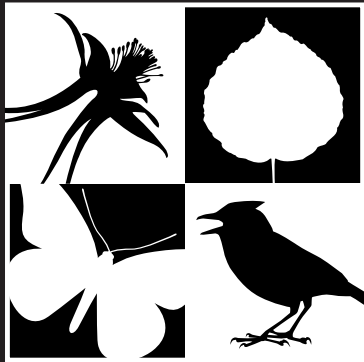


# LAKE OF THE SKY



# GARDEN CLUB

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
LAKE OF THE SKY GARDEN CLUB

September 2003, Volume Thirteen, Number Seven

Post Office Box 1827, Tahoe City, CA 96145-1827

# ALL THE DIRT

## OFFICERS

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Mary Hawley

**Historian:** Sharon Dewberry 530 587-1450

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Diane Morrison 530 545-2325

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14499 Hansel Ave., Truckee, CA 96161

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### For inclement weather changes, call:

Barbra Briggs 530 583-3011

## September 29th Meeting

The September meeting will be a potluck on Monday, the 29th at Pamela Williams' home at 10115 Vista Ave., Truckee. (See map on page two.) This will be our planning meeting for 2004. Come with your ideas and interests for speakers and activities for the next year. We want your input! This meeting is also our plant exchange... please bring a plant to exchange with another member! And, please bring a dish according to the following schedule. The club will provide the drinks.

A - D Dessert            M - R Salad  
E - L Main Dish        S - Z Appetizer

The meeting will begin at 3:30. Hope to see you there!

**Email October newsletter information to Patty Robbins by October 2, 2003 at [newsletter@lake-of-the-sky.org](mailto:newsletter@lake-of-the-sky.org)**

[www.lake-of-the-sky.org](http://www.lake-of-the-sky.org)

## Greetings!

I'm glad we had such a beautiful summer, because fall is creeping in. Soon the garden tasks of cutting back, mulching and wrapping tender limbs will be upon us. The seasons are ever changing, as is our membership. I'm sad to say we've lost a devoted member. Linda Jones, our Garden Tour Chairperson from 2002 passed away recently. She was a positive spirit and we'll miss her. We have dedicated the Penny Pines in her name this year. For those of you who are new to the club, each National Forest replants sapling trees annually and they can be purchased by the lot. We contribute to replanting annually and honor our members by dedicating in their name. Our community also lost Helen Parsons Smith recently at the age of 93. She was the founder of the High Sierra Herb Garden and the guardian of the McGlashan Butterfly Foundation. Helen struggled for nine years to get her project off the ground. The property at the Truckee Pines Senior Center still has hope to one day become a nice community garden.

**Continued on page two**

## August 25th Minutes

The meeting was held after a wonderful Members Tour showcasing our own beautiful gardens. Many thanks to our hostesses: Judy Luger, Joyce Polan, Val Dawes and Barbara Menk. The meeting and annual potluck was held at the home of Barbra Briggs. Many thanks, Barbra, for sharing your beautiful lakeside home.

After guests were introduced the minutes were approved.

The treasurer's report stated that our balance is \$14,962. Approximately \$8,400.00 was made at Garden Tour 2003.

Patty Robbins reported that Geoffrey Nicholls submitted an application to the California Garden Club, Inc. to be included in a web site competition and had already received compliments! The judging will be in December. Way to go Geoff!!

Pamela thanked the following people with plants or bouquets for their leadership with the 2003 garden tour: Bonnie Foster for chairing the tour; Steve Swigard for photographing the gardens; Barbara Menk for designing the tickets and posters; Barbra Briggs for chairing the food committee and Lois Perryman for organizing the hostesses. Many thanks to them and all the others who made this tour a success.

Our new chairman for Garden Tour 2004 is Mary Hawley who is already checking on gardens. She also shared some new ideas for fundraising (ie. a calendar with photos of gardens and tips; garden gloves for sale at each garden with our logo on them). We also discussed banners at each nursery where tickets are sold to improve ticket sales.

Barbara Menk has already designed the tickets and posters for Garden Tour 2004! Many thanks!

Because our Garden Tour was in Incline this year motions were made and seconded to give a \$500.00 donation to the Thunderbird Lodge for irrigation improvements and \$500.00 donation to the Demonstration Garden in Incline. Both motions passed.

Joyce Polan introduced Doni Glasmacher from the Bear League who gave an excellent

talk on how to live with our Tahoe critters. Many good ideas were given to help keep the wild animals in the wild and not in residential areas where, unfortunately, they would be in danger of being labeled a nuisance and then shot. Many thanks, Doni.

