

## Garden Tour Features Roses and Sustainable Practices

By Rebecca Miller-Cripps



UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County will host their twenty-first annual garden tour on Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The theme of this year's tour is "You Can Do It." The gardens demonstrate garden-enhancement projects that you can replicate in your own garden. Projects range from creating curb appeal to growing roses; from creating a beautiful landscape to growing vegetables sustainably, all while saving water.

Garden Tour tickets, \$10.00 per person, are available at the following locations: Columbia Nursery on Parrotts Ferry Road in Columbia; Sonora Lumber, South Washington Street, Sonora; Nature's Whole Food Depot in Standard; The Nest in Twain Harte; Antiques, Etc. on Washington Street in downtown Sonora; and the University of California Cooperative Extension Office at 52 North Washington Street, Sonora. Tickets can be purchased from any local master gardener and will also be available on the day of the tour at the Master Gardener demonstration garden at 251 S. Barretta Street in Sonora, CA. Tickets can also be purchased on-line at: <http://ucanr.edu/tuolumnegardentourtickets>



This week we offer a brief description of two of the gardens on the tour, the Sawyer garden and Bel Giardino:



The Sawyer Garden is situated in a picturesque country setting in the Sierra foothills amongst oak trees and Ponderosa pines. The garden was established in 1998 with 320 roses that were moved from the owners' previous home. Now, over 1600 roses of all types grow in the garden, including a "green rose" that is a sport of an "Old Blush" rose. At times, the owners have cared for over 2000 roses, including roses in the process of propagation and roses for sale when the garden was open for public tours. Many roses date back centuries, including Old Blush that was originally imported from China in 1751.

The owners do not spray pesticides to control insects. They also do not apply systemic pesticides to their roses, wanting to protect the many birds on the property from exposure to

harmful chemicals. The rose gardens do not have a problem with insect damage because the many beneficial insects and birds control insect pests.

We hope that you will come and enjoy the roses in this four-acre garden. Please allow adequate time to meander along the paths, view the roses from the gazebo or sit beneath the big oak tree at the lower part of the garden.

Bel Giardino, also located in the Columbia area. Visitors should be prepared to spend a significant amount of time in order to fully explore the site. In addition to five demonstration sites (described below), look for recycling ideas, rainwater harvesting systems, container gardening, an abundance of California native plants, design ideas and inspired plant combinations for sun, shade and everything in between.

The California native and All-Star garden framing the driveway features the University of California Arboretum's All-Stars and a variety of California native trees, shrubs, and perennials. This section showcases plants designated by the UC Davis Arboretum as their top 100 "All-Stars" based on extensive field testing for drought tolerance; low maintenance; value to wildlife including birds, bees and pollinators; attractiveness year-round and ability to thrive in our Mediterranean climate.

The perennial edible landscaping garden demonstrates an attractive, long-lasting landscape created with fruit trees, berries, grapes, artichoke, rhubarb, asparagus and herbs. It includes ornamental landscaping with edible flowers, foliage or berries to create a landscape that is good enough to eat. It also includes a "laundry to landscape" supplemental water system that supports the fruit trees.

The no-water garden is a research-oriented garden used to determine which plants can survive without supplemental water. They are watered well when planted in the fall and then tested to see how long they will survive based on what nature provides. Some of them have survived our four-year California drought.

The bees, birds and butterfly garden provides all of the essential elements for wildlife including: food for the various life stages, shelter, nesting places, water, and cover. In addition to checking out the plants specifically chosen for particular kinds of butterflies, birds and pollinators, look for the presence of wildlife activity.

And, finally, Bel Giardino has two distinctly different "welcome" gardens, one for sun and the other for shade, both designed to welcome and delight visitors.

*Rebecca Miller-Cripps is a University of California Cooperative Extension  
Master Gardener of Tuolumne County.*