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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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## Pine Tree "Waste" Turned into a Valuable Resource

by Katherine Cushing

Last November, Atherton resident Ernie Goitein, found that two of the Monterey Pines in his backyard were dying. But instead of having the trees cut up for firewood or dumped in a landfill, he decided to have the wood milled into lumber. Ernie's actions not only benefitted the environment, they also made economic sense. Milling the wood turned it into a resource, rather than a waste product—and avoided the air pollution which would result from using the wood as fuel.

Moreover, the value of the Ernie's 4,400 board feet of lumber is about twice as much as it cost him to mill it.

The two large pines had come to the end of their natural lifespan. One tree was dead; the other was dying. They were also infested with beetles. Ernie hired a local tree care company to cut down the trees at a cost of around \$3,000. But realizing that this wood could be an asset, Ernie looked into the option of having the

wood milled into useable lumber. After a series of phone calls, he found a company in Los Gatos that can send someone with a portable mill to cut up downed wood.



Over 4,000 board feet of lumber from a diseased Monterey pine are curing at the Atherton home of Ernie Goitein. Some of the lumber was also used to build a new picnic table which now sits in the garden in the same spot where the tree used to grow.

Continues next page.



Atherton resident Ernie Goitein, a longtime environmental leader, has found a new method of resource conservation: milling his cut tree into lumber.

Milling the trees took about two days. The wood was rough cut (rather than cut precisely to standard dimensions) at a cost of approximately 40 cents per board foot. (For 20 cents/foot more, the wood could have been further planed to standard dimensions.) The result: 4,400 board feet of beautiful pine lumber. "It's good sturdy wood with attractive knots," says Ernie proudly.

Ernie stacked the lumber, putting spacers between the boards so the wood could air dry for one summer. He's already used about 500 feet to floor over his attic. Next year, he hopes to sell some of the wood to contractors and will

probably use more of it around the house. Sawdust left over from the milling has also become mulch for fruit trees in his yard.

If Ernie had requested the wood to be planed to standard dimensions, it would have cost a total of 60 cents per board foot. "Equivalent lumber in home improvement stores goes for about \$1.20 a foot," says Ernie. Therefore, Ernie's cost to mill the lumber was half as much as he would have paid in the store.

Ernie thinks that cities could try this method to work on their solid waste problems. For example, when municipalities remove dead or dying trees from local properties, they could mill the wood into lumber and use it for municipal building projects — or sell it to residents. This activity could serve as a source of income for municipalities and provide sustainably harvested wood to local communities. ■

If you are interested in finding out more about milling wood into lumber or sustainably harvested timber, here's where to get more information:

Portable Mill Services:  
Ecolog Sawing Systems  
408 353-1611

Sustainably Harvested Timber:  
Forest Stewardship Council  
802 244-6257  
RD 1, Box 182  
Waterbury, VT 05676

## Tree Gifts Generate Lasting Appreciation

As we approach the holiday season, Canopy is again providing an opportunity to give your friends and family the lasting gift of a planted tree.

For a \$50 donation to Canopy, we will send the recipient a special card in your name. Send us their name and address, and we will plant a tree in their honor this year. Planted trees can also be given as memorial gifts. ■

## Canopy Welcomes New Steering Committee Members

Three Palo Alto residents have agreed to join the Canopy Steering Committee, for a three-year term starting this fall: **Brad Denson**, a Palo Alto native and property manager with Dalton Realty; **Joe Hirsch**, an attorney, former member of the Planning Commission and Green Acres resident; and **Stewart Kiritz**, a Realtor, psychologist and College Terrace resident.

**Susan Wilson**, who has been responsible for creating Canopy's printed materials (including this newsletter), has decided to step down from the Steering Committee after two years, but she will continue to work on our graphics and other projects. ■

## OakWell Volunteers Survey One-Third of Town

As of September 1, Canopy's OakWell survey volunteers have put in over 225 hours to map and record over 1,600 native oaks in about one-third of Palo Alto's flatland area.

Since April, two dozen volunteers have completed the survey in seven neighborhoods: Downtown, Downtown North, Hoover Park, Old South Palo Alto, Professorville, South of Forest and Walnut Grove. The survey is still in progress in many other neighborhoods.

Project director **Bill Courington**, a Canopy Steering Committee member who initiated this effort, notes that so far, 870 parcels have at least one Valley oak or Coast Live oak. These two species are being surveyed because they are now protected by Palo Alto's heritage tree ordinance, and even more significantly, because their owners often need to be educated in how to care for these native trees.

In addition to recording location and approximate size of the trees, OakWell volunteers are distributing doorhangers that remind native oak owners not to water them in the summer to prevent oak root fungus, to keep soil away from their trunks and to avoid digging and trenching in their shallow root zones.

