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Contributors to this newsletter are:

Writing/Editing

Karen Donnelly
Howell Lovell, Jr.
Forest Preston, III
Susan Rosenberg
Steve Scott

Photography

Howell Lovell, Jr.
Forest Preston, III
Susan Rosenberg

Design

Susan Wilson

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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3921 East Bayshore Road

Palo Alto, CA 94303

phone 650 964-6173

fax 650 964-6673

email info@canopy

www.canopy.org

Who Is That Man in My Backyard?

by Steve Scott, Project Manager, Tree Section, City of Palo Alto Department of Public Works

If power lines are adjacent to your property, the City of Palo Alto's Utility Department has an easement to maintain their equipment. This utility easement allows the City to have reasonable access to the electric lines to perform various jobs, including pruning tree limbs that may be endangering the lines. This maintenance is performed in order to provide safe and reliable service to you and your neighbors. The telephone and cable TV companies also use this easement to place and service their equipment.

While it may appear that excessive distances are kept clear, most electrical outages occur during storms when high winds blow limbs or tree tops into the conductors. Rain-heavy limbs can droop into the power lines and also cause outages. In severe instances the conductors might break and fall to the ground posing a dangerous safety hazard to anyone coming in contact with the wire. This contact can be

direct or indirect as in the case of a live wire falling on a metal fence or other conductor. An individual making contact with that object could receive a shock or even be electrocuted.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) requires all California utilities to meet certain standards regarding their equipment. Failure to comply can result in citations and fines. The CPUC mandates that higher voltage electric conductors ("wires", "lines") are kept clear of vegetation at all times and that certain distances are kept between conductors and vegetation when line clearing work is done. Higher voltages require greater clearing than lower voltages.

The City contracts the line clearing work. All power lines, utility poles, transformers and other hardware are inspected by the City on a regular basis for maintenance needs including vegetation clearance. Trees and vines that require clearing are given to the con-

Continues next page.

tractor for remediation. Outside of emergency situations requiring immediate action, the contractor or City representative will leave notification at the property explaining the necessary work. This notification is left at least a day prior to the work being scheduled and is normally only given for privately-owned trees. City trees are usually line cleared without prior notification.

From time to time even the best tree service company can make mistakes. Recently the City experienced some problems with one of its contractors, primarily as a result of lack of advance notification by them. The situation was rectified. If you are concerned about a job being done on a tree on your property easement you should first contact the job supervisor of the contractor (this information should have been given to you 24 hours prior to any activity). If you are still unsatisfied, you can contact the City Tree Section at 496-5953 for further assistance.

While efforts are made to clear trees without making them look too “harsh”, trees and power lines are not a good mix. Planting tall-growing trees under or adjacent to power lines will guarantee heavy clearing work in later years just when the tree is starting to look nice. Canopy and the City have partnered in a “Right Tree Right Place” program which addresses fast growing trees that pose considerable risk to the electric lines. Under this program, qualified trees are removed by the City at no cost and rebates for stump removal and new tree planting are available. For more details about this program, please call Canopy at (650) 964-6110. ■

Trees that Touch Our Lives

The third tree in this series, identified by Dave Muffly, is a rare naturally-occurring hybrid called *Quercus X Hispanica*. It comes from the crossing of the Cork Oak—*quercus suber* (featured in our previous Newsletter) and the Turkey Oak—*quercus cerris*. These trees are often found growing together in Europe. The tree is in Ramos Park along the western-most path in the park. Dave notes, “this large, beautifully symmetrical specimen is elegantly framed by two immature ginkgo trees. Looking at the bark you can easily see the Cork



Oak parentage in the deep vaguely volcanic-appearing fissures. The Turkey Oak parentage is most easily seen in the serrated leaf margins and the striking Medusa-headed nature of the acorn cap.”

Do you have a favorite tree—one that has special meaning to you, one that you find remarkable for some reason? If you know of such a tree and would like to tell others about it, we'd like to help. Send us a few sentences about why you think it is exceptional. Tell us where it is and, if you know, what kind of tree it is. Include a photo if you have one (with addressed return envelope if you want it back). We'll select from readers submissions and publish them in this column in future newsletters. ■

Palo Alto's Trees Working for You

The true cost of driving through Palo Alto's tree-lined street is considerably more than a tank of gas, an oil change, or a new set of tires. According to American Forests, every mile you drive, an average of one pound of carbon dioxide is released into the air we breathe. To calculate the number of trees needed to swab up after you and your family, American Forests has developed the Climate Change Calculator. Go to their website www.americanforests.org then click on Personal Climate Change Calculator.

