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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.

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Look What a Little Water Can Do . . .

A decade ago, the City of Palo Alto planted a tree in front of Pete Sylvester's house. Pete was notified that a tree would be planted, but says that no one asked whether he was committed to caring for it. He was simply given a door tag asking him to water the fragile new sapling.

This scenario has been played out frequently in the last few decades, often with sad results. The tree dies or languishes in a state of suspended animation, because no

one cares enough to make it healthy.

Fortunately, in Pete's case the situation was different. His tree was planted with good access to sunlight. Then Pete watered the tree with a bucket and fertilized it regularly. Eventually, the roots reached under the sidewalk and found the watered lawn.



Pete Sylvester



These three street trees planted at the same time show what watering and care can do—and doesn't do!

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Pete had the tree professionally pruned at his expense. Pete acted out of a sense of service, and today we all enjoy the benefits of the now thriving tree.

Standing in the shade of Pete's tree, one can see three other trees of the same species planted at the same time. All three of the other trees are much smaller for a number of reasons.

The least healthy of the other trees displays many dead branches despite a well-watered lawn nearby, signaling that the root system of this tree has somehow been damaged.

The other two trees are also healthy but are much smaller. One of these was planted in the shade of a mature Valley oak, allowing little light to reach its leaves. The last tree has excellent sun but lacks the benefit of a nearby lawn which provides regular watering. It also competes for water and nutrients with other vegetation in its root zone. ■

Water Trees Now . . . and regularly and they will grow!

- ☞ Water your tree once a week with approximately 10-15 gallons by filling the watering basin 2-3 times. Allow water to soak in completely before refilling. Water twice a week during hot or windy spells.
- ☞ Repair the basin if it no longer holds water. Make sure soil and mulch do not cover the trunk any higher than the original planting level.
- ☞ Keep weeds out of the basin.
- ☞ Lay wood chips or other materials three to six inches over the root zone. Mulch conserves moisture and improves soil quality. Avoid piling the mulch against the trunk of the tree, as this can cause fungal growth which damages the tree.

Senior Girl Scout Prepares Oak Planting Kits

Deirdre Trollman, a Palo Alto eighth grader, working on a Girl Scout "Silver Award" is preparing oak planting kits for sale in the fall.

Because she wants to encourage the growth of more native oaks, Deirdre collected and planted over 50 acorns in containers last fall. The acorns sprouted into seedlings, but this spring, squirrels ate all her carefully tended young trees. Rather than succumb to the disappointment, however, Deirdre decided to try another tactic.

Native oaks usually do better when acorns are planted directly into the soil, letting their taproots head

down deep toward water.

Therefore, instead of potting up more seedlings, Deirdre is preparing oak planting kits. The kit will include several acorns, an information sheet on how to plant and care for an oak seedling, a growing shelter (to protect against the squirrels and other critters) and a graph, so owners can chart the growth of their tree over time.

Kits will be available in September for \$3. Call the Canopy office at 964-6110 to order yours. Residents with Valley oaks or Coast Live oaks who would like to contribute acorns to this project are also invited to call Canopy. ■

The principal object of a street is, of course, that it be convenient for travel; but we also should try to have it as pleasant and healthful as possible; and a street lined with trees is certainly more pleasant than one without.

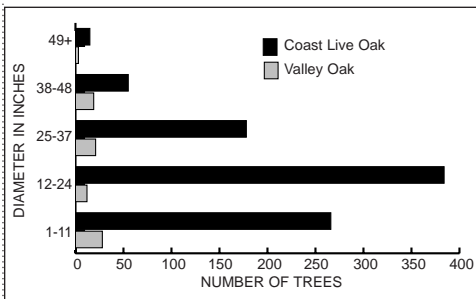
—The Tree Warden, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 1903

OakWell Reaches First Milestone

After two months and over 120 hours of volunteered time, Canopy's OakWell project will reach its first milestone by the end of June: inventorying the native oaks in a representative area of the city. The study area extends from San Francisquito Creek to Embarcadero and from Alma to Middlefield. It covers four neighborhoods: Downtown North, Downtown, South of Forest, and Professorville. There are about 120 blocks in this area, 97 of which have one or more native oaks. More than 400 properties have oaks, and the OakWell volunteers have left an oak care doorhanger at every one of them. (The OakWell project both distributes and collects oak tree information.)

