Eco-friendly pest control in the garden



Floating row covers allow air, light and water through, but prevent insects like bean beetles and cabbage worms from reaching and damaging the plants.
Photo/Melinda Myers

By Melinda Myers

Spots on tomatoes, holes in hosta leaves and wilting stems mean insects and diseases have moved into the garden. Don’t let these intruders reduce the beauty and productivity of your landscape. Work in concert with nature to prevent and control these pests and you will be rewarded with a bountiful harvest and landscape filled with beautiful blooms.

Monitor. Take regular walks through the landscape. Not only is

it good exercise, but it will improve your mood and you'll discover problems earlier when they are easier to control. Look for discolored leaves, spots, holes and wilting. Inspect the underside of the leaves and along the stems to uncover the cause of the problem.

Identify. Once you discover a problem, identify the culprit. Your local extension service, garden center or reliable internet resource can help. Once identified, you can plan the best way to manage the culprit.

Invite the good guys. Toads, lady beetles and birds help control many garden pests. Attract them to the garden by planting herbs and flowers to attract beneficial insects, adding a house for the toads, and birdbath for songbirds. Avoid using pesticides and learn to tolerate a bit of damage. A few aphids or caterpillars will bring in the lady beetles, lacewings, birds and toads that are looking for a meal.

Clean up. Many insects and diseases can be managed and prevented with a bit of garden cleanup. A strong blast of water from the garden hose will dislodge aphids and mites, reducing their damage to a tolerable level. Or knock leaf-eating beetles and other larger insects off the plants and into a can of soapy water.

Pick off discolored leaves, prune off diseased stems and destroy. Be sure to disinfect tools with 70% alcohol or one part bleach to nine parts water solution between cuts. This will reduce the risk of spreading the disease when pruning infected plants.

Adjust care. Reduce the spread and risk of further problems by adjusting your maintenance strategies. Avoid overhead and nighttime watering that can increase the risk of disease. Use an organic nitrogen fertilizer which encourages slow steady growth that is less susceptible to insect and disease attacks.

Mulch the soil with shredded leaves, evergreen needles or wood

chips. This will keep roots cool and moist during drought, improve the soil as they decompose, and also prevent soil borne diseases from splashing onto and infecting the plants.

Non-chemical controls. If the problems continue, try some non-chemical options for insects. A yellow bowl filled with soapy water can attract aphids, a shallow can filled with beer and sunk in the ground will manage slugs, and crumpled paper under a flower pot for earwigs are just a few ways to trap and kill these pests.

Or cover the plants with floating row covers. These fabrics allow air, light and water through, but prevent insects like bean beetles and cabbage worms from reaching and damaging the plants.

Organic products. Organic products like insecticidal soap, horticulture oil and Bacillus thuringiensis can be used to control specific pests. And even though these are organic, they are designed to kill insects or disease organisms, so be sure to read and follow label directions carefully.

Take note. Make notes on the problems and solutions in this season’s garden. Refer to these next year to help you do a better job of monitoring and managing garden pests. And when shopping for new plants, select the right plant for the location and choose resistant varieties whenever possible.

A little eco-friendly gardening can go a long way in creating a beautiful and productive garden.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more tha 20 gardening books.

Sensory overload on trot up Horsetail Falls



Horsetail Falls swooshes down through a wall of granite. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

If the drought continues for a number of years, one day it may be called “Ponytail Falls” instead of Horsetail Falls. But for now, the water is flowing as though there is no drought.

From a distance, especially driving west on Highway 50, the falls look like a horse’s tail – thus the name. It’s one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the area – from afar and close up.

This is one of those destinations where the end point can be anywhere one chooses because there are so many scenic vistas along the way.

There is designated a loop. While pretty, it doesn’t go up to the falls. But there also isn’t a sign saying when to get off this section of trail.



Pyramid Creek is either in view from or can be heard while on the trail.

Pyramid Creek is the early focal point. Downstream this water eventually ends up in the American River.

There was enough granite that AJ had booties on for the first time.

At times the trail is not well defined. Our group of 12 who was hiking there in June took a couple U-turns and crossed the

creek before we finally found our way to the end point we all agreed to. There we sat on slabs of granite eating our lunch, watching the water descend in all its glory. Absolutely stunning.

