.

The Tahoe Earth Day Foundation, a nonprofit organization, was formed to educate the general public about the Lake Tahoe and Truckee region's unique beauty and how to preserve and protect it.

Grow a tropical paradise in a container or garden

By Melinda Myers

Add an exciting new look to your garden, poolside, patio or deck with elephant ears. These easy tropical plants have tall stems and giant leaves that measure up to 2 feet across. You can use them to create an instant focal point in the garden, screen an unwanted view, or extend a bold welcome at the front door.

Elephant ears can be grown in containers as well as the garden, so if space is an issue, try some of the more compact varieties like Hawaiian Punch. You'll appreciate the impact this 3-foot tall plant makes with its red stems and bright green leaves with dark red veining.

Or go big with 6-foot tall Black Stem. Its smooth blue-green leaves are displayed atop striking purple-black stems. Variegated varieties are another option. The unusual foliage of Mojito, is decorated with blue-black dashes and splashes. No two leaves are alike on this beauty. For even more color and drama, don't miss Black Magic. Its dark, blue-black leaves measure 2 feet across and can grow up to 5-feet tall.

These are just a few of the many varieties that are well suited to home gardens. In warm areas (zones 9 to 11) elephant ears can be grown outdoors year-round. In cooler areas (zones 4-8) the plants are grown as annuals or can be brought indoors for the winter.



Elephant ears, like this Black Stem variety, can be grown in the garden or in containers. Photo/Longfield-Gardens.com

Give these bold beauties a space of their own or combine them with other interesting foliage plants such as caladiums, coleus, larger begonias, trailing sweet potato vines and other annuals. The fine leaves of ornamental grasses, such as shade tolerant Japanese forest grass and sedges, contrast nicely with the elephant ears' bold leaves.

Elephant ears are tropical plants that need warm soil and plenty of moisture all season long. They are happy to grow in sun or shade, though in hot climates the leaves need to be protected from midday sun. Fertilizing every two to three weeks will help your plants reach their full potential.

Elephant ears are available as spring-planted bulbs or as potted plants. The baseball-sized tubers can be planted outdoors after all danger of frost has passed and the soil has

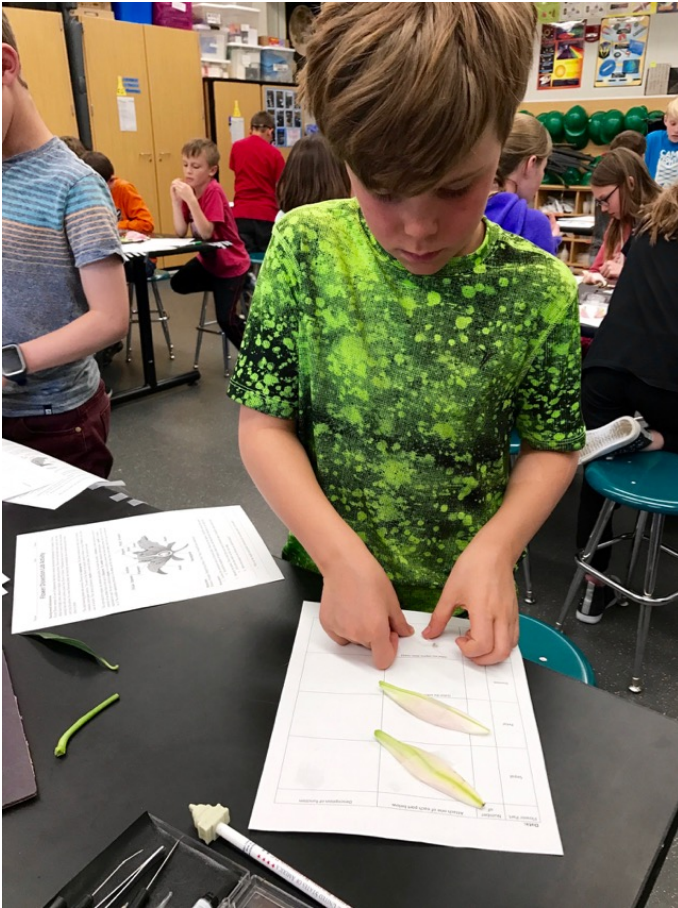
warmed to at least 65 degrees. Prepare the soil by adding compost or other organic matter prior to planting. Dig a hole large enough to accommodate the tuber and plant it pointy side up. The top of the tuber should be about an inch below the soil surface.