The forms filled out by the volunteers have been tabulated into the initial OakWell database. It shows that there are about a thousand native oaks in the study area, 90% them on private parcels. (The study area may

Palo Alto Native Oak Survey—to date



have fewer parks and schools than some neighborhoods.) The chart below gives a breakdown by species and size. Although most observers would probably say that coast live oaks outnumber valley oaks in Palo Alto, they might be surprised at the disparity: fewer than 10% of our native oaks are valley oaks. If this ratio holds in other neighborhoods, the message is clear: Canopy should concentrate on preserving and planting valley oaks.

The prospect for the valley oak population in the study area looks grim. If trunk diameter is a rough indicator of age, there are few young and middle-aged trees in the area. The 12-24" population is especially worrisome; there are only 11 of these trees. It's unlikely that all of them will live to maturity. In the worst case, a hundred years from now there may be a period in which large valley oaks are absent from the area west of Middlefield between the creek and Embarcadero. Thanks to the volunteers who have carried



Sue Thiemann and Susan Rosenberg getting their arms around a large valley oak in College Terrace. It measured 65 inches in diameter.

OakWell to its first milestone: Mike Alexander, Terry Andre, Dan and Jaye Bergen, Lu Bingham, Alice and Barry Fasbender, Kate Feinstein, Alison Fleming, Jean Gillett, Maureen Gough, Kay Hays, Gene Jacobsen, Ann Knopf, Karla Kummer, Jean Olson, Carlin Otto, Lucinda Pisano, Susan Rosenberg, Sue Thiemann, Ruth Troetschler, Ann Turner, Joan van Gelder, Ted Wassam, and Mimi Wolf. Special thanks to the City's Dave Matson who has supplied the maps that enable volunteers to locate oaks accurately.

As the OakWell database grows, the program needs one or two key volunteers to lead an effort to use the data to preserve native oaks. This is a chance to define your own project, organize it, and carry it through. Call or email Bill Courington (325-1151 or billc@forWord.com) to discuss your ideas and others that have already been proposed for putting the data to work. ■

Grand Finale to 1998 Planting Season Puts 19 New Trees on One Block

Residents of the 1100 block of High Street, led by Neighborhood Coordinator Cheryl Kendall, came out on Saturday, April 18 to finish off Canopy's 1998 planting season with a flourish, planting 19 new *Sapium sebiferum*, or Chinese tallow trees.



Cheryl Kendall (left), her husband Glenn and High Street neighbors pause to admire their newly planted sapium tree.

Planting this many trees in one block is unusual, but it was definitely needed. When Cheryl called Canopy to visit in November, Executive Director Debbie Mytels saw narrow planting strips, only about two feet wide, and down the whole block only about four street trees. City Arborist Dave Sandage identified Sapiums as a tree which would grow well under these difficult conditions. Cheryl then went door-to-door getting agreements from her neighbors that they

would accept and care for a new street tree.

By noon on April 18, 13 volunteers (along with a large poodle named Pavlov!) had put in the 19 new trees, promising new shade on the street and beautiful fall color. This block of High Street is just off Embarcadero to the north, before the underpass. Drive by and take a look at what one energetic resident and a group of community-spirited neighbors can do!

The High Street planting was the finale to Canopy's second year, with volunteers planting 93 trees in six neighborhoods and at the Girl Scout House in Rinconada Park.

In addition to the 238 volunteers who put in 3-4 hours each planting trees, Canopy owes special thanks to the following Neighborhood Coordinators, Tree Ambassadors, Planting Leaders and Volunteer Recruiters who contributed many additional hours talking with their neighbors and preparing for the plantings:

Neighborhood Coordinators: **Julia Powers**, Girl Scout House; **Alice & Barry Fasbender**, Palo Verde (PV); **Susan Rosenberg** and **Susan Wilson**, College Terrace (CT);

Sally Bemus, Community Center (CC); **Barbara Mackraz**, Ventura (V); **Vangi Uribe**, West Bayshore (WB); **Cheryl Kendall**, High Street (HS)

Tree Ambassadors: **Roland Finston**, PV; **Ruth Consul**, CT; **Paul Garrett**, CT; **Diane Hayfork**, CT.; **Mary Walsh**, CT; **Ann Bilodeau**, CC.; **Nancy Hay**, CC; **Pat Kallenbach**, CC; **Nikki Montez**, CC.; **Glenn Rennels**, CC; **Dick Clark**, WB; **Pat Tyler**, WB; **Mimi Wolf**, WB.