The water tumbling down comes from Lake Aloha. It’s possible to hike there and to other lakes in Desolation Wilderness from this point. But this is only recommended for more advanced hikers.

Almost every year at least one person is seriously hurt or dies in this area because of climbing beyond his or her ability level, not respecting how cold the water is or the swiftness of the current.

Parking spaces fill fast, so go early – or don’t go on a weekend. Our trek was about 4 miles round trip.

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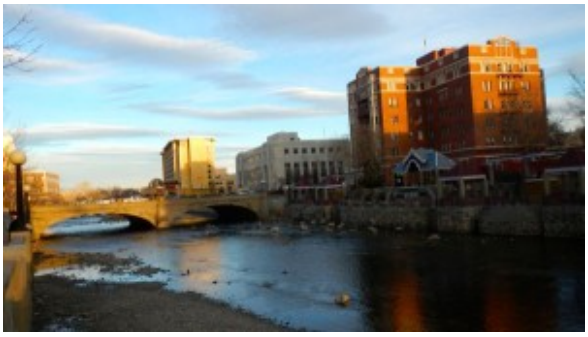
Several pools are inviting, though the snow-fed creek is

quite chilly.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west toward Placerville. The trailhead is outside the basin. Parking is on the right at Pyramid Creek. There is a fee to park.

Truckee River trout struggling in drought



The Truckee River in Reno is dropping as the drought continues. Photo/LTN

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The plight of Truckee River trout struggling to survive drought has anglers upset and some calling to suspend fishing in the stream until conditions improve.

But the Nevada Department of Wildlife says they don't have any plans to "close the river," as some have suggested because officials there don't believe it would help matters.

Although the department is urging catch-and-release anglers to

avoid fishing in the afternoon and evening when the water is warm and fish are particularly stressed, they aren't calling for a total ban on angling.

Read the whole story

Tahoe celebrity tourney challenges pro athletes



Ex-49ers and hall of famers Steve Young and Jerry Rice are regulars at the ACC golf tournament. Photo/LTN file

Hall of famers driven to excel at secondary sport

By Susan Wood

If you think it's humbling to try to break into professional

sports and then enter the Hall of Fame, then try golf once you've reached the top of your game. Golf can be the most humbling sport of all.

But that's all in the sport of life for 15 hall of famers who will be joining 78 other participants in the American Century Championship starting next week at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. Four of those hall of famers will be inducted this summer.

So what draws and drives these athletes who were once at the top of their game in professional football, baseball, basketball and hockey to compete in such a different type of sport? And what do they do to prepare themselves for the crossover?

The reasons vary when you ask the athletes, doctors, golf pros and enthusiasts.

Some say a competitive nature brings them here to NBC's big golf stage. Another observer said the ability to excel in yet another sport motivates them. Others said the network encourages them with the promise of fun and frolic.

Former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Jerome Bettis, aka "The Bus," told Lake Tahoe News on a conference call this week that his reason runs a little deeper.

The sixth all-time leading rusher in NFL history, who will be inducted Aug. 8 into the Hall of Fame, explained how he feels he's in good company with other Hall of Fame entrants. He enjoys the camaraderie of what he calls "a fraternity and brotherhood" over their accomplishments.

"You definitely feel you're in great company and more so with hall of famers. You have a respect from all these guys. You know what it took to get there. These are the most competitive bunch of guys I've ever seen," said Bettis, who got his nickname while playing at Notre Dame. (Note: Pittsburgh games bring out a huge Fighting Irish following.)

The football great has shown he’s willing to not only compete against his own brother, but in another sport beyond football and golf. They bowled.

Bettis recalled with affection how his family is so tight knit, especially given the struggles. The brothers lost their father and now are enduring their mother having cancer.

“It’s a special weekend for us because of the journey we’ve taken. Our mother and father have never missed a game the entire time I played in the NFL,” Bettis said. He added how he and his mother were both crying when he got the news of his Hall of Fame induction. Bettis’ brother will introduce him during the ceremony.

To Oakland Raider receiver Tim Brown, another inductee this year, the competition on such a stage is what brings him out to the golf course.

