



THE SECRET GARDEN IN NEVADA COUNTY

Lynn Lorenson, Nevada County Master Gardener

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Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after strolling through the Nevada County UCCE Master Gardener Demonstration garden located in Grass Valley, CA. Yes, it's pretty to look at, but that's not all, Master Gardeners and the Nevada Irrigation District cooperate to demonstrate sustainable landscape techniques for the home gardening public.

The **guiding principles** are to support regional biodiversity, conserve resources and minimize pollution and waste. The **focus** is on climate and soil adapted plants for the Sierra foothills. A process known as *zoning* is used in the design and planning. The zones include irrigation needs, light and protection from wildlife. Numbered signs throughout the garden indicate the hydro-zones, the amount of supplemental water used.

There is a bit of everything to catch your eye and peak your interest

The Pavilion Sets the Stage

The new Pavilion functions as the house set in the 1.5-acre site. As the landscape moves away from the house, less and less resources are used.

Foothill Mediterranean Garden

Come into this garden down broad steps at the entrance to the parking lot, or on the level by the pavilion. The garden is divided into 3 hydro-zones. The plants, with the exception of the Columbine (*Aquilegia*), are from an Asian or Mediterranean climate. The plants are especially suited to the foothills, thriving in snow, summer heat and recovering after romps by raccoons and browsing deer.

Raised-bed Enclosure

Roses, edible-ornamental landscape design, and vegetables in pots are just a few of the ideas you'll find demonstrated. See innovative methods for growing in small spaces. A new feature, the **Enabling Garden**, shows ways for individuals with limited mobility and strength to successfully grow vegetables and flowers. A section is devoted to the propagation of ornamental plants that are sold at the Master Gardeners' spring and fall plant sales.

Look for examples of ways to exclude four-legged pests from your landscape.

Rock Garden

Nestled on the west side of the raised-bed area are hardy succulents and rock garden plants that provide year round interest.

The raised bed was amended with sand and gravel to improve drainage in our wet winters. Most, but not all rock garden plants, need neutral soil. Lime is added to raise the soil pH.

Children's Bed

Yearly projects that inspire our younger gardeners to cultivate, plant and harvest bring the love of gardening to Nevada County youth.

Cottage Garden

This quiet garden features a stopping point with comfortable garden furniture. Learn how to develop the look of a cottage garden without the thirsty needs of traditional plantings. There is even a dwarf fig tree that shades the west side of the cottage office. Look for colorful blooms throughout the year.

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Backyard Fruit Growing

To the west and south of the cottage garden you will see backyard fruit production that is integrated into the home landscape. Springtime brings a beautiful display of white and pink blossoms. This area encompasses orchard trees, berries, wine and table grapes and fruiting shrubs. Innovative training and pruning methods create a peach-tree chair. Twenty-five percent of the fruit harvest is donated to local food banks.

The Edge

Need ideas for the wildland interface? Plants in this area provide a transition zone to natural surroundings. In normal rain years, little to no supplemental water is needed. Maintenance requirements are low.

Oak Habitat & Native Grass Meadow

The rapid urbanization of the foothills has prompted Nevada County Master Gardeners to develop a section devoted to showing the landscape use of natives, mostly from the Sierra foothills. Enter this section through the natural wood arbor that supports the native clematis (*Clematis lasiantha*). A wide selection of perennials, shrubs & trees display the landscape versatility of California native plants. The best way to foster beneficial insects in your landscape is to maintain or plant regional natives.

Continuing to the west of the oak habitat section you enter the native grass meadow. This area is being developed to show grasses for identification and the use of native grasses as an aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sound landscape choice. The meadow ends with a hedgerow of native roses, coffeeberry and live oak.

California Native Plant Introduction Program

The purpose of this cooperative venture is to test easy to grow, adaptable California native plants and plants from other Mediterranean regions. UC Davis and UCCE Master Gardeners throughout the state are testing selected plants for their suitability in varying growing conditions.

The first test, at UC Davis, is for low water use. The Grass Valley site tests for cold hardiness. When plants have passed all of the test phases, they will be recommended to the horticulture industry to be propagated and sold as *California All-Stars*.

Arboretum All-Stars

The horticultural staff of the UC Davis Arboretum have identified 100 tough, reliable plants that have been tested in the Arboretum and by Master Gardeners throughout the state. They are easy to grow, don't need a lot of water, have few problems with pests or diseases, and have outstanding qualities in the garden.

Many of them are California native plants and support native birds and insects. Most All-Star plants can be successfully planted and grown throughout California. Learn all about them here:
http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx

Compost Production

Master Gardeners are Master Composters too! The home gardening public is educated to reduce and use garden trimmings in the landscape. Regularly scheduled classes on composting are presented at the garden.

History

The Nevada Irrigation District and the University of California entered into an agreement in March 1991 to promote efficient resource use in the landscape, especially water. The garden is funded by fall and spring plant sales and from the sale of the award winning *Western Nevada County Gardening Guide*.

Garden Hours and Location

8:00 AM-5:00 PM week-days 8:00 AM-3:00 PM weed-ends

NID Business Center Grounds And Demonstration Garden 1036 West Main Street Grass Valley, CA

Please see the calendar of events page for a list of upcoming workshops at the Demonstration Garden put on by the Nevada County Master Gardeners.

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