

# 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 2004**

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## The Canopy Tree Care Survey—An Annual Event

How does a city like Palo Alto, which has so many trees, find a way to keep track of their health? The Canopy Tree Care Survey, which began as a pilot project in the summer of 2001 is part of the solution to that problem. The program was created to focus on young, recently planted street trees by educating homeowners on the proper care of young trees while notifying the City of Palo Alto of any problems which need to be addressed.

After the successful pilot the Survey was expanded into a citywide program in 2002; it now takes place annually in the summer months. All street trees planted by Canopy and the City in the previous four planting seasons are surveyed. At each address surveyed, information is left with the homeowners on the proper care for young trees. In 2003, surveyors also left informational flyers on Canopy and upcoming events, including tree care workshops. Results from the survey were compiled and shared in a detailed report to the City's Public Works Department so they can take action on trees in need of help.

After the survey residents were invited to attend a free workshop on proper care for young trees. Offered at two different

times, the workshop was taught by local ISA-certified arborist John McClenahan.

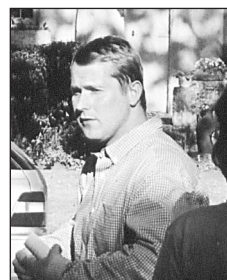
### METHODOLOGY

Canopy's Tree Care Survey is completed through volunteer labor. In 2003 Canopy had 43 volunteer participants—they contributed over 160 volunteer hours.

Volunteers represented a broad sector of the community, from high school students to local community groups such as Kiwanis and the Palo Alto Garden Club.

Survey routes for the volunteers were drawn up using mapping software that Canopy purchased. This software allows us to pinpoint the location of all the young street trees in the city making it easy to create routes. Each survey group was given a list of addresses as well as a map of their area.

Approximately half of the trees were surveyed during two tree care survey events held on July 9 & 12. Volunteers were trained, divided into teams and assigned survey routes. They typically completed



Certified arborist John McClenahan presented a free workshop to residents on proper care of young trees.

*Continued next page*

their routes within a 3-4 hour span. Volunteers surveyed the remainder of the trees not included during these two events on their own time. All trees were surveyed between mid-June and early September.

In total, 883 trees were surveyed. Of these, approximately 200 trees were not on our original survey lists. This discrepancy exists for a number of reasons including the fact that homeowners often plant trees without notifying the City. Also, believe it or not, there are some errors in both the Canopy and the City databases. Because we wanted to make sure that these “new” trees are recorded in Canopy’s database so that they continue to be surveyed in future years, the “new” trees were given an artificial planting date. This was necessary in order to ensure that they would eventually drop off of our survey lists. (Trees are no longer surveyed four years after their planting date.) Thus, most “new” trees have been recorded as having been planted on 12/15/01. (*Note: in some cases where it was obvious the tree was quite a bit older, the planting date was recorded as 12/15/99.*) We did not know the species of every “new” tree; in such cases the species was recorded as “unknown.”

The survey form divides the possible problems a tree may have into responsibilities of the homeowner and responsibilities of the city. This is used to guide the city and Canopy in further action.

## SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

The two most outstanding problems that volunteers found with young street trees were that the tree needed water and that the stakes needed to be removed (*both of these problems have been the subject of frequent articles in this newsletter*). Other common problems were the presence of a lawn or other competing plants, suckers that need to be removed, and trees that need significant pruning. Although mulching appears low in the list, we did note a need for education in this area. Too many people seem to think that they

should mulch all the way up to the tree trunk. This is, unfortunately, a good way to invite rot, disease, and insects into the tree— especially if the tree has been injured by lawn care equipment. Our education efforts will incorporate more emphasis on the need to keep mulch well away from the base of the tree.