After receiving these OakWell notes, several residents have called Canopy for more information on oak care and thanked the volunteers for their work.

One surprising finding: although the estimated ratio of one Valley oak for every ten Coast Live oaks

is holding true for the community at large, this ratio varies widely throughout the town. In Hoover Park, for example, 60 Coast Lives were mapped and 22 Valleys—a 27% ratio—many more Valley oaks than were expected. ■

## Trees Inspire Poetree with Poems, Song and Skit (see below)



To celebrate the beauty of trees, Canopy presented "Poetree: Speaking of Trees," an evening of original works read by local writers on October 15. Held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, the program was held in conjunction with the Center's fall exhibit of wood sculpture, "Figures Against the Grain."

**Bob Evans**, a founder of the Waverley Writers poetry group, was master of ceremonies. The program included 32 poets ranging from second grader **Emily Glider** to octogenarian **David Meblin**. Highlights included a song by composer (and former Paly tennis coach) **Keith Clark** and a dramatic rendition of "Woodsman, Spare that Tree!" performed by **Sharon Olson, April Eiler, Patrick Daly, Charlotte Muse, Jim Standish, Anatole Lubovich, and Palmer Pinney**.

## Planting Leaders Trained—Greenmeadow Will Have Shade Again!

Eager to learn tips from a master, eleven volunteers turned out on October 10 for Canopy's Planting Leader training led by local arborist (and Canopy steering committee member) **Kevin Raftery**.



Kim Lemmer and Bryan Taylor wrestle with a Frontier elm which was reluctant to leave its pot for its new site in front of the Greenmeadow Swim Center.

The site was the planting strip in front of the Greenmeadow Swim Center, where four dying Monterey pines had been removed the year before, much to the chagrin of neighbors who'd relied upon them to provide summer afternoon shade.

A request by nearby resident Lucy Young to replace the trees

led to some confusion and complications. Although the trees had been removed by the Greenmeadow Association, it required examination of property line maps to determine if the sites belonged to the City or to the Association. Stumps from the old trees created an obstacle to planting new ones, and, intensifying the problem, junipers covered the area, making stump removal nearly impossible.

A solution was found when City Arborist **Dave Sandage** agreed to provide new trees and pay for the stump removal, while Greenmeadow Association President **Walt Hays** himself volunteered to remove the junipers.

This paved the way (oops—not exactly the best metaphor) for planting four Frontier Elms (a species resistant to Dutch Elm disease), and the work was done as part of their training by Canopy's new Planting Leaders: **Mark Pratt, Bryan Taylor, Brian Wright, Heather Brady, Linnie Melena, Peter Danczkay, Pam Sherer, Kim Lemmer, Joan van Gelder, Ashley Holt and Debbi Sizemore**. These folks will lead teams of other Canopy volunteers in our plantings this winter. ■



Planters Linnie Melena, Mark Pratt, Debbi Sizemore and Peter Danczkay complete the staking process on another Frontier elm. This species of elm is resistant to Dutch elm disease.

### Know How to Stop Squirrels ?

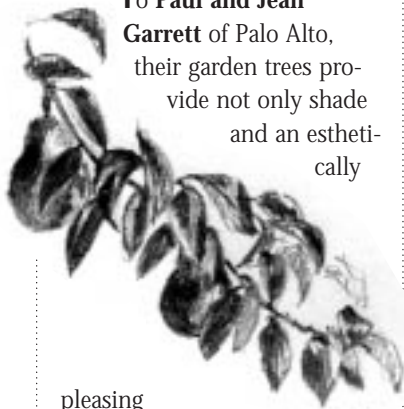
"Tree Line," Canopy's arboreal version of a "hotline," is available to answer YOUR calls and questions about trees. Call us at 964-6110 (e-mail: [info@canopy.org](mailto:info@canopy.org)) if you want ideas and advice on tree care, pest management or tree selection. Your questions will be answered by Canopy staff or referred to our Master Gardener, Sally Sakols.

And if YOU know what to do to keep squirrels out of fruit trees, please call Canopy. We'd love to share your success with others.

# Enjoying A Bountiful Backyard Harvest

by Katherine Cushing

**To Paul and Jean Garrett** of Palo Alto, their garden trees provide not only shade and an esthetically



pleasing environment, they also provide fruit—and lots of it. Even though the size of their College Terrace lot is small (60' x 100'), the Garretts harvest fruit from 18 trees from July to November each year.

Their front yard includes grapefruit, persimmon, mandarin orange, and lime trees; entwined in an overhanging trellis lies a kiwi vine. The side garden contains two dwarf apples, a black mission fig, a Blenheim apricot, an Asian Pear, and a dwarf Bartlett pear. The back holds a pineapple guava bush, a Satsuma plum, and two more citrus trees.

