



## Growing Food in Tahoe – A Christmas Valley Family Garden

Note: *This is the first of a series highlighting food gardens that are located in the Tahoe/Truckee area.*

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On a sunny lot that surrounds their house in Christmas Valley Marissa and Matt have an extensive vegetable garden that uses a variety of planting options, from pots and grow bags to raised beds with drip irrigation systems.

After 5 years of growing only indoor potted plants and the occasional herb, Marissa and Matt decided to expand to the great outdoors utilizing the front, side and rear portions of their yard to grow a variety of vegetables and herbs. The first year's success with the first couple raised beds led this year's expansion of several more raised beds and use of grow bags, and containers. Squash, potatoes, garlic, onions, beans, tomatoes, tomatillos and basil are only some of the crops successfully grown in the garden. Marissa has attended a couple of the Master Gardener workshops on growing vegetables.

To simplify raised bed construction, precast masonry cornerstones were purchased and 2x6 redwood sides used. The masonry corners are designed to allow interlocking beds to be built, minimizing construction time and costs.



**Raised beds using masonry corners**



**Potatoes, onions and elephant garlic ready for harvest**

There are two keys to the success of the garden: the first was bringing in quality soil for the raised beds and containers. The soil selected came from a program operated through the Nevada Department of Corrections and the folks at Full Circle Compost, which uses up to 20% horse manure (from the prison's mustang program) in their compost blends. The remaining organic materials used by Full Circle come from green waste programs, including that operated by South Tahoe Refuse.

The second key to success was control of the critters. The use of exclusion systems such as netting helps, but the family's cat seemed to be a primary deterrent.

Marissa and Matt have not entirely given up on indoor (at least in winter) growing, having several avocado plants grown from seed in containers.