Below is the breakdown on how many times specific problems were reported (*Note: Many trees exhibited more than one problem.*)

TREES SURVEYED	883
Need water	334
Stakes need to be removed	301
Lawn or other competing plants	111
Need pruning	93
Suckers need to be pruned	80
Need basin re-building	67
Need to be re-staked	44
Root flare no longer visible	43
Need weeding	37
Need mulch	31
Need to be re-strapped	20
Mechanical damage or injury	16
Dead or dying	12

A list of individual trees and their corresponding problems was provided to the Public Works Department so that they may include the information in their records and attend to the trees most in need.

## EVALUATION

Following completion of the 2003 tree care survey, the Canopy Program Committee reviewed and evaluated the success of the survey and came up with suggestions for the 2004 survey. Below are a few of those suggestions:

**1. Mail out watering reminders to all residents with a young street tree during the spring.** This would spur young tree owners to remember that the hot summer months are hard on young trees, and give them instructions for watering.

*Continued next page*

## 2. Begin the survey earlier in the year.

We hope that this will spur homeowners to establish a beneficial watering pattern early in the dry season, giving young trees a better chance of survival. We will hold tree care survey events on June 23 & 26, 2004. We will also continue to recruit volunteers from community groups and strive to build a greater sense of community.

## 3. Send results to all volunteer survey

**participants.** Participants would gain a greater understanding of the overall health of the city's street trees and an increased sense of community involvement.

**4. Have volunteers fix small problems as they survey.** Volunteers could be given the appropriate tools for such tasks as pulling mulch away from the root flare, pruning suckers and repairing basins.

## CONCLUSION

Palo Alto's health and vitality depend on maintaining a healthy urban forest. Our forest canopy is one of the things that draw people to our community. The Canopy tree care survey is done to make sure that young trees survive so that our urban forest is maintained. Last year's tree care survey represented a great advance for Canopy in the way we conduct the survey. The skills we learned will go far in aiding our ability to help oversee the health of Palo Alto's urban forest in the future. Understanding the biggest problems that we face with our city trees will help us to shape our programs in the future to better meet these needs. But now it's time for the 2004 survey. Please contact the Canopy office if you would like to help out this year—it's fun, it gives you a chance to walk the neighborhoods of Palo Alto, and you might even meet some interesting new people. All of this while helping to maintain the health of our urban forest—what could be better?

Whether you join our survey crew or not, remember that the hot days of summer are upon us—**SO WATER TREES NOW!** ■



Volunteers from Roche Palo Alto joined Canopy and the City of Palo Alto to clear ivy from oaks in Pardee Park.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Roche Palo Alto

Early on a Tuesday morning recently, twelve employees from Roche Palo Alto descended on Eleanor Pardee Park. They were there as part of Roche's Earth Day program, which connects employee volunteers with local environmental groups such as Canopy. This year, in a joint project with Roche, Canopy, and the City of Palo Alto, employees helped to clear patches of overgrown ivy from Pardee Park. The ivy population in the park was threatening the health of nearly 30 mature coast live oaks by climbing up the trees and creating a breeding ground for oak root fungus. The City of Palo Alto's Tree Section pitched in with a chipping machine to haul away the ivy and spread fresh mulch to discourage the ivy from gaining a new foothold.

But Roche's Earth Day celebration didn't end with the physical labor! Roche also holds a barbeque to recognize the efforts of everyone involved, and wraps up the day by donating \$50 to Canopy for every employee who participated. We at Canopy extend great thanks to Roche for their hard work, their financial support, and their dedication to the trees of Palo Alto! ■

## Arbor Month a Smashing Success!

California Arbor Day is celebrated March 7-14. This year Canopy decided to expand this celebration in Palo Alto to the entire month. With the help of around 250 participants, our Arbor Month celebrations were a great success.

Highlights of the month included a Tree Talk



Cass Turnbull autographs a copy of her new book.

by Cass Turnbull, the dedication of the Challenger Space Shuttle Trees in Peers Park, and the launch of Canopy's newly revised Tree Walks and website.