Most of the Garretts' fruit trees are grafted hybrids which combine two different kinds of trees. The grafting process

involves implanting the fruit stock of one type of tree into the root stock of another. The root stock is typically chosen because of its ability to thrive in a particular climate, while fruit stock is the part of the plant that will bear the desired variety of fruit. While all of the Garretts' hybrid trees were purchased from commercial nurseries, Paul did his own grafting on the kiwi vine.

Several of the Garretts' trees—in particular the Fuyu persimmon, Mandarin orange, Yellow Delicious apple, and Asian pear—are exceptionally prolific. For example, the single Mandarin orange in their front yard yields hundreds of oranges each year. Their Asian pear tree is so heavily laden with fruit that its branches practically sag with their weight.

Growing fruit trees in your own yard and enjoying the “fruits” of your labor can be a rewarding endeavor. If you are interested in having an urban orchard, see Paul's tips for maximizing its utility. ■

## Garrett's Tips for Maximum Harvest

- Stay away from ornamental fruits such as crabapple and Catalina cherry. While attractive, the fruit is not good for eating, and clearing away the fruit drop can be tedious.
- Condition your soil. Last year, the Garretts had their soil reconditioned, which included stripping out unwanted ground plants, adding the proper mix of soil nutrients, rototilling the soil, and covering the ground with “gorilla hair” (shredded redwood bark readily available in gardening stores). Since then, they have noticed a marked improvement in the productivity and overall health of their trees.
- Protect your trees from wildlife such as squirrels, raccoons, and even skunks that will spoil your harvest. Place the trees away from fences, which are transportation routes for squirrels, or put copper banding at the bottom of the trees to impede squirrels from climbing.
- Be selective in the trees you plant and take into consideration which fruits squirrels seem to avoid. In their garden, squirrels tend to stay away from the citrus and the persimmon trees, so you might want to consider those as good trees to grow.

## Eucalyptus Under Attack

by Kim Lemmer

You may have noticed bare eucalyptus trees around town. An insect known as the redgum lerp psyllid has made its way here from Australia and has been attacking our eucalyptus trees. Only one millimeter long, the tiny white bug sucks juice from tree leaves. The leaves eventually die and fall, leaving the tree weakened.

Much like aphids, a pest common in the United States, the psyllid excretes a sweet, sticky honeydew which attracts ants. The immature insects (nymphs) make a protective case which looks like a white scale insect.

The psyllid was first noticed at Stanford University when students tracked honeydew-covered leaves into classrooms. **Herb Fong**, Stanford's Manager of Grounds, is monitoring thousands of eucalyptus trees on campus. So far only 30 to 40 trees have become infested. These trees have lost most of their leaves but none have died so far. Fong reports finding predator insects, including lady beetles and assassin bugs, feeding on the psyllids.

The psyllid was first identified in Southern California this June. It has now been found in Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Palo Alto's city arborist, **Dave Sandage**, reports the pest was spotted at the Baylands water treatment plant. University of California entomologists are studying the psyllid, and lady beetles have been released in Los Angeles and Fremont to help control the infestation.

Eucalyptus trees, native to Australia, have thrived in California since European settlers first imported them in the 1800's. They have been under stress since the early 1990's when another pest, the longhorn borer beetle, arrived. Trees which were already weak from both drought and a severe winter freeze were vulnerable to the beetle. If healthy Eucalyptus are weakened by the psyllid, the borer beetle might attack them also. However, a cold winter this year might help the trees by reducing the pest population. ■

## Second Anniversary Party Salutes Volunteers

The historic Professorville home of Canopy advisory board member **Kathy Levinson** was the beautiful setting for Canopy's second anniversary party on September 24. City officials, Canopy board members, volunteers and other friends came to celebrate our successful second year and recognize residents who have been working to rejuvenate the Palo Alto's urban forest.

Palo Alto Vice-Mayor **Micki Schneider** presented a City proclamation to **David Schrom**, founder of Magic, an organization which does research and teaching on ecology, honoring him as recipient of a California ReLeaf "Tree Hero" award. Schrom was given this state-wide recognition for his work to restore oak trees in the Stanford foothills, start neighborhood tree plantings in Evergreen Park, and advocate for the formation of Palo Alto's Tree Task Force which led to the founding of Canopy.

A "Going Out on a Limb" award was given to **Kim Lemmer** for volunteering her administrative skills to Canopy once a week; to **Joan van Gelder**, for creating a photo book of Palo Alto street trees; and to **Karin Chapin**, for serving as the Canopy webmaster. (Check out her great design at [www.canopy.org](http://www.canopy.org)) **Forest Preston** and **Alice Fasbender** were also recognized for participating in the most plantings—five!—during the past year.