If you're feeling a bit guilty about the work load you place on Palo Alto's trees to absorb your fossil fuel emissions then consider making a Canopy Tree Planting Gift.

Tree Planting Gifts from all donors are combined to support Canopy's planting efforts in neighborhoods throughout Palo Alto during the Fall and Winter. ■

Trees Fight Crime and Do Other Wonderful Things

Our appreciation of Palo Alto's urban forest can extend far beyond savoring the beauty and shade that trees add to our lives. Did you know trees help save energy, reduce crime, and combat pollution?

- Shade prevents heat build-up from hard surfaces like driveways, patios, and sidewalks and can reduce the temperature in urban areas by as much as 9 degrees.
- A tree is a natural air conditioner; the evaporation from a single tree can produce the cooling effect of 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.
- Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and heating energy by 20% to 50%.
- By slowing wind speed, evergreen trees reduce wintertime heat loss from your home by from 10% to 50%.
- A recent University of Chicago study found that apartment buildings surrounded by trees and greenery had a lower incidence of crime than buildings with little or no vegetation. Buildings with greener surroundings were found to have as much as 52% fewer total crimes.
- Another University of Chicago study found that compared to children with ADD playing indoors or in paved outdoor areas, ADD children playing in greener, more natural settings showed dramatic improvements in the ability to concentrate, complete tasks, and follow directions.
- One large tree can supply a day's supply of oxygen for four people.
- An acre of trees absorbs as much carbon dioxide as a car produces in 26,000 miles.
- Trees remove sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide (two major contributors to acid rain and ozone pollution) from the air.
- Trees settle out dust, pollen, and smoke from the air. Dust levels can be 75% lower on the sheltered side of a tree compared to the windward side.
- Trees absorb and block sound, reducing noise pollution by as much as 40% (prolonged exposure to noise can cause hypertension, higher cholesterol levels, irritability, and aggressive behavior).

Next time you admire a tree, think about how hard it is working to make your community a better place to live. ■

Planting Season 2001–2002

Many thanks to all of you who helped make the 2001–2002 planting season a great success. Canopy planted over 95 trees! More than 170 enthusiastic volunteers planted trees in a variety of locations around Palo Alto, including along Page Mill Road in front of Hewlett-Packard, Gunn High School, numerous city parks, and the Palo Alto Duck Pond.

Canopy is very pleased to have had the participation of volunteers from more than ten community groups and businesses, among them Roche Pharmaceuticals, Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto, Youth Community Ser-

vice, Gunn High School's Key Club and Environmental Club, and the students of Elizabeth Seaton School. The hard work and dedication of these groups and many individual volunteers helps renew Palo Alto's urban forest and educate residents in tree planting and care.

Canopy also thanks the many city departments, organizations and businesses who provide tools, materials and logistical support to our

tree planting efforts. A special thank you goes to everyone in the Tree Section of the Department of Public Works. They provided trees, delivered materials, and often worked on Saturdays to help. Canopy would also like to recognize the help and collaboration of the Parks and Golf Division, as well as the Recreation, Open Space, and Sciences Division. Many

thanks are owed to the Palo Alto Unified School District for being instrumental in organizing one of Canopy's largest plantings to date at Gunn High School. We really appreciate the wonderful coffee cake from Hobe's. And last but not least, thanks for the contributions of Larry Hassett, Palo Alto Hardware, and the Palo Alto Garden Club which helped us purchase tools. Tree planting is truly a community endeavor!

Thank you all again. We look forward to seeing you at our next planting season. ■



Sandra Shimizu and Linnie Melena enjoy a morning of planting at the PA Duck Pond as part of the Kiwanis Service Day.



Gunn High School Planting

Arbor Day Planting

On March 7, 2002, volunteers from Canopy and from Elizabeth Seaton School planted four flowering crab apples (*Malus 'Adams'*) in honor of California Arbor Day. The trees were planted in the Kellogg Parkette next to the Gamble Garden Center at the corner of Embarcadero and Waverley in celebration of Gamble's centennial year. A dedication ceremony for the trees was attended by Mayor Vic Ojakian, members of City Council, and representatives of Gamble and Canopy, as well as students from Walter Hays Elementary School. In keeping with the spirit of Arbor Day, participants braved inclement weather to see the trees safely in the ground. It seemed for awhile that the spirit of Dave Muffly was with us as the predicted rains held off during the planting. But Dave was never one to stand on ceremony and, sure enough, when the dedication ceremonies started—the rains came.