Planting Leaders: **David & Cindy Blitz**, PV; **Karin Chapin**, PV & WB; **Robin Clark**, CT; **Dave Coleman**, Mayor's Planting, V & WB; **Marty Deggeller**, CC; **Brent Duby**, CT.; **Alice & Barry Fasbender**, Mayor's Planting & WB; **Roland Finston**, PV, V & HS; **Jeffrey Hook**, CT & HS; **Jeremy & Piper Joseph**, PV & CT; **Kim Lemmer**, PV & Mayor's Planting; **Barbara Lilley**, PV, CT & V; **Paul Lomio**, CT; **Forest Preston**, PV, CT, Mayor's Planting & HS; **Kevin Raftery**, PV; **Michael Rogondino**, CT & V; **Susan Rosenberg**, PV & Mayor's Planting; **Susan Wilson**, CC & V.

Volunteer Recruitment: **Julia Schreiber**, Gunn High Interact and Youth Community Service students; **Diana Bebbington**, Boy Scout Troop 76; **Preeva Tramiel**, Midpeninsula Jewish Community Day School. ■

Plans Underway for 1998 - 99 Planting Season

Neighborhood coordinators are already at work in four Palo Alto neighborhoods, laying plans for tree planting activities next fall and winter.

Barron Park—**Sue Luttner**, together with **Shirley Finfrook** and other members of the Barron Park Beautification Committee, have organized a team of ten Tree Ambassadors who walked block-by-block over half of Barron Park to identify potential sites for new street trees.

Canopy volunteers **Alison James**, **Joan van Gelder**, **Gene Jacobsen** and **Susan Garland** then mailed about 200 letters to residents asking if they would like a new tree. So far, about 35% of those responding have agreed to take a tree in the fall.

Old South Palo Alto—Anne Truitt, a Bryant Street resident, has agreed to coordinate a neighborhood planting effort for the area bordered by Alma Street, Oregon Expressway, Middlefield and Loma Verde.

Palo Verde—**Alice and Barry Fاسبender**, neighborhood coordinators for the Evergreen area between Louis and Ross roads, have been working with Tree Ambassador **Roland Finston** to contact neighbors about the second phase of a “remove and

replant” project which began last year. As was done before, about 20 dead and dying trees will be removed and replaced with new trees this fall.

In the *Kenneth Drive/Thomas Drive/Greer Road* area of Palo Verde, **Jeremy Joseph** has agreed to coordinate a similar “remove and replant” project. Many of the Carolina cherries in this neighborhood are diseased, and Jeremy has a vision of replanting these streets with taller trees which will provide a leafy canopy of shade.

Crescent Park: **Margaret Toor** of the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association is working to recruit volunteers to work on site identification and neighbor contacts in her neighborhood.

If you are interested in working with Canopy to plant trees in these or another neighborhood next winter, please call the office at 964-6110. We'll connect you with the neighborhood coordinator—or help you start the ball rolling in *your* neighborhood. ■



Planting leader (and Canopy Chair) Forest Preston checks for proper planting depth.



High Street planters dig the last hole for a row of sapling trees.

POETREE—Poetry Reading Planned for the Fall

Canopy, in conjunction with Palo Alto Cultural Center's fall exhibit on wood sculpture, will stage a poetry reading on October 15th. Local poets and Canopy members are invited to submit original poetry inspired by trees to the Canopy office by September 15th. ■

Anthracnose Hits Hard During Wet Spring

All over town, crinkled leaves are falling and tall branches stand nearly bare against the sky. This “autumn” picture seems eerily wrong, however, since it’s the middle of June when Palo Alto’s streets and gardens—especially along streets like Louis, Ross, Waverley, and Ash—are usually shaded by bright green canopies.

The culprit is anthracnose, a fungal disease which causes the leaves to turn brown in splotches, crinkle and fall off. This problem is common during a wet spring when lots of rain hits the new foilage, distributing spores which have over-wintered on infected twigs of the tree. Fortunately, anthracnose will not seriously harm a tree unless the new growth is repeatedly attacked,



This street tree on Greer is one of hundreds throughout the city whose leaf production has been inhibited by anthracnose.

leaving too few new leaves to produce food during the summer.

With the warmer weather of mid-June, the infestation has abated, but it remains to be seen whether the prolonged problem, which has occurred for a few years now, will have caused permanent damage to the trees.

Although other species such as sycamores (also known as “London plane trees”), Chinese elms, and some species of oaks have also been affected, Palo Alto’s 2,000 Modesto ash trees have been hit the hardest. Since most of these trees, which were planted about 50 years ago, are reaching maturity, they may not be resilient to the effects of repeated defoliation.