We kicked off Arbor Month by launching a new website— [www.Canopy.org](http://www.Canopy.org) on March 4. The new website

contains a wealth of information on the urban forest and trees in the Bay Area. It was even the subject of an article in the San Jose Mercury News. Features of the new website include:

- ~ The Tree Library—a catalog of over 170 trees found in the Palo Alto area. Searchable by scientific, common or family name, it also includes a “Tree Expert” for tree selection help based on characteristics such as height and water usage.
- ~ Frequently Asked Questions answered by the City of Palo Alto's head arborists.
- ~ Information on the benefits of the urban forest.
- ~ Links to the City of Palo Alto's Tree Technical Manual.
- ~ Explanation of Palo Alto's Heritage Tree Ordinance.
- ~ Calendar of upcoming events.
- ~ Volunteer opportunities.
- ~ Online membership options.
- ~ Results of the Oakwell Survey of native oaks in Palo Alto

d Much more!

During its first public month the website garnered more than 27,800 hits—nearly ten times the previous rate. Check it out. On March 6, Cass Turnbull, author and founder of Plant Amnesty, spoke to an audience of 75 at the Lucie Stern Community Center. Her talk, [A Show of Pruning Horrors](#), was appreciated by all. Cass has just published a new book, *Cass Turnbull's Guide to Pruning: What, When, Where and How to Prune for a More Beautiful Garden*, and was happy to sign copies. While in town, Cass also led a pruning demonstration workshop with the help of local arborists Straun Edwards of ArborWell and Kevin Raftery.

March 10 brought the dedication of the Challenger Memorial Grove in Peers Park. The grove of 10 redwoods was planted in 1987.

Seeds for the trees, taken from Palo Alto's eponymous stalwart—El Palo Alto, had orbited the earth aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger in its STS-51F mission from July 29 to August 6, 1985.



Boy Scout troop 76 helped plant new cherry trees in Bowden Park.

Canopy also launched a set of newly revised Tree Walks. Tree Walks are an effort to give residents the opportunity to become more connected to the trees in their neighborhoods by having certified arborists lead them through their neighborhoods pointing out specimen trees, good (and bad) tree maintenance practices, and the appropriateness of various street trees for their location.

Continued next page

Thanks to a grant from California ReLeaf, Canopy updated an existing set of 12 walks around Palo Alto neighborhoods. In addition, during Arbor Month arborists Dave Muffly, Kevin Raftery and Dave Dockter led new Tree Walks in around the Southgate, Main Library, and South of Forest Area neighborhoods.

The new and updated Tree Walks are now available on Canopy's website. Also available is a new Tree Walk Index, a guide to all of the trees and what walks they are found on. The index

allows people to find certain kinds of trees about which they may be curious.

Other Arbor Month events included a tree planting at Bowden Park, a Fungus Fighters workday at Rinconada Park (see "Volunteer Spotlight" — page 3), and the unveiling of Palo Alto's new "Tree City, USA" sign.

Canopy gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors of its Arbor Month activities: The Palo Alto Weekly—media sponsor; Safe & Beautiful, the Care of Trees—underwrote the expenses of speaker Cass Turnbull; Piazza's Market and Peet's

## Canopy Announces Two New Affiliation Programs

**Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto is pleased to announce two new programs with area businesses that we encourage Canopy members and volunteers to use.**

### BONFANTE GARDENS

Bonfante Gardens Family Theme Park in Gilroy is offering a significant admission discount to our members. Discounted admission is \$19.99 for adults (*regularly* \$31.99) and \$16.99 for children ages 3 to 6 and seniors 65 and older (*regularly* \$22.99). Children 2 and younger are free. Bonfante Gardens, located on Highway 152, combines the beauty of magnificent gardens with the appeal and excitement of a traditional family theme park.

One park highlight that will be of particular interest to Canopy members is the collection of Circus Trees. This group of unusual trees appeared often during the 1940's and 50's in Ripley's "Believe-It-or-Not," in "Life" magazine, and in other publications in the United States and other parts of the world.

