

IN THIS ISSUE

Tree Talk	1
Bareroot Planting	1
Dawn Redwood	4
Hybrids/Cultivars	5
Tree Gifts	5
Magnolias	6
Tree Ordinance	6
Thanks, Members	7
Thanks, Businesses	7
Mayor's Tree	8

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.

WINTER 1999

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Save the Date: Tree Talk, March 27th

You undoubtedly appreciate Palo Alto's tree-lined streets. But have you ever wondered:

- Why oak trees are still growing in the streets of old Palo Alto?
- Which still-active community organization planted some of the first trees in Palo Alto?

- Which popular street tree was developed locally and given the variety name "Palo Alto"?

For nearly 100 years, Palo Alto residents and city staff have planted street trees, battled over the removal of aged oaks, and pressed for the protection of all trees—public and private.

Come to Tree Talk '99 where Mayor Gary Fazzino will join City Historian Steve Staiger and local ecologist David Schrom to talk about the history behind our renowned community forest. Archival photographs of early Palo Alto will be shown.

**Tree Talk, Saturday morning, March 27, 9 to noon,
Lucie Stern Center Ballroom.**

Admission is \$20 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased for \$15 by sending a check to Canopy. Advance tickets will be held at the door. Canopy members may take a \$3 discount. ■

Going Bare, or "Mommy, Why are You Planting that Stick?"

by Dave Muffly, Canopy Program Director

You may be uncomfortable planting what appears to be a stick with a few straggly roots, but winter-time bareroot planting is often preferable to planting from containers.

Planting bareroot, you see what you're getting: the trunk, the graft and the roots. With a container tree, you may be buying a plant which is over- or under-rooted. Neither one is good.

Bareroot trees are available in the winter, during the trees' natural dormant period. The ideal time to plant bareroot trees is as soon as the plants drop their leaves. Because trees grow roots even in the winter, planting early gives a tree the maximum amount of time to get its roots into the soil before spring growth and water stress begins. Usually, though, bareroot trees become available in January. The sooner you plant, the better.

**In Palo Alto
it's the trees!**

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Continues next page.

Meanwhile, container trees are often started from leftover bare-roots potted into containers and sold throughout the year. Buying one of these in spring or summer, you are likely to find that the tree has not yet developed a solid rootball. The soil will fall off the roots along with all the fine root hairs which had started to develop. This tree will be very difficult to water properly.

You may also find that your container tree is “root bound,” with large and small roots growing in a circle around the sidewall of the container. Getting these roots to expand freely into the soil is tricky. However, if container trees are carefully tended in the nursery, they can be well-rooted by the fall. If you do choose to plant container trees, November 1 has been described as the magic day to plant, with the 30 days before and after also being good to give plenty of time for easy root growth.

In general, bareroots have an easier time becoming established. They don't have to make the transition from potting soil to your soil. They are also less expensive and much easier to handle because you don't have to move a heavy ball of soil with the tree.

Selecting a Specimen

Once you have chosen the variety of tree you want, selecting a good specimen is important. Local

nurseries have some and mail order sources have others. But just because a local nursery sells a particular variety, it doesn't necessarily mean that it will work well here. Lots of people want to grow 'Fuji' apples here, so the nurseries stock them, but most Fujis I have seen grown here sunburn quite badly.

If you have positive first-hand experience with other fruit tree varieties that do well in Palo Alto, please give Canopy a call.

or else bigger trees with plenty of branches.

For many home gardens, you can start the branches within a foot or so of the ground. This will aid in caring for and harvesting from the trees. If you want low branches, you can either get a tree that already has them (hard to find) or else, after planting, prune the tree to the height where you want the first branch to emerge (two feet or less). For the strongest tree, prune it to have a central leader.