Our next meeting will be September 29th at Pamela's. This will be a very important planning meeting. We will also have our plant exchange and another potluck. Yeah! It will be an A-Z potluck as was the potluck at Lorrie Moore's.

*-Respectfully submitted by,  
Elly Stickney, Secretary 🐛*

**Please Note:** Our November meeting has been cancelled. After our October meeting, we will have a cookbook tasting (desserts and appetizers) and wreath making ideas meeting/party, Monday, December 1st.

## Lake of the Sky Name Tags

If you need a name tag, please contact Patty Robbins at 530 587-4647 (Robbins Design) or email at newsletter@lake-of-the-sky.org with your request.

## New Members

### Earline Jones & Mike Prescott

Post Office Box 7396  
Incline Village, NV 89452

### Stephanie Bright & Joshua Ditchoff

15946 Wellington Way  
Truckee, CA 96161  
email: sbright@ltol.com

### Julie Jarrett & Steve Larson

Post Office Box 598  
Carnelian Bay, CA 96140

### Chris Mooney

Post Office Box 1229  
Kings Beach, CA 96143

### Shirley & Philip Altick

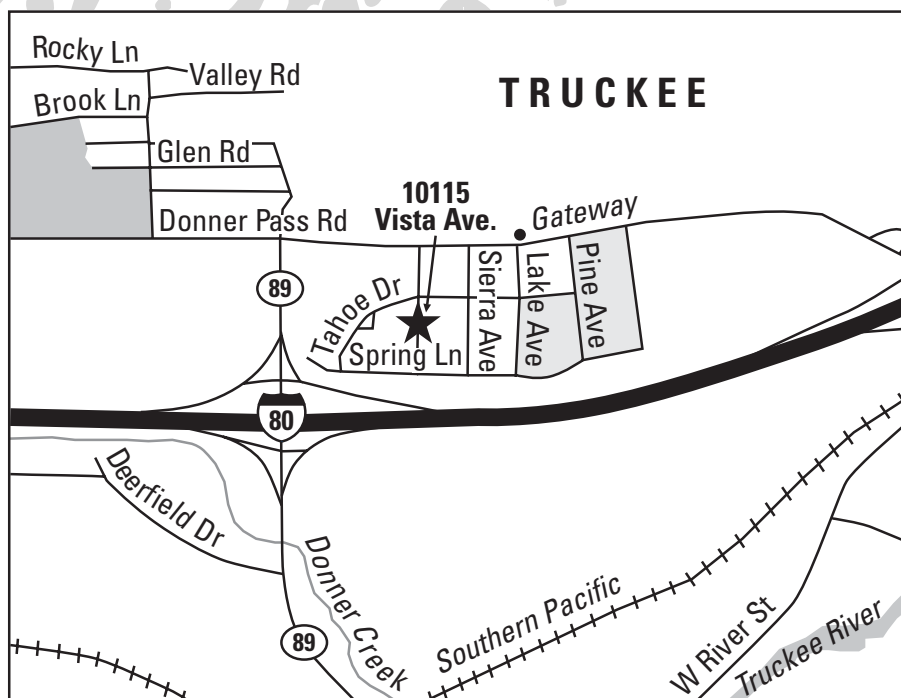
psaltick@charter.net

## Greetings continued

Our next meeting will be at my home. Please see the map below. This is a salad potluck, plant exchange and planning session. Please bring an outdoor chair and hope for good weather! If the weather is poor, we will meet at the Fairway Center. See you all then!

*-Best Regards, Pamela 🐛*

## Pamela Williams' Home



## Notes from the "Pondlady"

As the average temperature drops, you should begin checking the water temperature of your pond often. When the water temperature remains below 60 degrees it's time to stop feeding your fish high protein foods. The metabolism of fish slows down and they can no longer digest protein. Continued feeding leads to undigested food rotting internally and eventually death. There are commercial high carb fish foods available, or you can simply switch to Cheerios. Don't start with Honeynut Cheerios or they'll turn their nose up to the regular flavor! Other fall chores include trimming plants to at least 2" below the water surface and to the tubers for lilies and arrowhead. The plants you won't need to trim are the rushes, horsetail and water iris. Creepers such as; creeping primrose, moneywort, and watercress will need to be discarded, along with water lettuce and water hyacinth. Cannas bulbs should be brought into cool storage before the first frost. Egyptian papyrus and umbrella plants can winter indoors, once you get over their frog pond odor. Simply remove most of the soil around the plants base. Soak the roots in one gallon of water with two cups of activated carbon. *Tip: fill an old nylon knee-high or mesh bag with the carbon.* When you're done with sweetening your plants, put it into your pond filter and it will keep on working. Systems with fish benefit from a salt treatment after the plants are trimmed. This has a two fold advantage: algae is stifled and a three percent salt content will kill up 95% of all parasites that plague fish. Do two water changes after two weeks, (two days apart). Release salt water away from pine trees. Now you're set for winter. For more info on salt and fish health see Dr. Johnson's web site at koivet.com, it's a treasure trove.