“This tournament is the only one of its kind. There’s nothing like Lake Tahoe. You go out there and think ‘I’m going to beat this guy.’ You can’t get this on the football field,” Brown told Lake Tahoe News on a conference call. To cross over to golf, Brown said he walks a lot, but admitted “I’d die” if he walked a lot at his home in Texas where the temperatures are scorching hot.

Another new participant this year, Steeler wide receiver Hines Ward, said he relishes the competition of golf.

“I wished I would’ve started golf a long time ago. We’re trying to work on my game,” the two-time Super Bowl champion said of his fellow teammate Bettis. The two have become close off the field.

So perhaps golf is more than a place for sales executives to solidify a deal. It can be a place for kinship among other athletes.

That’s at least what Phil Weidinger, spokesman for the tournament and a golfer, believes goes on with the players.

“Where else are you going to play with this guy?” Weidinger said, illustrating the uniqueness of the tournament.

Most of the Hall of Fame players hit the course for fun, but some have winning in their back of their minds, like San Francisco 49er receiver Jerry Rice.

“He works on this. That’s his goal – to win this thing,” Weidinger said of the well-liked participant. “There are four to five hall of famers who could win this thing.”

Overall, Weidinger estimated about a dozen of the 93 participants have a shot at it.

And this friendly competition and the fierce competitive nature is just what the sports network is going for with inviting these hall of famers. Besides the exposure of bringing out an athlete at the top of their game gains much of the attraction, Weidinger pointed out.

“You have to have the skills – the skills that are inherent to any pro player or any college player and apply to any sport,” Mike Fry, physician with Tahoe Fracture & Orthopedic Medical Clinic, told Lake Tahoe News of the crossover these athletes make on the golf course.

Fry cited the sports figures’ mental game as coming into play.

“Most of these guys compete with personality. That’s what makes them succeed at what they do,” Fry said.

To fellow golfer Randy Fox, hall of famers in other sports competing on the golf course seems natural. Their intensity, competitive spirit and household name give NBC reason to attract viewers by bringing them on screen.

“Hall of gamers, along with many other athletes take up the

game of golf. They all have very good hand eye coordination and with being very competitive individuals. Many excel in the game of golf and become very good golfers. Lots of celebrities from numerous occupations try to get into this event, but NBC chooses the players they feel will create the most interest," said Fox, who is manager of Edgewood Tahoe pro shop. He attributes the anticipated interest as a reason for the increased number of Hall of Fame participants.

Hall of Fame participants in the July 14-19 celebrity golf tournament: Marcus Allen, Charles Barkley, Jerome Bettis, Tim Brown, John Elway, Marshall Faulk, Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux, Mike Modano, Jerry Rice, Joe Sakic, Emmitt Smith, Ozzie Smith, John Smoltz and Steve Young.

National monuments expanding in Calif., Nev.

By Josh Lederman, AP

Mammoth bones, prehistoric rock carvings and more than a million acres of wilderness will be protected as part of three new national monuments that President Obama is creating in California, Nevada and Texas.

The presidential move, announced by the White House early Friday, brings to 19 the number of monuments that Obama has created or expanded since taking office. Environmental advocates hailed the new monuments as bringing sorely needed protection to natural American treasures, even as Republicans in Congress were pursuing legislation to stop the president.

In Texas, Obama is creating a monument at Waco Mammoth, a

relatively small site in central Texas where archaeologists have discovered remains of 24 Columbian Mammoths – the largest of the mammoth species – from more than 65,000 years ago, the White House said. Like other mammoths, the Columbian Mammoth is now extinct, but roamed freely in North America during the Pleistocene epoch, known colloquially as the ice age. The site marks the only spot in the U.S. where a nursery herd of mammoths has been discovered, and is also home to preserved remains of other ancient species including the saber-toothed cat, dwarf antelope and the western camel.

Nevada's Basin and Range, home to rare rock art from 4,000 years ago, will also become a national monument. The White House said more than 700,000 acres of public land will be protected in an untouched area of the Great Basin region. In addition to petroglyphs, the site also contains "City," an array of abstract sculptures that artist Michael Heizer has worked on for more than four decades. The project evokes elements of Mesoamerican life, with ceremonial mounds interspersed with more modern architecture. Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, the Senate's top Democrat, has been pushing for years to protect the site and its surroundings.