While fungicide sprays may be somewhat effective, the City does not consider it cost effective to spray against this fungus. Private tree owners may want to consider the use of fungicides, although *Pests of Landscape Trees and Shrubs: An Integrated Pest Management Guide* published by the University of California, says that “Fungicides have not been found to be effective in controlling anthracnose on elm or sycamore...” This book suggests pruning and disposal of infected twigs during the fall or winter to help control anthracnose the following spring. ■

Meet Dave Muffly— New Program Director



Dave Muffly’s love for trees comes naturally. He grew up in Nebraska, a

state known for its beautiful tree-lined streets and home to the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Dave came to Stanford in the early ‘80’s to study Mechanical Engineering. After graduation and a brief stint away from the tree-lined streets of Palo Alto, he returned in 1989 and began working with the nonprofit organization, Magic, on their Oak Restoration Project. In 1990 Dave also spearheaded Magic’s Fruition Project that continues to provide free fruit trees to the families of school children. Fruition started with the children of East Palo Alto and now reaches from Tiajuana to Santa Rosa.

In his new position as Program Director for Canopy, he aims to make stronger connections between Palo Alto’s residents and the street trees. “I see it as the crucial ingredient keeping Palo Alto’s urban forest really great.” ■

Builder Modifies Plan—Southgate Heritage Oak Preserved

Many residents cherish the giant valley oak that stands at 450 Sequoia on the corner of Castilleja Avenue in Southgate. The tree is a local landmark—over 200 years old, with a diameter of nearly five feet and a crown spread of 90 feet. Two of its lateral branches are the size of substantial trees in themselves.

The city's 1996 tree preservation ordinance protected the trunk of this heritage tree, but not its canopy, which extends into the buildable area of the lot.

When the property was sold last year, the new owner, Denis Morrissey, decided to replace the existing one-story home with a two-story one, using a building plan that would have destroyed much of the canopy.

Upon reviewing the plans, the City's Planning Arborist, Dave Dockter, recommended that a building permit be granted on condition that the oak be preserved. Subsequently, the City Council, with the support of Canopy and the community, enacted an emergency ordinance to protect this tree and others like it. The ordinance clarified the tree preservation law by amending it to cover the canopies and roots of

heritage trees (in addition to their trunks), even if they extend into buildable areas.

The city ultimately required the developer to retain a project arborist, and S.P. McClenahan Co.



was selected. An analysis done by McClenahan found that the tree may contribute about \$70,000 to the property's value, in addition to the benefits it furnishes the larger community. McClenahan and Dockter developed strict requirements for protecting the tree during demolition and construction.

To be more compatible with the tree, the new house was partially redesigned. While the permit required that the lateral branches be retained, selective pruning was allowed to create room for the second story, and two branches were removed. According to Dockter, this removal reduced the

weight on the support pole and trunk by as much as 1,000 pounds.

A protective fence has been put up around the tree's critical root zone. Grading changes may not

be made within this zone, construction equipment and materials may not be stored there, and the arborist is required to be on-site when work is done within it.

The City has kept close track of the developer's compliance with these measures, and the tree appears to be in contin-

uing good health. McClenahan inspects the tree at least monthly and submits reports to Dockter, who visits the site weekly and continues to work with the developer and arborist on tree protection issues as they arise. Tree protection measures will also be implemented after construction is complete.

According to Dockter, "Mr. Morrissey is to be commended for modifying his construction to fit the tree's needs. The finished result should enhance the property and benefit the community, preserving a heritage tree for many years to come." ■

City Plants New Trees Along Oregon Expressway

Oregon Expressway, gateway to Palo Alto, sports newly planted trees along the thoroughfare. City Arborist Dave Sandage selected these trees.

Smoke Tree, most often seen as a shrub, can be trained into tree form. The dramatic puffs of “smoke” come from large, loose clusters of fading flowers that remain on the tree for weeks. Incense Cedar is considered a slow-growing tree which may grow two feet per year once established. Warm weather brings out its distinctive fragrance. *Michelia doltsopa*, blooms from January through March with soft white magnolia-like flowers that are very fragrant. A mature tree can be seen at Gamble Garden Center in front of the carriage house. Golden Chain Tree, planted throughout Europe, is known as Golden Rain in Germany. Spring blossoms resemble yellow, sweet pea-shaped flowers that hang in clusters like wisteria. ■



*Cotinus
Coggygria,*
Smoke Tree

Newly planted trees on Oregon Expwy between:

Waverley & Cowper—

2 *Fraxinus Americana*, Autumn purple ash

Middlefield & Ross—

3 *Cotinus coggygria*, Smoke tree;

7 *Carpinus betulus* 'Festigiata,' Hornbeam

Ross & Louis—

3 *Fraxinus Americana*, Autumn purple ash;

6 *Calocedrus decurrens*, Incense Cedar;

8 *Michelia doltsopa*

Louis & Greer—

3 *Laburnum*, Golden Chain tree

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