-Pamela Williams, 2003 

*"To stand by the beds at sunrise  
and see the flowers awake is a  
heavenly delight."* -Celia Thaxter

*Garden Notes:*

## Fall is the time to think about... Planting Spring Bulbs

by Marianne Kistler

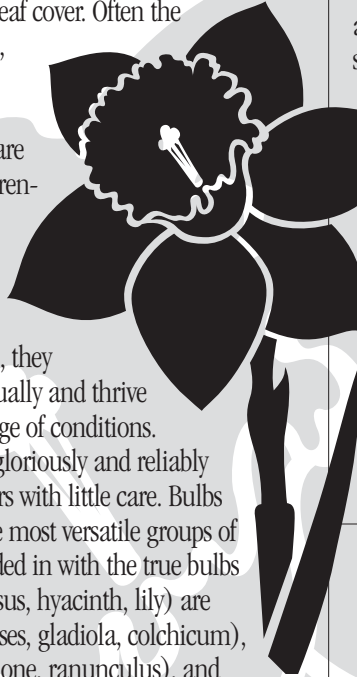
Nothing says spring like the sparkling brilliance of the first crocuses peeking out through the leaf cover. Often the first to bloom, crocuses start the parade of bulbs. Bulbs are the perfect perennial... beautiful, easy to care for and practically indestructible, they increase annually and thrive in a wide range of conditions. They bloom gloriously and reliably for many years with little care. Bulbs are one of the most versatile groups of plants. Included in with the true bulbs (tulip, narcissus, hyacinth, lily) are corms (crocuses, gladiola, colchicum), tubers (anemone, ranunculus), and rhizomes (bearded iris, spuria iris, Japanese iris, Siberian iris).

When selecting bulbs, purchase the healthiest, best bulbs you can afford. Size is important. Larger bulbs tend to produce larger and more pleasing blooms. Avoid soft bulbs and those that seem bruised. The outer, paper-like skin does not need to be intact for the bulb to grow.

Choose bulbs that are firm, with no soft spots, sprouts, or mold, and do not give off a bad odor. Good bulbs feel heavy for their size. Plant them in a sunny, well-drained bed. Bulbs will give the most pleasing results when planted in clumps or mass displays.


Spring flowering bulbs can be planted from October through December, depending on the temperatures where you live. If it's still pretty warm in October, wait to plant until daytime temperatures drop.

Give some thought to their placement before wielding the shovel! Spring flowering bulbs look especially lovely encircling trees, planted in groups among shrubs or along



walkways. Mass plantings are always breathtaking. Bulbs may be planted one to a hole or several in a broader basin-type of hole. It is also possible to double-deck bulbs: plant smaller bulbs higher up in the same hole as the larger, more deeply planted ones, if space is limited. Mark the tips of the larger ones (say, daffodils), which are set 3 to 4 inches apart at the bottom, so as to place smaller bulbs, like muscari or crocuses, in between them at a higher level.

If your soil is very alkaline, use cottonseed meal (an organic fertilizer) sprinkled over the soil to cover each layer of bulbs instead of putting it underneath. Finish with a one to two-inch layer of mulch and plant labels.

-Marianne is an Assistant Editor  
on the Golden Gardens Staff  
California Garden Clubs, Inc. 

## Think About Family

Closely related vegetables usually prefer similar sun temperature, water and the like, so, they are organized according to botanical "families." By the same token, members of the same family often suffer from the same problems. Certain pests and diseases often attack only a closely related family of crops. Keeping the same family in the same spot in the garden each year makes it easy for pests to find their favorite target and fosters the accumulation of pests and disease in the soil.

Different families use nutrients differently and, therefore, make different demands upon the soil. Growing one family in the same garden spot, year-after-year, can exhaust the soil of certain nutrients. Crop rotation is the easy solution to this problem. Move crops around your garden on a regular sequence so that they do not return to the same spot for three to four years.

-Golden Gardens, Garden Notes  
California Garden Clubs, Inc. 

