

July 27, 2016



Wetland Gardens
By Barbara Finley
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

You may have found a wet area on your property with some surprise -- what is to be done with that? Consider this to be a unique challenge or better yet a wonderful opportunity at developing a unique and lovely gardening area.

The wet area may actually be a pond, a stream, a marsh, a swamp, or a bog. What comes to mind when thinking of a bog – cranberries or peat? Such plants are not to be found naturally in California unless created by someone. The wetland areas being referred to here are sourced by our winter rains, and unfortunately most will dry up come summer unless, by luck, they are fed by a natural spring.

Wetland areas are actually considered a vibrant ecosystem. They are a home and breeding ground for bird species, fish, insects and mammals. The essential environmental function of water serves as a valuable filter; water percolates through the soil removing pollutants, excessive nutrients and controls erosion. This percolation is also responsible for oxygenation of the soil which is necessary for plant growth.

An important consideration is planting the right type of plants, and avoiding invasive plants that can harm waterways and take over surrounding vegetation. Take note of native plants that may have been growing in or near your wet garden area, and encourage those plants where possible. When introducing new plants, consider some of these attractive alternatives: clumping bamboos (*Bambusa multiplex* ‘Alphonso-Karr’ or ‘Golden goddess’), Redtwig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), Yellowtwig dogwood (C. s. ‘Flaviramea’), common yellow monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*), Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica* ‘Butter-&-Sugar’), and Lobelias (*Lobelia cardinalis*, *L. fulgens*, *L. siphilica*). For more details, the following publication lists aquatic plants to avoid and more that are recommended: <http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8369.pdf>.

July 27, 2016

Last, a word of caution: because so many of California's streams, creeks and underground water are connected, it's best to locate your bog garden away from any visible surrounding natural waterways.

A wonderful bog garden is located in the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County's Sherwood Demonstration Garden. The Bog Garden represents a natural water garden in Northern California, and demonstrates effective and successful landscaping in a seasonally wet and dry location. Master gardeners have encouraged native plants while satisfying the need for ornamentals. An added bonus is native wildlife sightings that include toads, frogs, blue heron, geese, hawks and killdeer. The Sherwood Demonstration Garden is free and open to the public (weather permitting – closed if temperature are forecasted for 95° and above) on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Located behind Folsom Lake College – El Dorado Center, 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville.

There are no Master Gardener classes this weekend.

UCCE Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions at local Farmer's Markets, and Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. 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.