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# CANOPY

TREES FOR PALO ALTO

*Canopy is a non-profit advocate for Palo Alto's community trees and works to educate, inspire and engage Palo Altans as stewards of new and existing trees.*



SPRING 2000

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## Time to Water Street Trees

by Kate Feinstein

**F**rom now until rains begin again in the Fall, you are the key to ensuring a healthy future for your new trees. Conscientious watering during a tree's first two dry seasons will ensure the well-established root system it needs for vigorous growth and long life. Even mature trees (except for native oaks—see below) benefit from monthly deep summer watering, depending on the type of soil. Here are some guidelines for watering:

**Native Oaks need special care in watering as young trees and no summer watering when mature.**

In its first dry season, water your tree once a week. Trees planted in heavy clay soil need watering only every other week. New trees should get about 10

gallons of water per one inch of trunk diameter. During hot spells, double the frequency of watering. After 2 to 3 months, gradually reduce the watering frequency to twice a month. During the second dry season, water your trees only once a month, except during hot spells.

Continues next page.

## Canopy and City Honor Retiring City Manager

June Fleming honored on California Arbor Day

by Forest Preston

**I**n the afternoon of March 7 under threatening skies, Canopy and City of Palo Alto staff joined with current and former members of Palo Alto's City Council and other friends to commemorate California's Arbor Day and to honor June Fleming who has retired from the Palo Alto City Manager's job. June has always been a strong and visible supporter of Canopy. We wanted to show our appreciation for her encouragement. The planting of an Aptos Blue Coast Redwood (*sequoia sempervirens*) seemed to be an appropriate way to create a lasting reminder of how much June has done for the revitalization of Palo Alto's urban forest.

It was also fitting that this be done on California Arbor day since, under June's stewardship Palo Alto only last year regained its Tree City USA

Continues next page.

## Watering from page 1

In order to avoid runoff, water slowly and deeply. Apply water directly on the root ball. Soaker hoses are ideal for this. In the first season, create a watering basin set off with a berm. After the first year, extend or remove the berm. Water a foot away from the tree trunk over a soil area that is two to three times the radius of the tree's canopy. To see whether the water is penetrating to the roots, try using a straightened coat hanger to probe the soil. It should move easily through moist soil down to 12" to 18".

Mulching is essential for keeping the soil moist and rich in nutrients for a developing tree. 2" to 4" of one-inch wood chips, or pine needles and stiff leaves such as oak leaves, work best for mulching. Loosen the soil before applying the mulch and keep it at least 6" away from the tree trunk. You can plant shrubs and perennials beyond the mulched area. Keep grass at least 4' away, since it will significantly slow a new tree's growth.

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON OAKS:** Native oaks (Coast Live and Valley Oaks)—naturally adapted to summer drought—have different water needs from other trees. For the first year, water weekly; for the next two years, water only once a month. Because native oaks are susceptible to diseases in warm moist soil, an established native oak should receive summer water only very rarely—less than once a month—only if it is stressed during prolonged drought periods or other unusual conditions, at the advice of an arborist. Water should not be applied closer than 10' from the trunk of an established oak. ■

## Tree for City Manager from page 1



**Dave Dockter and June Fleming inspect the ceremonial shovel.**

Dave Dockter, Planning Arborist in the City planning department reminded all in attendance that the requirements for a city to obtain Tree City USA designation include having a tree care department, implementing a tree ordinance, having a comprehensive forestry management program, and celebrating Arbor Day. Dave proudly unfurled the Tree City USA flag as part of the ceremony. He noted that the flag will now fly at City Hall.

The site, in front of the Palo Alto Main Library building at 1213 Newell Road was also appropriate. It was at

the Main Library that June began her career as an employee of the City of Palo Alto several years ago (she declined to say exactly how long ago).

Canopy's Program Director Dave Muffly was not able to attend. But it seemed that his spirit was there. Dave has exhibited an uncanny ability to schedule Canopy street tree plantings on days in which the rains held off until

shortly after the planting was complete. This day was no exception.

Although the clouds broke for most of the program, it wasn't long afterward that the rains returned with a vengeance. Thanks Dave!

