

Master Gardener's Favorite Perennials

This month's featured Master Gardener's favorites are from Maggie Gordon. Here are a few of her favorite perennials.

This is the perfect time to plant a Butterfly Bush to attract butterflies to your garden. The Butterfly Bush, *Buddleia davidii*, is also sometimes called a summer lilac. The fragrant flower comes in blue, lilac, pink or white. In the Tahoe basin it does not reach its full growth potential which is 12 by 8 feet. It is more like a perennial which is cut back each spring. It needs to be pruned back to encourage a thick full bush. I have not seen one in Tahoe more than 3 by 5 feet and they are usually smaller. It attracts butterflies and bees and is outstanding in the garden during its July to frost bloom time. Plant in full sun but it can take a little shade. Plant as deep as it is in the container but make sure your hole is much wider. There is no need to add soil amendments, it should be happy in our Tahoe soil. Water deep to settle the soil around the roots. A minimum amount of care is needed but regular medium amounts of water are needed for a healthy plant and lots of visiting butterflies.

The Blanket Flower - *Gaillardia x grandiflora* is another one of my favorite Lake Tahoe perennials. It can be planted right now. The blanket flower blooms from late June until frost. It is a low growing hardy plant that can reseed itself. It attracts bees and makes a good cut flower, flowers profusely and needs little water. It would be a good idea to mulch around this plant. This is a vigorous mountain garden perennial that gives joy and delight year after year.

RHODODENDRON

Who said Lake Tahoe is no place for Rhododendrons?

This beautiful early spring blooming shrub generally likes filtered shade, moist soil and humid air but if happy in its location it will thrive in the Tahoe basin. Remember that its leaves are poisonous. The Rhododendron does not like to be planted where the roof unloads snow that causes plant damage so be careful of the location where you plant it.

For more information on any of these plants consult **The New Sunset Western Garden Book** (2012).