Tourists and nature lovers in California will see more than 330,000 acres in Northern California set aside for a new monument at Berryessa Snow Mountain. The White House touted the area's rich biodiversity and Native American cultural sites, but the area is best known as a destination for hikers, campers, fishermen and hunters. Officials said designating the site as a monument would likely prompt increased visits to the area and drive economic growth in the coming years.

"I applaud the president, because his historic action will preserve this magnificent area for generations and boost the local economy," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.

Some Republicans have complained for years that Obama has abused his authority to designate monuments. In anticipation

of Obama's move, this week Nevada Rep. Cresent Hardy introduced an amendment to an Interior Department bill that would block Obama from creating monuments in areas where there's been local opposition. His amendment, which successfully made its way into the bill, lists counties in Nevada, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah as off-limits.

"Any decisions that restrict ranching, recreation or other types of land-use activities should have as much local input as possible," Hardy said, adding that the amendment was "about empowering local communities and local stakeholders most affected by monument designations."

Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, presidents have broad authority to designate historic or ecologically significant sites without congressional approval, protecting those areas from new development like mining, oil wells and grazing.

Obama has used that authority aggressively as he's worked to secure a legacy of protecting the environment and warding off the effects of climate change. Earlier this year, Obama designated new monuments in Hawaii, Illinois and Colorado, and last year he expanded the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument to cover 490,000 square miles, making it the largest marine preserve in the world.

California's Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, the White House said. The National Park Service will run Waco Mammoth National Monument in Texas, with help from Baylor University and the city of Waco. In Nevada, Basin and Range National Monument will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Golf event benefits pancreatic cancer research

NFL hall of famers, former Major League Baseball players, and other sports and entertainment celebrities will gather July 12-13 to raise funds for cancer programs and traumatic brain injury research during the 7th annual Gene Upshaw Memorial Golf Classic at Schaffer’s Mill Golf Club in Truckee.

Practice rounds begin July 12, followed by a VIP pairings party. Tournament play begins July 13, with a 10am shotgun start followed by an afternoon awards banquet.

Since the inaugural event in 2009, more than $825,000 has been raised for pancreatic cancer research, medical treatment and care for cancer patients and their families, sustainability and advancement of medical technology, and funding for research in areas such as mild traumatic brain injury at the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center.

Upshaw passed away from pancreatic cancer at 63.

Military takeover of Nev. wildlife refuge angers conservationists



Bighorn sheet at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Photo/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Conservation groups are blasting a plan in Congress that could split Desert National Wildlife Refuge north of Las Vegas and hand half of it over to the U.S. Air Force.

The change, tucked quietly into the House version of a massive defense authorization bill now in conference committee, would make land withdrawals permanent for the Nevada Test and Training Range and put the Department of Defense in charge of almost 850,000 acres currently managed by both the Pentagon and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Attempts to get a Department of Defense comment on the plan were unsuccessful Wednesday, but the proposal's backers say it will save the military the time and expense of having to reapply for an extension every couple of decades just to keep using the land the way it has been used since World War II.

But environmental advocates worry it could curtail future wildlife research and management on that part of the refuge.

Read the whole story

Wacky weather to linger for a couple more days



Hail gathers along Highway 89 in Truckee on July 8. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Rumbling, crackling and flashes of white light. It’s just another day in Lake Tahoe. Oh, and there is fresh snow on Tioga Pass.

Hail has been common with this series of storms that is now in its second week. On July 8 golf-ball size hail was recorded in South Lake Tahoe. More typical has been marble-size hail. It has gathered in places to the point it looks like snow.

While summer thunderstorms are not uncommon in the region, they usually don’t hang around this long or come at all hours of the day and night.

“This pattern has been very persistent in that it hasn’t

shifted," Alex Hoon, meteorologist with National Weather Service in Reno told *Lake Tahoe News*. "A high pressure over the Great Basin brings moisture up from the south." These are monsoon-like storms.

In the last 36 hours a low pressure has come over California, which is cooling things down.

South Lake Tahoe's high on Wednesday was 69, while it was 85 in Reno. Normally these two cities are 80 and 91, respectively. Today's high in the city is slated to be 65 degrees, while it may reach 78 in Reno.