Most fruit trees are grafted onto rootstocks, and you may have a choice when purchasing a bare-root. Semi-dwarf or standard rootstocks are generally the most robust and drought-tolerant. Dwarf rootstocks keep the trees

smaller but often have shorter lives and other disadvantages. Most semi-dwarf rootstocks give less dwarfing effect than people expect. This means you still have to prune them if you want to keep the trees small.

Planting

If you have to work hard to break up the clumps, your soil is probably either too wet or too dry. Dig a hole 18 to 24 inches deep and a bit wider than the roots of your tree. It's really important to break up the walls and bottom of the planting hole, being sure not to create a smooth side wall.

In general, in our clay-based soils, it's wise to plant the tree on a mound 6 to 12 inches high or in a raised bed. This will keep water from pooling around the base of the tree, which causes root rot—a common way fruit trees die.

Adding amendments to the soil of the planting hole is generally agreed to be a waste of time and sometimes bad for the tree, but amending the mound is great. Add mulch to the mound to conserve moisture.

The point where the tree is grafted is often a weak spot, so to minimize sunburn, point the graft to the north where it will be shaded by the rest of the tree. Water thoroughly after planting and lightly tamp the soil to remove air pockets which will kill root hairs. ■

A Big Thank You to New or Renewed Canopy Members from July 1, 1998 through January 13, 1999

Forest (\$1,000 +)

California ReLeaf
Crescent Park Neighborhood
Association

Branch (\$100 - \$999)

George & Betsy Bechtel
Ann & Ken Bilodeau
David & Cindy Blitz
Janet Dafoe & Ron Davis
Mary Davey
Carolyn & Gordon Davidson
John Dawson
Brad & Helen Denson
Sandy & Gil Eakins
Gary Fazzino
Rita French
Paul & Jean Garrett
Leannah Hunt
Stewart Kiritz & Sally
Schuman
Mike & Rene Lewis
Barbara Lילה
James McClenahan
Kevin Raftery
Carolyn & Bill Reller
Kathy Roberts
Jack & Fran Rominger
Sally & Jim Sakols
Gail Schubert
Maddy & Isaac Stein
Kathy & Mike Torgersen
First American Title Guaranty
Forest Preston, III
Joe & Bette Hirsch
Susan Wilson
Susan Rosenberg

Leaf (\$50 - \$99)

Dalton Realty
Brigid Barton
Sam & Elizabeth Bonar
Robert & Patricia Brown
Joyce Bryson
David & Patricia Bubenik

Bill Busse
Connie Crawford
David & Judy Daniels
Dale & Nancy Denson
Pria Graves & George Koerner
Kelly & Randolph Hicks
Nancy & Joe Huber
Doug & Rebecca Karlson
Len Lehmann
John & Veronika Simms
Barbara Spreng
Joan & Dick van Gelder
Greg Walker
Ellen & Tom Wyman
Garry Wyndham
Jeffrey Yost
Larry & Jean Bozman

Acorn (\$25 - \$49)

Richard Almond
Peggy Arnold
Heidi Baum
Joel Bergquist
Rich Cabrera
Carolyn Caddes

Terry Chay
Lynn Chiapella
Ruth & Jerry Consul
Sibby Coxhead
Charlotte Epstein
Barry & Alice Fasbender
Mark Foster
Walt Fujii
Raymond & Lise Giraud
Sondra Glider
Jack & Millicent Hamilton
Mickey Hamilton
Maie & Tracy Herrick
Ed Hillard
Thomas & Madge Jordan
Cristen Juencke
Leo & Marlys Keoshian
David & Delphine Kohler
Karla Kummer
Carol Lauffer
Robert & Isabella Leon
Stephen & Nancy Levy
Claire MacElroy
Susie Mader
Marshall & Maija McDonald

Jeanne McDonnell
Eileen Menteer
Robert & Harriet Moss
Dena Mossar
Helen, Paul & Janet Pitlick
Steve Player
Stephen Pond
June Pratt
Alice & Rick Stiebel
Barbara Swezey
Mary Jane Tapp
Mary Walsh
Ted Wassam
Solon & Diane Finkelstein
Duane Bay & Barbara Noparstak
Sue Luttner & Jerome Coonen