If you live in a cold climate and want to get an early start on the season, plant the tubers in containers filled with well-drained potting mix and grow them in a warm, sunny window for four to six weeks. Move the plants outdoors when the soil is warm and the danger of frost has passed.

Your tropical paradise awaits. Just choose a few containers or locate some spots in the garden where you can include these bold-leaved beauties. Before you know it, you'll be sipping your favorite beverage in your very own tropical garden.

Melinda Myers has written numerous books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts the Great Courses "How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone" DVD set and "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio program.

Youngsters embrace the spirit of Earth Day



Fourth-grader Luke Davis carefully records his data.
Photo/Frany Thorne

One day wasn't enough to celebrate the Earth. At the magnet school in Meyers the students embraced a week of activities.

The theme last week was Plant Your Seed.

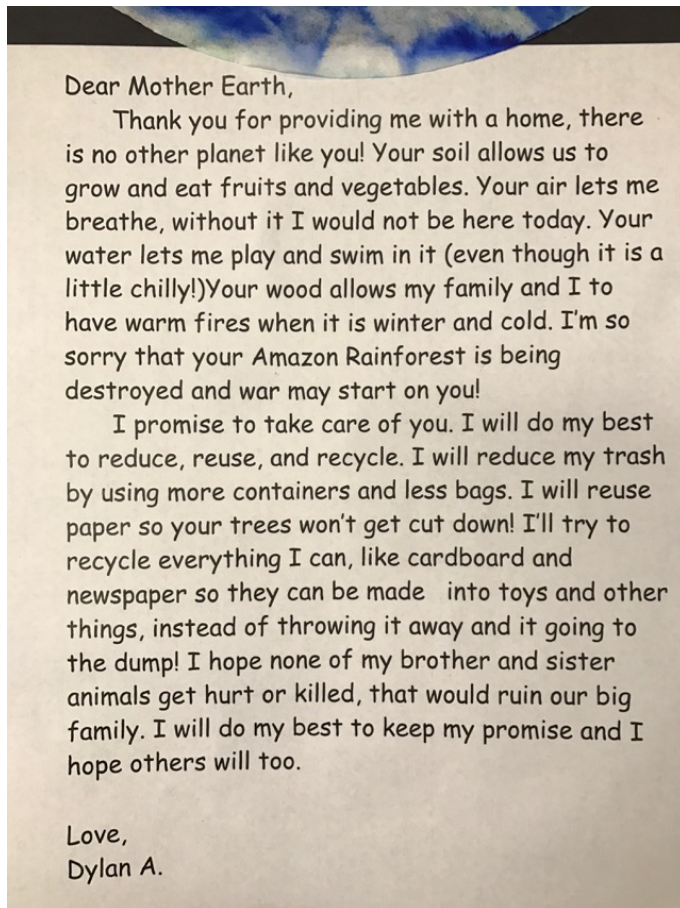
Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22 since 1970. It started in the United States; now more than 190 countries recognize this as an opportunity to take stock in what is going on environmentally with the world or in individual locations throughout the world.

Each day something different took place at the magnet school:

Monday: Students took an Earth Day pledge and each class participated in a school yard clean up.



Second-grader Briley Zlendick dissects a Lima bean. Photo/Frany Thorne



A letter to Mother Earth by second-grader Dylan Anton, who is in Frany Thorne's magnet school class.

Tuesday: Book swap – students in each grade brought books to trade with others in a school-wide book swap.

Wednesday: Waste free lunch – This was a school-wide effort to reduce waste; students were encouraged to pack their lunches using reusable containers and fewer wrapped items.

Thursday: Lights out day – This was a school-wide effort to conserve electricity. Classrooms and hallways were filled with natural light from the windows, lessons took place outside, and each teacher made an effort to use less.

Friday: Labs – Each class participated in a hands-on science lab. Labs were carefully designed to follow the Next Generation Science Standards while also sticking to the Plant Your Seed theme.

“The goal of the week was to reinforce the importance of conserving our Earth. We had a very successful week and hope to foster the ‘Every day is Earth Day’ slogan in our actions,” second-grade teacher Frany Thorne told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Road Beat: Toyota's Prius Prime is plugged in



Prius Prime will have people rethinking a hybrid's performance – in a good way. Photo/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Prius Hybrid has been around the United States since 1999 and as complex a vehicle as it is, it is one of the most reliable and fail-safe vehicles ever sold in the United States.