South Lake received 0.39 inches of rain on July 8 and 0.05 inches on July 7. Truckee on Wednesday recorded 0.11 inches. In Little Valley, which on the other side of Diamond Peak between Incline Village and Washoe Lake, the rain total was 0.57 inches.

Douglas County on Wednesday issued a disaster declaration for parts of the valley because of the flooding. The declaration will allow the county to call in additional crews to help clear roads, remove debris and repair public infrastructure that continues to be damaged as repeated storms cause flash flooding.

The most recent flash flood was primarily concentrated in the Stephanie Lane and Johnson Lane areas. Approximately141 homes have been recorded as possibly having water and structural damage and an unknown number of homes with landscape damage, according to the Douglas County Sheriff's Department.

The Johnson Lane Firehouse Station 6 is being used as the local field office for citizens to report damage. Sandbags are available at Fire Station 6 on Stephanie Lane.

While the moisture is welcome in this fourth year of drought, it is wreaking havoc on traditional summer businesses in Tahoe. Ski resort gondolas and trams can't run when there is

even a threat of lightning, and boat-paddle-bike rentals come to a grinding halt.

Thunderstorms are still in the forecast and remain so through the weekend, though with a diminishing chance.

By next week the weather is expected to return to normal – dry, a little breezy and in the 80s at the lake.

Torch Jenner ran with in Tahoe to be sold

By Ula Ilnytzky, AP

NEW YORK – The 1984 Summer Olympic Torch that Bruce Jenner carried through Lake Tahoe is going on the auction block where it could fetch $20,000 or more.

It's the first major piece of Jenner memorabilia to go to auction since the winner of the 1976 Olympic Decathlon Gold Medal became Caitlyn Jenner.

The 24-inch torch, featuring a brass finish and leather handle, is being offered by Heritage Auctions at its Platinum Night Sports Auction in Chicago on July 30. The seller is Bob Lorsch, a Los Angeles philanthropist and entrepreneur who orchestrated the Tahoe leg of the torch relay and secured Jenner's participation.

"This torch serves as a wonderful symbol that masculinity and femininity are not mutually exclusive," said Chris Ivy, Heritage's director of sports auctions. "The decathlon has

long been considered the ultimate athletic proving ground. Jenner has played both gender roles masterfully."

Jenner was approached to carry the torch as part of the Los Angles Summer Olympic Games to help support Caesars Tahoe's agenda of giving back to the local community and promoting area youth programs, said Lorsch. The hotel casino held a drawing for a chance to win a place in the relay and sponsored 50 kilometers or about 31 miles of the Nevada route. Seven went to individuals and 42 to local organizations. Jenner was asked to run the remaining kilometer or 1,000 meters.

"Caesars saw it as a tremendous opportunity … to do something more special, never realizing that we would be creating what is truly a piece of history that originated as a piece of sports history, then evolved as a piece of entertainment history through the Kardashian legacy and becoming a cultural phenomenon through the transition to Caitlyn," said Lorsch.

"Other than trinkets and signed memorabilia, this is the first piece of what I would consider significant Jenner memorabilia to reach the auction block," said Ivy.

Better known to a younger generation as the patriarch on "Keeping up With the Kardashians," Jenner, 65, announced earlier this year that he was transitioning to become a woman. Vanity Fair ran glamour photos of him as Caitlyn.

A spokesman for Jenner did not respond to a request for comment.

Caitlyn Jenner will receive the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the upcoming ESPY Awards on July 15 for her bravery for publicly coming out as a transgender woman.

An E! Entertainment network documentary series "I Am Cait," depicting Jenner's transition from a man to a woman, will debut July 26.

Study: Nature may be vital for mental health

By Peter Dockrill, Science Alert

Getting away from it all in the great outdoors has been a proven panacea for generations of city-dwellers, but a new study has quantified how access to nature could be a vital component in our overall mental health.

With more and more of us living in urban areas, researchers from Stanford University wanted to investigate why urbanisation is associated with greater incidences of mental illness. In a controlled experiment, they looked at whether exposure to nature could influence depression levels and specifically 'rumination': repetitive thoughts focused on negative aspects of the self.

The researchers took two groups of participants and led them on 90-minute walks through two very different kinds of environments. One group walked across a grassland area populated with oak trees and shrubs, while the other group walked along the side of a heavily trafficked four-lane highway.

Read the whole story