Park operating days and hours vary from now through October so check the park's website, [www.bonfantegardens.com](http://www.bonfantegardens.com), or call (408) 840-7100 for details. Discount tickets must be purchased

from the Canopy office in advance of your visit to the park. Call the Canopy office, (650) 964-6110, to arrange for a time to pick up your tickets.

### KEPLER'S BOOKS

Canopy is now part of Kepler's Community Donation Program. This program is designed to acknowledge and give back to local non-profit organizations by donating a percentage of their designated member sales back to the organization. Anytime you are shopping in Kepler's, mention Canopy when you're checking out and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to Canopy.

Want to shop on-line? Look for a link from the Canopy website ([www.canopy.org](http://www.canopy.org)) to the Kepler's website. When you purchase on-line through this link, Kepler's again will donate a portion of the sale to Canopy.

Thanks for thinking of Canopy when you are shopping at Kepler's!

### Special Day at Kepler's Books

To kick off our partnership with them, Kepler's has offered us an in-store Benefit Day on Sunday, June 27, 2004. On that day, if our supporters shop at Kepler's and mention Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto at the point of sale (cash register), we will receive 10% of the sale. ■

# New Trees on El Camino Real

by Susan Rosenberg

Co-Chair, Trees for El Camino Project

We started out with an idea to plant trees and ended up moving mountains...well, not literally, but if you've ever been fortunate enough to have planted a tree you know the fairly simple process; you go outside one morning, dig a hole, gently drop the tree in, backfill with soil, give it a healthy dose of water, then stand back and admire your contribution to the future.

In the case of planting trees along El Camino Real, it wasn't quite that easy. The City of Palo Alto was happy to have a citizen's group (what became the Trees for El Camino Project) spearhead and organize a community wide fundraising drive to fulfill their vision—that El Camino Real become a welcoming, tree-lined boulevard extending the length of Palo Alto from the Menlo Park border in the north to Mountain View in the south. The idea was to transform the existing four miles of highway into a leafy thoroughfare. For its part, the City allocated funds, provided staff time, worked with Stanford University (over two miles of Stanford land fronts El Camino), and worked arm in arm with us to get this project off the ground.

The bump in the road occurred with Caltrans. While Palo Alto is responsible for the maintenance of the landscape, Caltrans has jurisdiction over the size of the plants to be planted. As it turned out, by Caltrans rules only a small percentage (30%) of the medians were wide enough to accommodate trees that would grow tall enough and develop a canopy broad enough to shade the street and fulfill the vision.

Caltrans had its rules to follow but Palo Alto wanted more shade trees on this major thoroughfare.

The City prevailed, thanks in large part to the efforts of both Joe Simitian and Byron Sher who went to bat for us in Sacramento. They negotiated a pilot project that would allow Palo Alto to plant trees in narrower medians (8-foot instead of 12-foot minimum widths).

The results are in: 70 new trees were recently planted in the medians of El Camino Real from Embarcadero south to Park Boulevard. The newly planted valley oaks, cork oaks, and London planes, are intermixed with existing ginkgos and Italian stone pines. A new irrigation system was installed to guarantee young trees adequate water in those first critical years. As a result of consistent watering, especially during the recent hot spells, the young trees are now flush with new growth.

The City is now setting its sights on planting medians in south Palo Alto. Achieving the goal of a "tree-lined boulevard" is more difficult in south Palo Alto because of Caltrans guidelines that prohibit the planting of large trees within 100 feet of the nose of a left turn lane. El Camino Real in south Palo Alto is chock full of left turn lanes. At a minimum, the City of Palo Alto will plant the medians between Maybell Avenue and Los Robles Avenue with approximately 40 to 50 trees. Design work and Caltrans approval should be completed by this fall with planting to begin this coming winter.

So a few mountains were moved, a significant number of trees were planted, and as the face of El Camino Real changes with new development and more trees it will become another of Palo Alto's cherished tree-lined streets. ■

## Canopy's Efforts Recognized



Program Director Jana Dilley displays the Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Month Activities given to Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto by the International Society of Arboriculture.