Tree Care '02—Making a Difference

As summer approaches, Canopy's thoughts turn to tree care. Hot and dry California summers present young trees with their most significant challenge. Canopy continues its Tree Care Program to help improve the health and survival of new street trees.

Modifying our approach based on lessons learned through last year's pilot program, Canopy will hold tree care classes, survey the health of young trees and encourage Palo Alto residents to care for their trees. Survey results will be passed on for action to a newly formed young tree maintenance team in the Tree Section of the Department of Public Works.

Last spring, Canopy surveyed over 300 young trees. The findings indicate that what young trees need most is water! Over 50% of the trees really needed a good soak. The simple act of watering a young street tree once a week can make a huge difference in how it thrives. Young trees grow up to 50% faster when they receive regular summer watering. All trees, even drought tolerant species, require regular water for the first few seasons until the roots are well-established.

Help Canopy make a difference to Palo Alto's urban forest. Join the survey team, attend a class or participate in community events. Help spread the word about the importance of tree care! ■

Volunteer Opportunities

SURVEYOR: Working individually or in pairs, you survey the health and maintenance needs of young trees. Training will be provided at hands-on training sessions led by certified arborists. You'll be asked to spend up to 10 hours over the summer months.

OFFICE HELP: Support the Tree Care Program by entering survey data and helping organize events. A time commitment of two to three hours, once a week, June to September would be ideal. Experience with Macs and FileMaker is helpful.

**Call Karen at Canopy
(650) 964-6110**



Watering technique demonstrated by Program Director Karen Donnelly

Water NOW!

Young trees grow up to 50% faster with regular care during the first five growing seasons. All new trees need deep watering until they are established. Your new street tree is depending on you for this care.

How should the young tree be watered?

First, check 2–3" below the soil grade to determine the level of moisture. If slightly moist or dry, a slow drip from the garden hose (about 30 minutes) will promote deep root growth. Water to the drip line, the imaginary line to the ground created by the farthest-out branches. Sprinkling 5–10 minutes does more harm than good; it brings roots closer to the surface instead of encouraging them to grow deep.

How often should young trees be watered? Check the tree routinely, choosing a day that is easy to remember, for example, every Sunday or your garbage pick-up day. During the hot, dry summer months you might need to water once a week whereas in the winter it's once a month. You'll know if the tree needs water when you check the moisture level of the soil. By the way, deep watering a tree weekly costs less than \$1 a month.

Does a tree surrounded by lawn need additional water? Absolutely!! Lawn irrigation is designed to wet only a few inches of soil. Give young trees a deep watering to encourage their roots to go down. ■

Tree Talk: Preserving Our Native Oaks

Local residents Connie Lefkowitz, garden designer, and Michael Young, arborist and heritage oak tree specialist, gave informative and interesting presentations at the joint Canopy and Gamble Garden Tree Talk on Preserving our Native Oaks in February. Connie gave many examples of compatible companion landscape plants, complete with photographs of some delightful landscapes. Noting that *quercus*, the Latin word for oak, is derived from the Celtic for “good tree,” Michael offered many pointers on growing requirements and environmental tolerances of oak tree.

A review of basic tree care when landscaping under mature trees:

- Do not change drainage patterns. Do not allow sprinklers to hit the trunk of the tree. Drip or micro-soaker hose irrigation is usually better than sprinklers. Native oaks should not be watered at all in the summer months—they are susceptible to oak-root fungus which thrives in warm moist soil.
- Do not till soil under canopy. Most trees have the majority of their main roots within a foot or two of the surface and they extend all of the way to the tree’s “dripline.”
- Protect your tree from compaction of soil during construction by putting a fence around the tree under the drip line.
- Be aware that cultural needs of the tree and cultural needs of plants are compatible. Understand shade and sun conditions for new plants and choose them accordingly.

Always check with an arborist before undertaking any major landscaping near a mature tree. Canopy can provide a list of local ISA certified arborists. Make the arborist integral to the design/construction phases of the project and your chances of success will be increased manifold. ■

Major Donors Hike Jasper

Canopy’s major donors were invited to a spectacular Sunday morning tour of Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve on April 7. Docents Jessie Schilling and Bob Buell led 25 loyal Canopy supporters on two different walks through the wildflower-blanketed hills where they saw a number of valley oaks, live oaks, blue oaks, and plenty of poison oak. ■



George Bechtel, Marty and Judy Deggeller, Bob Buell, and the back of Betsy Bechtel

THANK YOU!