Even the batteries are almost bullet-proof, with failures even after 10 years being an extremely rare occurrence. Part of that is due to the strict control of the battery software. In 2006, Toyota had tested the batteries for 150,000 cycles with no significant loss of efficiency. Amazing.

New for 2017 is a plug-in version of the Prius, called the Prius Prime. Instead of about a 1 kWh Nickel-Metal Hydride battery, the new Prime gets an 8.8 kWh Lithium-ion battery that can give the Prime a real-world EV range of about 22 miles, according to some reports. While the combined power output from the 1.8L Atkinson cycle inline four and the Prius' two electric motors is limited to 121 hp, Toyota has not released the standard hp available from the battery that powers the electric motors. Subtracting the 95 hp of the gas engine from the total combined output, it leaves just 26 hp as an EV vehicle. But from its performance as a pure EV and its EV top speed of 84 mph, I suspect this number to be higher, but with a co-efficient of drag of 0.25, 84 mph on 26 hp is possible.

Because the EV portion of the car is fairly low hp, it is possible to get engine assistance even though the battery is in a high state of charge as in pure EV mode, performance is a bit lethargic. But with the gas engine available it performs like a conventional Prius hybrid, but pure EV mode is more readily available and for long periods of time.

In my prior Prius tests I longed for more battery. With this plug-in, that wish has been answered. With judicious modulation of the throttle in normal mode, you can EV the Plug-in Prius to your hearts content, knowing that you are still driving a Prius Hybrid that has an EPA rating of 133 MPGe (equivalent) in pure electric. MPGe/hybrid MPG is rated

at 55/53/54 city/highway/combined. And with its relatively large 11.3-gallon fuel tank, 600 miles might be easy.

During my short 10-mile excursion starting a zero mpg, the Prius was up to 42 mpg on the trip computer and climbing and that included some use of the gas engine during some full throttle runs. I estimate a 0-60 mph time of about 10 seconds, both engines working. And there is little if any guilt when you stomp the throttle.

In my test drive around Roseville and without a full charge I was still able to EV quite handily accelerating to 45-50 mph on pure electric. But this Prius is so smooth and quiet, about the only way you know if the engine is helping or running is to look at the systems operational depiction on the IP. Otherwise you just don't know. The starting and stopping of the engine is also imperceptible, it's that smooth of an integration.

Ride quality is obviously extremely quiet and it is almost cushy. It's certainly not a car for the track, but you could create a new kind of racing, one that requires both speed and fuel economy, sort of an endurance race. Now that could be interesting. We could call it "hypermiling with speed."

Even with its 265-pound battery, Prius Prime tips the scale at a modest 3,375 pounds. Prime is only 183 inches long, but it is classified as a mid-size car by the EPA. Prius Prime has a spacey look to it, futuristic, if you like. It will be polarizing. Starting at a shade below \$29,000 for a Prime Plus to about \$34,000 for a loaded Prime Advanced, the Prime is well priced considering that a loaded Prius hybrid stickers for about as much. But then again, a "conventional" Prius does have EPA mileage numbers in the 50 mpg range which the Road Beat easily averaged (54 mpg overall) in our recent test.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the

U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Donner Party tragedy becomes a stage musical



“The Donner Party” opens this weekend. Photo/Charr Crail/Sacramento Theatre Company

By Marcus Crowder, Sacramento Bee

If you heard that Sacramento Theatre Company will produce a world premiere musical based on the story of the legendary Donner Party, you might have thought, “Hmm, that’s a nervy choice.”

The creators of “The Donner Party,” which opens this weekend on the STC Main Stage, just want you to keep an open mind and give them a chance. After all, a few years ago an enterprising young man turned the dense literary biography of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton into an unlikely multiracial hip-hop musical. That turned out OK.

To refresh your memory of local history, the Donner party was a group of pioneers led by George Donner and James F. Reed who in May 1846 set out for Sutter's Fort from Springfield, Ill. The trip by wagon train typically took between four and six months. The Donner-Reed party left a larger body of wagons to take an untried "shortcut" across the Great Basin, which had been described by writer-adventurer Lansford Hastings.