June was pleased with the entire affair. She brought a chuckle from all in attendance when she good-naturedly remarked "I'm soooo glad it's not a memorial tree!" So are we June. And thanks to you once more for all your support. ■

**Retiring City Manager June Fleming was instrumental in regaining Tree City USA status for Palo Alto.**

## The Community's Youth are Doing Community Service

The young people of our community are into community service. This year, over half of the Canopy volunteers were young people. These youths worked alongside adults and charged the work with their energy. Many participated in more than one planting.

Among the participating groups were Cub Scout Pack 8, Troop 14; Boy Scout Troop 52; Girl Scout Troop 52; the Monte Vista High School (Sunnyvale) Environment Club, and the Key Clubs from Palo Alto and Gunn High Schools.

After watching a group of Cub Scouts help plant four Coast Redwood trees in Boulware Park, Canopy Executive Director Howell Lovell, Jr. commented: "These Scouts will be able to tell their children 'I helped plant those trees!' What a feeling that will be." Thanks to you all from Canopy and the trees of Palo Alto. ■



**Rajiv Randeo and Jonas Opperman from PAHS at Pepper Ave. planting**



**Terra James, Emily James, Dave Muffly, Jenny Doong and Jane Shih**



**Gunn High School Key Club members plant a Chinese Pistache on High St.**



**Oded Wurman, Adam Quam, Christine Feng and Andy Liang of Gunn Key Club plant Elms on Pepper**

### Canopy Needs Some Volunteer Office Help

Familiar with computers and you have a few hours a week to help Canopy?

We're looking for someone to come in weekly for 2-3 hours. Call Hal at 964-6110.



**Cub Scouts from Pack 8, Troop 14 (Palo Alto) hard at work planting a grove of Coast Redwoods at Palo Alto's Boulware Park**

# “Look! Up in the sky! It’s a maple! It’s a plane! No, it’s Syc A More!”

by Dave Muffly

Seems that everyone has a different name for this tree. To botanists it’s usually *Platanus acerifolia*. *Platanus* identifies it as part of the global sycamore or planetree clan. *Acer* is Latin for maple. *Folia*

refers to foliage, i.e. the tree has leaves like a maple. Many people call them sycamores. Some call them Planetrees. If the tree does have an

‘official’ common (as opposed to scientific) name, it is the London Planetree. But why London?

The story begins in the 1600s, when some observant plant lover in London noticed a Planetree that didn’t look quite like others commonly planted. London at that time had sycamores from America and China, and they hybridized to produce a tree that is uniquely qualified for growth in European cities, and that tree has become the most widely planted urban tree on the planet. London Planes have some very attractive, and even surprising features. They grow fast, but have very strong and useful wood. They grow large but don’t push up pavement very much. They tolerate a wide range of soil types. They generally have

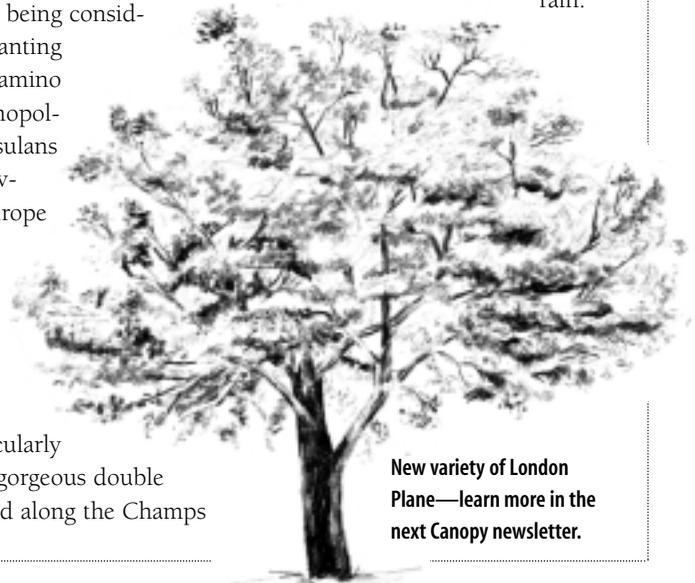
a good shape for planting along our streets.