Canopy salutes the following individuals and corporations for their gifts of \$250 or more since our last newsletter.

California ReLeaf
John & Nancy Cassidy
Arline & Peter Dehlingeer
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Liz Schwerer-Duffie &
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Garden Club of Palo Alto
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Leannah Hunt
Ken & Marilyn Lavezzo
Joseph Martignetti, Jr.
Forest Preston, III
Roche Pharmaceuticals
Eric & Kathryn Verwillow
Vittoria Management
Susan Wilson
Hans & Elizabeth Wolf

Stanford Does It Again—Planting Trees in Record Numbers

Nobody, outside of city governments, has planted more trees on the Peninsula than Stanford University. Founder Leland Stanford was adamant; he didn't

want “the vacant lot look” around his new university's buildings. So, in 1891 he traveled to Long Island, New York where he purchased 5,000 trees and plants.

To learn more about Heritage trees on the Stanford campus as well as other landscape topics try <http://grounds.stanford.edu>

To lend a hand to the Oak Reforestation Project by planting and maintaining the young oaks contact Magic at 650-323-7333.

That tree-buying spree was the single-largest and most amazing private purchase of a collection of growing things at the time.

What Leland and Jane Stanford started in the late 1800s, guided by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, the University continues today.

Stanford's 8,180 acre domain includes the University campus, Stanford Shopping Center, Stanford Hospital, the Stanford Research Park, Stanford's residential subdivisions, and the foothills.

At one major project in the Research Park, (3301–3307 Hillview Avenue) more than 600

new trees were planted, according to Ramsey Shuayto of Stanford Management Company. He estimates that over the past five years, development activities in the Research Park have contributed roughly 3,000 new trees.

At the Stanford Shopping Center expansion and Sand Hill Road project, approximately 300 native trees were removed and nearly 2,200 were planted, more than meeting the Palo Alto City requirement for a 3:1 replacement ratio.

On the University campus, Herb Fong, Grounds Manager, estimates that over the last five years 750 trees have been added to his tree inventory.

Most newly planted trees come in 5 or 15 gallon containers—sometimes they come in 24” boxes. But since the 1980's when Stanford Planners found the oak population in significant decline, they've used oak acorns and seedlings. Working in partnership with Magic, a local non-profit organization, as well as the Center for Conservation Biology, the Planning Office launched the Oak Habitat Reforestation project. Planting in the foothills surrounding the Dish, the open fields adjacent to Sand Hill Road, and the Arboretum, they found that protective tubes

placed over the acorns have dramatically increased their rate of survival. These tubes provide protection from wildlife and mowers and hasten development of the young oaks. To date, approximately 2,000 young oaks near the Dish and in the Arboretum are thriving.

Stanford also plants trees, when warranted, by moving them from one location to another. A magnificent oak was located in the middle of the building site at 3301 Hillview Ave. Rather than lose the tree, in February 2001; Stanford Management Company brought in a heavy duty crane and successfully transplanted the oak to a site at the edge of the property. According to Herb Fong, it's not uncommon to move oak, redwood, olive, or pistache trees from one site to another. When sufficient precautions are taken the survival rate is close to 85%.

In Palo Alto, Canopy and the city work hand in hand to keep the city covered with a continually replenished, healthy urban forest. Stanford has made significant contributions toward this goal, on the University's land within Palo Alto's jurisdiction as well as in the adjacent counties.

Excerpts from this article were published in the *Palo Alto Weekly*

Corporate Sponsor Roche Plants on Earth Day



Roche employees are no wimps when it comes to Earth Day. Wielding picks and shovels and under the spirited leadership of Neal

Blow they planted fifteen Flowering Cherry trees (*Prunus yeodensis* 'Akebono') along Embarcadero, from the island at Heather Lane to the corner of Newell Rd. Pink cherry blossoms will announce the arrival of spring for years to come thanks to the Roche planting crew. This caps the 2001–2002 planting season. Roche Pharmaceuticals is a corporate sponsor of Canopy, working in partnership to provide financial support, facilities and to sponsor activities. ■

The printing of this edition of our newsletter is underwritten by a generous grant from Roche. Many thanks.

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