Arboriculture (WCISA) presents Gold Leaf Awards every year to local agencies, non-profits, neighborhood groups and individuals who conduct outstanding Arbor Day activities and landscape beautification projects. They also like to recognize urban forestry projects that have significant social, economic and/or environmental benefits to the local community. Canopy's Arbor Month activities (*see related article on page 4*) qualified the organization for this year's award. Program Director Jana Dilley accepted the award on behalf of the organization from WCISA President Robert Phillips. The award was given at the WCISA annual dinner on May 11 in Clearlake.

**Community Star Award** Meanwhile, Jana Dilley also won a special award for her own efforts from the City of Palo Alto. Every year, the Community Services Department presents Community Star Awards to individuals or organizations who have helped further the goals of the department's five divisions: Arts and Culture; Human Services; Libraries; Parks and Golf; and Recreation, Open Space and Sciences. Jana's work at Canopy was noted by Paul Dias, Director of Parks and Golf as having "been instrumental in developing a good working relationship between Canopy and the Parks and Golf division. We appreciate her efforts in organizing plantings of trees in our parks, and her initiative in the battle against ivy in our trees through the Canopy 'Fungus Fighters' program." Jana and the other recipients of this prestigious award were honored on May 19 by Community Services Director Richard James and the entire staff of the Community Services Department. Awards were given at the department's annual staff breakfast at the Palo Alto Golf Course Restaurant. Congratulations, Jana, for a job well done! ■

## "Ask the Arborist"

Do you have a burning tree question—one you can't get out of your mind, but have never known whom to ask or how? Well, we've got the solution for you. Send your question to Canopy at [info@canopy.org](mailto:info@canopy.org). We'll compile some of the most interesting and thought-provoking questions and we'll publish answers from arborists. Here's our first submission with an answer from local ISA certified arborist (and Canopy Board member) John McClenahan.

***Hi, I live in Palo Alto. I think that my outside house plants have fireblight. Is there anything I can do other than watch my plants die? ~ Kurt***

It is possible that your plants do have fireblight; however the first step is to confirm what the plants are and what's causing the symptoms. Assuming fireblight is the problem, it affects plants in the Rosaceae family (apple, evergreen pear, hawthorn, loquat, pear, pyracantha, toyon and others).

Fireblight looks like someone took a blowtorch to the newer growth. It is a bacterial pathogen that causes a canker on twigs resulting in dieback. The bacterium affects new growth and enters through the flowers during spring. If left alone, dieback can continue down the stem. Leaves appear scorched, wilted and remain attached to the twigs. Plants look very unsightly and can die if untreated.

The most common management strategies are to plant resistant varieties or to remove infected tissue to at least 6 inches into healthy wood. Using a disinfectant between pruning cuts will improve sanitation and reduce the risk of spreading bacteria. Various copper products or antibiotic sprays applied during the blossom time can also reduce the degree or potential of infection. It is always a good idea to seek the advice of an arborist or pest management professional to evaluate plant health and recommend treatment. ■

## Coming Events

Wednesday, June 23

**Tree Care Survey**

Saturday, June 26

**Tree Care Survey**

Sunday, June 27

**Benefit Day at Kepler's**

TBA

**Greenmeadow Tree Walk**

## Canopy Thanks Our Generous Business Donors

Canopy has recently received significant gifts from the following businesses:

**The SafeTree Program of Pacific Gas & Electric Company**

**Mid-Peninsula Bank**

**Arborwell**

**SummerHill Homes, LLC**

**Watercourse Way**

Please join us in giving our business donors a hearty "thank you" for their support.

## Canopy's Leadership

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Jane Stocklin

**Q: What is a termite's favorite breakfast?**

**A: Oakmeal, of course!**

Contributed by Kevin Harvey, age 11, College Terrace



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