Canopy's 1997-98 Neighborhood Coordinators—**Alice and Barry Fasbender**, **Susan Rosenberg**, **Susan Wilson**, **Sally Bemus**, **Barbara Mackraz**, **Vangie Uribe** and **Cheryl Kendall Nash**—were given a poster showing "Sub-Tropical Trees of California" as thanks for their work in planting over 90 new street trees. ■

## Saving an Oak at Walter Hays School



Dan Bergen was one of a dozen volunteers doing a crown root excavation under the direction of arborist Michael Young.

To preserve a heritage Valley oak growing at the Walter Hays School on Middlefield Road, Canopy volunteers joined a PTA clean-up day on Saturday, August 22. After some instruction from arborist and oak tree specialist Michael Young, about a dozen volunteers used hand towels, shovels and a lot of “elbow grease,” to excavate the crown root of this specimen oak.

About six inches of soil was removed from around its base, in an effort to prevent contact between the bark and soil, which encourages development of crown root fungus that can eventually rot

the tree away from inside. A large patch of ivy, growing around the base of the tree, was also removed. Finally, mulch was spread over the area, in an effort to prevent any remaining ivy roots from re-sprouting.

Work still needs to be done to remove a large patch of ivy from around a nearby Coast Live oak, and discussions have begun with the school staff about the issue of turf next to two younger Valley oaks near the entrance to the school. Look for more volunteer opportunities this year! ■



Becky Chan shows off a large ivy root she pulled from the soil around the heritage oak.

## Volunteers Assess Growth of 500 New Trees

Although summer's not planting season, Canopy volunteers haven't been idle. Almost 20 people have been out walking around our urban forest, looking at new trees and reminding owners to care for them.

As the weather warmed up (finally!) in June, our first wave of volunteers visited all of the 93 sites where Canopy had planted trees this year, distributing “Water Now” doorhangers to their owners.

In July, another dozen volunteers distributed the same flyers to almost 400 sites where City contractors had planted trees. In addition, these volunteers carried a check list to assess the health of the trees: had the trees survived? did they need to be weeded or pruned? were the watering basins still there? When all the data is compiled, we will compare the survival rates of the Canopy-planted trees with those planted by City contractors.

Many thanks to the following terrific volunteers who took time from their summer to help us revitalize our urban forest:

**Terry Andre, Annette Glanckopf Ashton, Diana Bebbington & Ivan Goering, Dave Coleman, Alice & Barry Fasbender, Roland Finston, Jane Hayes, Walt Hays, Warren & Pat Kallenbach, Cheryl Kendall, Kim Lemmer, Paul Lomio, Barb Mackraz, Julia Powers, Forest Preston, Diane Reklis, Susan Rosenberg, Lauren Bonar Swezey, Vangie Uribe & Matt Sorgenfrei** ■

## Canopy Activities Calendar

October 31

Palo Verde Planting, 8:30–12 noon

November 2

Canopy on Cable TV: Common Ground Show on “Oaks and Global Climate Change,” 10 p.m. air time, Channel 6

November 8

Crescent Park Tree Walk, 3–5 p.m. Meet at corner of Lincoln and University Avenue, Palo Alto

November 21

Barron Park Planting, 8:30 a.m.–12 noon. Meet at Barron Park School

December 5

El Carmelo Planting, 8:30 a.m.

December 12

Tree Planting in honor of Mayor Dick Rosenbaum

January 23

Crescent Park Planting (tentative)

## Co-op Shoppers Can Now Donate Bag Refunds to Canopy

Starting November 13, shoppers at the Palo Alto Co-op Market can donate their 5-cent reused bag refunds to Canopy. To reduce waste and save trees, for many years the Co-op has offered its customers a 5-cent refund every time they re-use paper bags, use a shopping net or canvas bag. Now Co-op patrons can go a step further and rejuvenate our urban forest by donating these nickels to Canopy’s tree-planting efforts!

The Co-op Market, run by the Consumers’ Cooperative Society of Palo Alto, has been a community-owned store since its founding in 1935. Under the new leadership of General Manager Bob Claxton, the Co-op has opened a new deli section, built an outdoor produce market and is expanding its community service programs.

Look for Canopy’s donation jars at the check-out counters next time you shop Co-op—and remember to bring your own bags! ■

## Canopy’s Leadership

### Steering Committee

Forest Preston, III,  
*Chair*

Kathy Roberts,  
*Vice-Chair*

Arnold Soforenko,  
*Treasurer*

James Crawford,  
*Secretary*

Bill Courington

Brad Denson

Rita French

Joe Hirsch

Stewart Kiritz

Mary McCullough

Kevin Raftery

Susan Rosenberg

Sally Sakols

### Advisory Committee

Ron Bracewell

Jack Buktenica

Herb Fong

Leannah Hunt

Jeanne Kennedy

Larry Klein

Kathy Levinson

Carolyn Reller

John Warren

A project sponsored by  
Peninsula Conservation Center

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