Read the whole story

Tahoe City planning summer activities

Tahoe City Wine Walk and Solstice Festival are gearing up to offer myriad activities for local residents and visitors June 15-18.

The annual wine walk will be June 17 from noon-4pm. This alfresco event features more than 20 tasting locations that showcase regional wineries and bites from North Lake Tahoe restaurants and caterers.

The event also includes craft brews and spirits, as well as non-alcoholic tasting options. The complete list of participants will be updated **online**.

Wine walk tickets are \$45 per person in advance and \$50 day-of. Ticket price includes admittance, wine, beer, spirits and non-alcoholic tastings (for participants 21 years and over), commemorative wine glass, bite-sized morsels, live music and complimentary on-site parking. Designated driver tickets are available for \$20 day-of and include food sampling only. Kids under age 6 are free. For more information or to purchase

tickets in advance, go **online**. Day-of tickets will be available at the Boatworks Mall and the North Lake Tahoe Visitor's Center (cash only).

The Tahoe City Wine Walk takes place during the Tahoe City Solstice Festival, a weekend full of activities that kick off the summer season at Lake Tahoe. The four-day Solstice Festival brings together artisan food and wine, musicians and artists, and the popular shops, restaurants and galleries.

Tourism binds Tahoe and Cuba



Rafael Betancourt and Julie
Regan

By Julie Regan

International collaboration was alive and well recently at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency where Cuban tourism expert Rafael Betancourt spoke to South Shore locals.

Betancourt's lecture, titled "The Cuba tourism engine revs

up,” included a discussion of Cuba’s new wave of American tourists and the steps the Caribbean island nation is taking to accommodate what’s projected to be steady growth in the coming years.

TPRA hosted the presentation in partnership with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

What Cuba and Lake Tahoe have in common is the need to grow our tourist-based economies while not loving the place the death.

Sustainable tourism is a matter of global concern. The United Nations declared 2017 as the year of sustainable tourism and published data that show that approximately 1.2 billion people travel internationally every year. That number has nearly doubled in the last 15 years.

Betancourt shared recent figures on Cuba’s tourism, which is essential to growing the country’s struggling economy. There has been an “explosion” in cruise ship visits to Cuba in the past three years, with four U.S.-based cruise ship companies bringing tours to the island. He said new procedures are being instituted by the Cuban government to manage this new form of tourism to the island.

Betancourt explained how environmental protection is included in Cuba’s constitution and the government has established numerous national parks and marine protected areas. Cuba’s biodiversity is known throughout the world and the island nation is often called the Galapagos of the Caribbean. While nature-based tourism is being advanced by Cuban officials, the need for economic development is urgent, Betancourt said.

Julie Regan is TRPA’s external affairs chief. Regan met Betancourt in Havana on a trip as part of her doctorate research.

Donors allow Truckee-Tahoe animal group to expand services

Adopting out the healthiest pets possible is of the utmost importance to the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.

By providing a strong level of care and preventative medications/vaccinations to the pets released back into the community, HSTT also helps maintain the health and well being of other pets in the community.

Partners like the Lahontan Community Foundation Fund at Parosol Tahoe Community Foundation and community donors help HSTT meet its health goals.

It's HSTT's goal to facilitate and perform vaccinations, disease testing, medical treatment and safe sterilization surgeries on every pet that is stray, abandoned or relinquished within the community.

HSTT has expanded its community spay/neuter program by providing more low-cost surgeries to qualified limited-income, full-time residents of Truckee, Sierra County, eastern Placer County and eastern Nevada County. They are also now offering free monthly surgery clinics for the community's pit bulls and Chihuahuas, and for pets owned by active and retired US military, with the help of area vets on World Spay Day.

Autism to be discussed at Incline event

Autism currently affects 1 to 2 percent of children (one in 68) in the United States. It is a complicated, behaviorally defined disorder that impairs social interaction and communication, causes repetitive behaviors, and restricts interests; it also has many associated features such as anxiety, digestive disorders, and epilepsy.

UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village is hosting a lecture where people will learn how the description of autism has changed since it was first described in 1943, the various causes of autism, the attempts at treatment, and the success of early intervention treatments.

The talk is May 18 at 6pm. Door open at 5:30pm for guests who have preregistered, open seating starts at 5:50pm. A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door.

Go online to **register**.