Not surprisingly, earlier residents of Palo Alto often chose to plant London Planes, as they were familiar with them from the East. A good current estimate is that Palo Alto has roughly 3500 London Planes growing, most of them along the streets. The stretch of Middlefield between Oregon Expressway and Embarcadero is known for its Planes, and perhaps the most impressive planting is in front of the main Library, planted many years ago in deep San Francisquito flood soil followed by decades of abundant lawn watering.

Here on the Peninsula, the London Plane is currently getting more scrutiny than trees usually get, as it is being considered for planting along El Camino Real. Cosmopolitan Peninsulans who’ve travelled to Europe have seen the boulevards planted to London Plane, and have particularly noted the gorgeous double row planted along the Champs

Elysee in Paris. London Plane is a tree perfectly adapted to the climate of Paris. Peninsulans returning home want to see something as wonderful here. Is it possible?

Maybe. In an average year, Paris may receive three to four times the amount of rainfall we do here in Palo Alto. London Planes thrive with water. Sycamores in the wild generally grow along rivers, rather than in forests—they are called riparian trees. We have our own native sycamore here in California, and they thrive in wet areas, like a stretch of Highway 9 headed into Los Gatos. Even when there are dry years in Europe, the London Plane exhibits sufficient drought tolerance to continue giving great benefits and surviving on to the next period of rain.



**New variety of London Plane—learn more in the next Canopy newsletter.**

**The hardy London Plane is a favored candidate for the new plantings along El Camino (see related article on page 8).**



### London Plane bark pattern

But our Mediterranean climate is a different story.

A wet year for us is a drought year in Northern Europe. And one of our drought years is almost unimaginable to a Northern European. Observing the old population of London Planes in our area, a few trends are obvious. Planes are tough, but if you plant them in dry locations, away from creeks, and give them no additional watering, they may survive, but they will be dwarfed and give little shade or beauty. To see the evidence for this, you can go to the Stanford campus and look at the Planes near Lagunita Hall and also between Frost Amphitheater and Campus Drive. Heavy soil, no water, small, unimpressive trees. In these locations, native oaks would likely give much better results. If you look along the streets

of Palo Alto, you will see a mix of big and small and everywhere between Plane trees, generally depending on amount of supplemental water and also on underlying soil type (which varies much more than most people think).

With these considerations in mind, you may well be thinking that yes, indeed, we can plant London Planes along El Camino and succeed, so long as we provide supplemental watering. This, in fact, was the conclusion drawn in the 80's by newly-hired City Arborist Dave Sandage, when he directed an ambitious tree planting on El Camino Real. People planted nearly 300 London Planes of the 'Bloodgood' variety which we have watered by water truck ever since (generally about 10 gallons of water each week during the dry season).

With this background, we end the first of two parts of our article on the London Plane Tree. While waiting for the second article, we welcome you to observe the London Planes as they leaf out and grow into the summer season. ■

## Dave Muffly's Farewell



Canopy volunteers gathered at the home of Susan Rosenberg to commend and thank departing Program Direc-

tor Dave Muffly for his service to Canopy and the community. Dave did a fine job of organizing the planting of over 250 street trees during his time with Canopy.

Canopy Steering Committee Chair Forest Preston said "We have been extremely fortunate to have Dave as a part of Canopy. Two years ago we looked for a part-time Volunteer Coordinator. What we got was far more than that. Dave consistently contributed above and beyond the call of duty—overseeing significant growth (no pun intended—unless you like it) in our neighborhood plantings as well as improving tremendously the planting techniques used. He has been a wonderful asset."

In a farewell message to volunteers Dave noted that during his two years "We have touched the lives of uncounted residents. Our volunteers have been uniformly excellent. Again and again, I have appreciated how open people have been to new ideas and approaches." He added "To continue, Canopy needs support. If you have a passion for trees and a desire to help, this is an excellent time to step forward, as a volunteer or a donor. The next planting season is months away, but between now and then there is much preparation to be done. My best to you."

