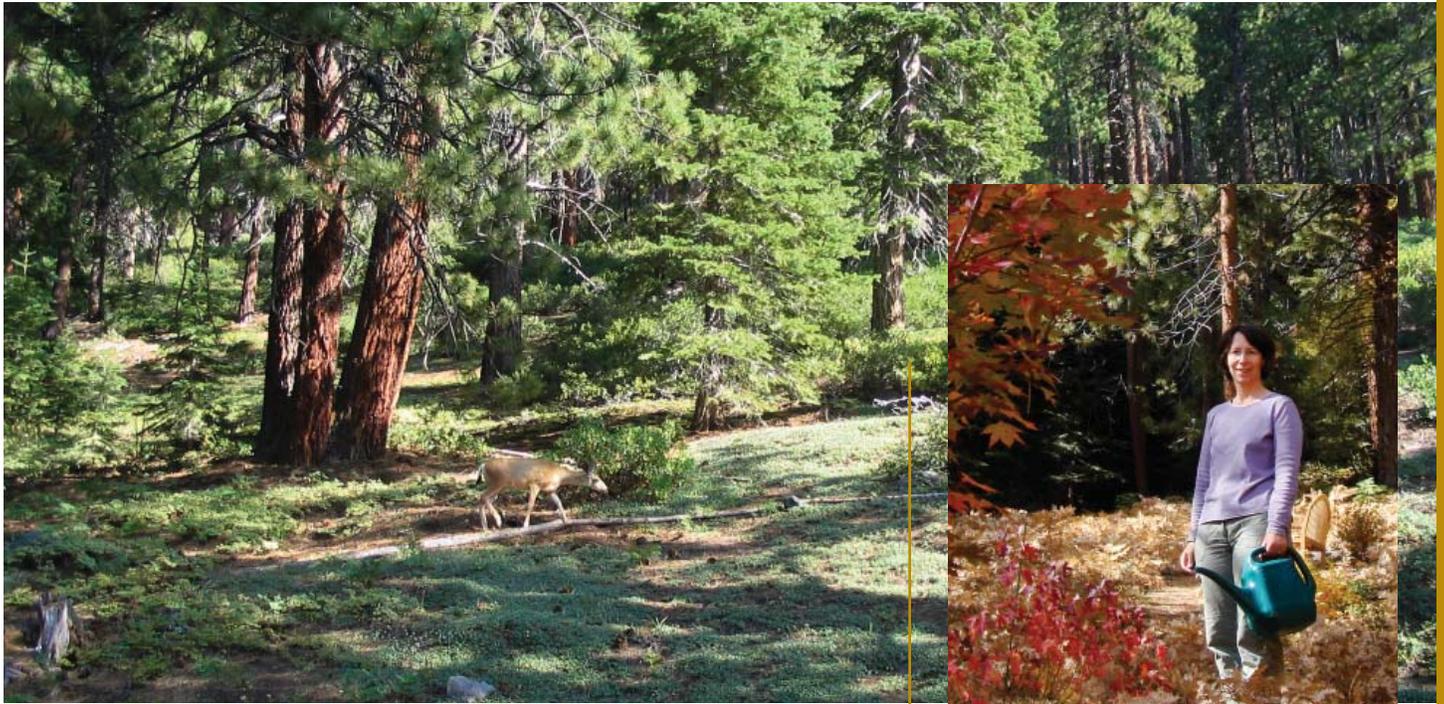


BACKYARD NATIVE PLANTS: FRIEND OR FOE FOR FIRE SAFE LANDSCAPING?

LECTURE WITH LESLEY HIGGINS, PH.D.

PRESENTED BY THE UC DAVIS TAHOE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER



Date: Thursday, October 23, 2008
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Lecture begins promptly at 6:00 p.m.
Cost: \$5 donation requested. No-Host Bar.
Location: Assembly Rooms 139 & 141,
Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences
291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, Nevada
(on the campus of Sierra Nevada College)

Lesley Higgins graduated with a M.S. in Marine Science and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Prior to moving to Lake Tahoe in 2003 she worked in the fields of wildlife ecology, marine mammalogy and animal behavior in Australia, California and Mississippi. She has been working in the Tahoe Basin with best management practices (BMPs), defensible space and native plants to promote forest health, habitat enhancement and conservation. She is the Incline Village Fire Safe Chapter leader and is the author of "Common Backyard Native Plants; Shrubs and Ground Covers for Fire Safe Landscaping at Lake Tahoe."

Tahoe's native plants evolved when fires were a common occurrence. In the absence of fire they have become overcrowded or degenerate, and increase the risk for catastrophic fire such as the Angora fire. We all know about thinning the fir and pine trees for fire safety, but what about all those shrubs and ground covers?

Identifying the native plants is the first step in determining what to do with them. Generally, fire risk depends on the type of plants, and whether they are evergreen or deciduous. Also important are height, age, density and the amount of dead material in the plant. How the plants are treated will depend on their growth habits; for example,

some of the natives regenerate readily and can actually be cut down to the ground to separate them and promote new growth. Pruning and thinning the native plants will not only reduce fire risk, but can also improve the health and look of the plants.

This presentation will describe the most common native plants and their growth characteristics, plus tips for maintaining these plants in a fire safe landscape. The value of native plants to birds and other animals will also be discussed to promote a greater understanding of the natural landscape here at Lake Tahoe.