



Sherwood Demonstration Garden: Succulent Garden

By Deborah Hager

UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

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The Succulent Garden at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden (SDG) in Placerville is a stunning illustration of this large group of plants which can thrive in El Dorado County. This educational garden is filled with plantings that are experimental so that we can all learn what plants are cold hardy. Succulents are tough and forgiving as well as drought tolerant and largely deer resistant. A visit is a must to explore the succulents that will thrive in our local El Dorado Hills Gardens. The specimens include cactus, perennials, shrubs, succulents and trees. The companion plantings here work beautifully in combination with the succulents, whether offering filtered shade and shelter, or complimentary design elements such as color or structure.

The collective name for this varied plant group gives the clue to their drought tolerant characteristic: fleshy leaves that hold their own water reservoir. There are an incredible variety of succulents with very strongly defined shapes, textures and colors. A number of succulents have adapted some amazing shapes and forms in their struggle to survive various environments.

The Golden Barrel Cactus, *Echinocactus grusonii*, instead of storing water in leaves, has a stem that is modified into a thick cylinder that stores water.



The South American Golden Barrel, *Echinopsis bruchii*, had magnificent red blooms this spring at the Succulent Garden.

The leaves of Agave 'Blue Glow' have very sharp tips and are edged with thin red bands and inner gold bands that light up when backlit by the sun. The plant grows to about four feet wide and two feet tall. There is a beautiful Agave 'Blue Glow' at the Succulent Garden.

Check out the SDG website at http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/ for complete plant lists and much more.

The culture and care of succulents is low maintenance, not no maintenance. Succulents have a seasonal rhythm - a time to grow and a time to rest and have maintenance needs - as do many other plants. Succulents demand good drainage. The soil in the Succulent Garden is sandy loam with very good drainage and this feature was critical during our

very wet winter. Succulents are susceptible to rot if planted in heavy soils that hold too much moisture. Water management is one of the biggest defining factors in keeping succulents healthy. Succulent plants like to approach dryness before being watered.



July is a busy month for all gardeners, so we will have only two public education classes coming up. “Saturdays with Barry” continue July 8, at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, 6699 Campus Drive, Placerville. A lot of things are happening in the summer vegetable garden! The class time is 9 – 11 am and is free, but on-campus parking is \$2.

“All About Berries” will be on Wednesday, July 12. Master Gardeners/Master Food Preservers Cheryl Knapp and Cindy Young will share their knowledge on the benefits of homegrown berries. Topics will include selection, planting, fertilizing, pruning, and a few ideas on how to use all those berries. The free class is 9am – noon at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at [311 Fair Lane in Placerville](https://www.ucanr.edu/locations/311-fair-lane). For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. You can also find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ucanr).