And our best to you, Dave in whatever course your life now takes. ■



## Tree Words from Ros Creasy

by Mureen  
Decombe

**W**hat does a jar of paprika have to do

with fruit tree? Ros Creasy began Canopy's Tree Talk 2000, which drew over 52 participants, by passing around a jar filled with freshly dried paprika from her own garden.

One whiff of the spice informed the sniffer that this was not the stale stuff we all have stashed at the back of the spice cabinet. This was fresh, full of flavor and bite. The difference we perceived was the same as that between store-bought tomatoes and the ones we grew in our own gardens last summer, or purchased from the farmer's market. But why stop with tomatoes?

We can also enjoy fruit from some of the most fertile ground our world has to offer—our own backyards. The gardens surrounding many of our homes was once fertile, productive orchard, and for those who seek to preserve some sense of that agrarian past, Ros was a great source of inspiration.

Ros imparted the wisdom of her many years of fruit tree cultivation, educating us on the basics of tree selection, design, and mainte-

nance. From apples to plums, Ros introduced us to her favorite varieties and gave us the sort of frank, humorous, gardening advice we might get from a friendly, interested neighbor.

Understanding the ecology of gardens, the interaction of insects, birds and plants, is an important tool for the home fruit tree gardener. Ros advised us that the prudent gardener first reaches for the hand lens rather than the spray bottle, and observes the rich and diverse world of insects before resorting to insecticides which, especially for home gardeners, may be as unnecessary as they are harmful.

Up close and in full color, we were introduced to beneficial insects, our garden allies that come to our aid for free, gleefully dispatching of aphids and other pests. She encouraged us to tolerate early aphid infestations on our plum or apple trees, and await the army of syrphid flies, lady bugs, soldier beetles, parasitic wasps and lacewings which are abundant in ecologically balanced gardens.

Finally, Ros treated us to a small slide tour of her garden, from which she pro-

duces not only abundant harvests, but also serves as her photo studio and experimental plot. A lively question and answer period covered a broad range of topics, and even included a discussion of genetically modified organisms.

When we were finally kicked out of the room after two hours of delightful, informative dialog, many of the participants purchased one of Ros's many books. It it rumored that several fruit trees were planted the next day. ■

### Canopy's Top Picks

- 'Fuyu' Persimmon (*Diospyro kaki*)
- 'Black Mission' Fig (*Ficus carica*)
- 'Blenheim' Apricot (*Prunus*)
- 'Santa Rosa', 'Satsuma' Plum (*Prunus*)
- 'Yellow Newton Pippin', 'Golden Delicious', 'Granny Smith', 'Gravenstein', 'Anna' Apple (*Malus*)
- 'Babcock', 'Indian Free', 'Baby Crawford', 'Mid-Pride' Peaches
- 'Italian' Prune Plum (*Prunus*)
- '20th Century', 'Hosui', 'Kikusui' Asian Pear
- Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*)
- 'Washington' Navel Orange, 'Valencia' Orange, 'Meyer Improved' Lemon, 'Bearss' Lime, 'Oro Blanco' Grapefruit, 'Satsuma' and 'Clementine'
- Pineapple Guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*)

## Canopy's Web Site: a Tree of Information for Palo Alto

by Karin Chapin

**H**ave you checked out Canopy's web site recently? If not, you may be surprised to find many of your questions answered right there, online. Canopy has been watering, pruning, and watching this "Tree of Information" grow over the past several months.

At <http://www.canopy.org>, you will find answers to Frequently Asked Questions, courtesy of Dave Sandage, Palo Alto's City Arborist; a How-To section with recommendations on how to "Hire an Arborist" and "Water Your Young Tree;" descriptions and contact information for all Canopy's programs; past and present newsletters; a calendar of coming events; photographs of some of our latest plantings; images of some of the most common Palo Alto trees, shown in different seasons and neighborhoods; a whole list of related sites; and of course, information about how you can volunteer or make a donation.