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## What is Mycorrhizae? A Beneficial Garden Relationship ...and a term used for beneficial fungi.

There is a lot of confusion about mycorrhizae, a word that describes the common relationship between plants and beneficial fungi. While the modern gardener is just beginning to learn about mycorrhizae, it has actually been around for millions of years. In fact, the fossil record shows that mycorrhiza appeared at about the same time as plants appeared on land.

Under natural conditions, many plants, especially California native plants, live in close association with soil microorganisms. The roots of almost all higher plants are known to form "mutualistic symbioses" with fungi. This is termed "mycorrhizae" which means fungus-root. This term is derived from the Greek, "mykes" which means mushroom or fungus and "rhiza" which mean root. The relationship is mutually beneficial. It forms colonies on the roots of a host plant. The fungus spreads threadlike feeding structures called hyphae into the soil. This type of colonization allows the host plant to develop a much larger root system, sometimes 100 times in length with up to 2000 times more surface area. The increased the root surface area provides more room for water and nutrients to be taken in. The fungus serves as a bridge between the host plant and available nutrients. The hyphae help to break down organic material thus helping to release nutrients to the plant. Some fungi release chemicals to inhibit other organisms that might otherwise harm the plant. They develop a soil community that supports friendly bacteria, nematodes, springtails, earthworms, etc., but inhibits herbivores and pathogens. The fungus is considered a plant, but it has no chlorophyll so can not produce its own food. In return for their hard work, the fungi obtain a steady source of food (sugar) from the host plant.

This relationship developed because of need. Under conditions which are optimum, when the plant gets appropriate water and regular fertilizer, the plant had no need for the fungus and it will often disappear. For this reason, where there is adequate nutrition and moisture, non-mycorrhizal plants

occur. These include most cultivated garden annuals and perennials. But in nature, conditions are not always optimum. Over past 400 million years or more, many plants have developed such that they depend upon this relationship. California natives are a prime example of plants that need this fungal relationship to survive. A coast live oak, for example, will be more pest and disease ridden and have a significantly shortened life span, if there is plentiful water and fertilizer but no mycorrhizae.

There are several different types of fungi that take part in mycorrhizae. Two major groups are recognized.

### Ectomycorrhizae (EM)

- Fungi that forms a covering around plant roots which protects the roots and acts as a reservoir for the major nutrients (N-P-K) as well as calcium.
- Found on most stress-tolerant plants, such as willow, eucalyptus, birch, and oaks, and are common to the forests of the Pacific northwest.
- There are thousands of this type.
- They tend to be "host-specific".
- Acid soils with good drainage favor ectomycorrhizae.
- These fungi usually produce mushrooms above ground which produce spores.

### Endomycorrhizae

- There are three main types. One is associated mainly with orchids. A second works in unison with the family Ericaceae which includes heather, manzanitas and rhododendron.
- The most important type in this discussions are the "vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae" (VAM) which actually penetrate inside the roots of the plants and make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the root.
- They cannot be seen without a microscope.
- They are clumped in the soil and not spread by the wind.

- There are only 100-200 know species of VAM.
- They are often found where there is low organic matter and low phosphorus in the soil, e.g. deserts, grasslands, tropical forests.
- The same species of VAM may continue, interconnected, for miles. (That is why digging around some plants is so disruptive. It breaks and kills the mycorrhizae life support system.)
- They are important to grasses, sages, buckwheat and ceanothus.
- VAM is not particularly host-specific and will work on a wide range of plants.

Soil pH and type dictates mycorrhizal type and associated plant type. Plant material that is native to an area with a soil pH more than 2 units different than yours should not be used. pH is logarithmic. A pH of 5 is 100 times more acid than pH of 7. A soil fungus that grows in soil pH of 5 will not generally survive a soil pH of 7.5. Amending the soil with organic matter tend to increase the pH to "neutral" over time. Again, a soil fungus that grows in soil pH of 5 will not generally thrive a soil with a neutral pH of 6.5 or 7.

Soils that have been moved or compacted, heavily amended or planted, or soils with pronounced fertilizer and pH imbalances are not good homes for mycorrhizae. In the average home garden, urban settings and commercial development, mycorrhizal fungi are often not present in adequate quantities. This is especially true of commercial potting mixes and fumigated soils (in which transplant trees are grown). They often sterile and may contain no mycorrhizal fungi at all. Plants may be "inoculated" with commercially produced mycorrhizae. In natural soils, mycorrhizae are abundant and readily available to the plants that grow naturally there.

*-Golden Gardens, Garden Notes  
California Garden Clubs, Inc. 🐿*