

# PLANTS FOR THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN



## Creeping Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*)

### USES OF CREEPING SNOWBERRY

Creeping snowberry is an excellent plant for erosion control, good for stabilizing moist streambanks and steep hillsides. It is a rapid and vigorously growing plant and is often planted as a ground cover. Creeping snowberry also provides excellent wildlife cover. The white berries feed a variety of birds, and the pink flowers attract hummingbirds. In the fall, fruiting stems make for colorful fresh floral arrangements and add distinctive beauty to the landscape.

### DESCRIPTION AND GROWTH CHARACTERISTICS

Creeping snowberry is a deciduous trailing shrub that can reach up to 2 feet tall and 3 to 6 feet in width. This small shrub, sometimes called trip weed, grows low and spreads by runners to form small thickets. The bluish green oval leaves, up to 2 inches long, grow opposite on twigs. Small whitish pink flowers form clusters at the tips of the stems or where leaves join the stem and bloom April through June. The flowers give rise to small white berries during the fall. Creeping snowberry has a limited range from southern British

Columbia to southern California and from Washington east to northern Idaho. This hardy shrub does well in the Tahoe Basin and is commonly found on moderately dry, sunny montane slopes. While creeping snowberry is one of few shrubs that can tolerate both intense sun and constant shade, it grows best in partial to full sun and prefers constant moisture throughout the season.

### ESTABLISHMENT AND CARE

Creeping snowberry is easy to grow and valuable for low maintenance landscaping. It can grow in almost any light condition and adapts to a variety of soil types. When using as a ground cover, plant 36 inches or more apart because they sucker freely and will fill in the space between the plants.

Container plants establish rapidly and should be planted in the fall or in the spring after the danger of frost has passed, which in the Tahoe Basin is typically mid-June. Avoid planting in windy areas or in compacted soils. If the soil in the container is dry, soak it and let it drain overnight before planting.

Carefully remove the plant from the container so as not to break the root ball. Dig a hole that is twice as wide and six inches deeper than the container. When the native



soil is rich in humus (organic material), mix a small amount of compost or slow release organic fertilizer in the base of the hole to help the roots become established.

(continued on back)

For more information contact your local conservation district:

#### **In California:**

Tahoe Resource Conservation District  
530.543.1501 ext. 113  
info@tahoercd.org

#### **In Nevada:**

Nevada Tahoe Conservation District  
775.586.1610 ext. 28  
bcp@ntcd.org

# PLANTS FOR THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN



If the soil is poor in organic material, pre mix the backfill soil with 50% native soil and 50% stable compost. When planting with compost, additional fertilizer is not needed.

Plant at the same depth as the container, and make sure the root crown is level with the surrounding soil surface. Tamp the soil at the base of the planting hole to keep the plant from settling after the planting depth has been set. Backfill the hole half way with soil and then fill with water. The water will help settle and firm the soil around roots, eliminating air spaces and providing good root to soil contact. After the water has drained, finish backfilling the hole such that the upper level of back filled soil is even with the soil surface.

When completed, the root crown should be level with the solid soil surface. Form a shallow watering basin around the plant by building a ridge of soil around the edge of the hole. This will contain the water and allow for a deeper penetration of the water.

Applying a 2 inch layer of mulch (shredded leaves or dried grass clippings) around the plant each spring will help retain soil moisture and discourage weed growth.



## **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT:**

### ***In California:***

Tahoe Resource Conservation District  
530.543.1501 ext. 113  
info@tahoercd.org

### ***In Nevada:***

Nevada Tahoe Conservation District  
775.586.1610 ext. 28  
bcp@ntcd.org