We welcome your input as to what information would be helpful to you on our web site. If you have comments or questions, please direct them to [webmaster@canopy.org](mailto:webmaster@canopy.org) or call Canopy at (650) 964-6110. ■

## Canopy to Help Sponsor Seminar on Estate Planning

**O**n Wednesday evening, June 7, 2000, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Canopy will help sponsor a Seminar on Estate Planning for the Future. Call the Canopy office (650-964-6110) for the location, which had not been set at press time.

At this seminar you will learn how estate planning can protect your family and maximize benefits for your heirs and beneficiaries. The program consists of two presentations followed by your choice of specialized breakout sessions:

*Starting an Estate Plan*, presented by Greg Takata, Financial Consultant at Salomon Smith Barney, will describe the initial steps in developing an estate plan, from a simple will to planned giving.

*Updating Your Estate Plan with New Options*, presented by John Calloway, the Sierra Club's Director of Planned Giving, will address recent developments in estate planning and taxation.

For more information on this event, contact Howell Lovell at 650-964-6110 or e-mail at [info@canopy.org](mailto:info@canopy.org). ■

## Join the Programs Committee, Canopy's Educational "Limb"

**T**he educational "limb" of Canopy, the Programs Committee is looking for more members. Our goal is to raise the community's awareness of the needs of trees in Palo Alto. The committee arranges:

- Speaker programs with topics ranging from appropriate pruning practices and fruit tree selection to oak tree care.
- Tree walks, approximately 4-8 a year, which take residents through Palo Alto's neighborhoods with an I.S.A. Certified Arborist.
- Street tree plantings, organized in cooperation with City arborists. They take place throughout the October-March planting season. Volunteer planters, including neighbors, high school volunteers, and Girl and Boy Scout troops, plant under the supervision of Canopy's trained planting leaders. Participants are introduced to planting techniques that promote the growth of a thriving tree.
- Tree Hotline—Palo Alto's answer source for tree-related questions.

If you're interested in joining the Program Committee, call Canopy. ■

## Canopy Spring Calendar

### Tree Walk

May 21, 2000  
2:00 pm  
Michael Young,  
arborist  
North of Lytton  
Avenue

June 25, 2000  
2:00 pm  
Kevin Raftery,  
arborist  
Main Library Area

### Estate Planning Seminar

June 7, 2000  
6:00 pm  
Call Canopy Office  
for location.

## El Camino Real Tree Project

by Susan Rosenberg

**Y**ou may have heard that it's happening and you certainly know that it needs to happen.... El Camino Real, long considered an eyesore, particularly the stretch south of Page Mill Road, has been earmarked for City-funded tree planting. The plan specifies a triple row of trees covering the sidewalks and the median from Menlo Park to Los Altos.

Over a year ago, an ad hoc group of Palo Alto residents, including Canopy's Susan Rosenberg and Dave Muffly, started the ball rolling. In subsequent meetings with Council Members and the previous and current City Managers, the groundwork was laid. Support has been enthusiastic. The first step, a Capital Improvement Project included in the Proposed City Budget, would rewrite the El Camino Real Design Guidelines for tree planting. These have not been updated since 1979. Many of the trees currently on that list are no longer considered suitable for the harsh conditions of El Camino Real. The new guidelines will recommend trees with wide canopies to shade and cool the street.

The one roadblock to this well-received plan has come from Caltrans which has jurisdiction over El Camino Real. Their planting guidelines are incompatible with the new proposal. Caltrans insists on small-diameter (4") trees. The Cities of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City are negotiating with Caltrans for a waiver. Stay tuned. ■

## Canopy's Leadership

### Steering Committee

Forest Preston, III,  
*Chair*  
Joe Hirsch,  
*Vice-Chair*  
Brad Denson,  
*Treasurer*  
James Crawford,  
*Secretary*  
Bill Courington  
Kate Feinstein  
Rita French  
Mary McCullough  
Kevin Raftery  
Susan Rosenberg  
Sally Sakols  
Gail Schubert

### Advisory Committee

Ron Bracewell  
Herb Fong  
Paul Garrett  
Leannah Hunt  
Jeanne Kennedy  
Larry Klein  
Kathy Levinson  
Carolyn Reller  
John Warren

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