Tree (\$1 - \$24)

Sharleen Fiddaman
Jay & Teri Johnson
Carol & Jeff Rosenberg
Nancy Eldredge

Support the Local Merchants Who Support Canopy

Thank you, **Palo Alto Co-op Market!** Remember to contribute your 5-cent bag refund to Canopy by bringing in your own grocery sacks the next time you shop at Co-op Market in Midtown. Contributions for the first month, which added up to \$99.98, were matched as an additional donation from the Co-op. The Co-op also named Canopy as the first recipient of its "Wishing Well." All coins contributed in December were donated to Canopy and the amount was doubled as well.

Thanks also to:

BayView Bank, for selecting Canopy as recipient of its community donations program, giving us \$2 for every new customer last December, and

Palo Alto Cafe in Midtown for providing hot morning coffee for our three plantings this fall. ■

The Dawn Redwood

by Forest Preston, III

When you went to the downtown Palo Alto post office last month for your new one-cent stamps, did you feel sorrow over the apparent demise of the redwood on the post office's Waverly frontage? Rest easy, what you saw is the perfectly normal winter state of a Dawn Redwood—*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. Unlike Palo Alto's eponymous example of Coast Redwood and its many cousins in town, or even the related Giant Sequoia, Dawn Redwood is deciduous.

The Sequoia family has three distinct species; each with a record. When discovered by Europeans, Coast Redwood was thought to be the oldest, tallest, and largest living thing. Later the Giant Sequoia was found to be the "largest" living thing. The title of "oldest" remains under debate.

Glyptostroboides, on the other hand, never held any such claim. It was first identified in the modern scientific community in 1941. Dr. Shigeru Miki, a Japanese paleobotanist, saw interesting details in a fossil he had found near Kobe. Needles and shoots on the branches of the fossilized twig "opposed" each other on the branch. (In redwoods they alternate—a "spiral" arrangement.) Also, the cones were on the end of naked stalks vs. on needle-bearing twigs. He

called it *Metasequoia* meaning (roughly) "akin-to," or the "newest" sequoia.

Further research showed that many fossils believed to be Coast Redwood were, in fact, *glyptostroboides*. The species had been widely prevalent throughout the northern hemisphere in Pliocene times (over 100 million years ago—truly the time "when dinosaurs roamed



The Dawn Redwood in front of the downtown post office.

the earth"). But, living specimens were unknown to the scientific community. *Glyptostroboides* was believed to be extinct by some 20 million years.

Meanwhile, in a remote area of China's Sichuan province, a forestry expedition came upon a large tree in the village of Modaoqi. At its base was a shrine. Locals prayed to it for fertility, health,

and good crops. This "discovery" occurred in 1941 also! But it wasn't until 1946 that similarities were noted between the Modaoqi tree and the fossil *Metasequoia*. Locals considered the Modaoqi tree to be akin to a swamp cyprus *Glyptostrobus*, so the tree whose fossils and living example were now connected was given the additional moniker *glyptostroboides*.

What an exciting time for botanists! Western awareness of the discovery was boosted by Dr. Ralph Chaney of UC and Milton Silverman of the *SF Chronicle*; they went on an expedition in 1948 to see it first-hand. During this trip the common name "Dawn Redwood" was coined—a catchier name for the press to use.

Specimens brought back were distributed worldwide. Our own tree must have come from one of them, for it was planted March 7, 1949—California Arbor day.

Dawn Redwood has a tapered trunk buttressed at its base. It grows rapidly to a 35 meter height. What record does it hold? Well, none really. But I'm sure you'll agree it has a most interesting history. When you go to the post office next month for your second batch of 33 cent stamps, wish our local example a very Happy 50th Birthday! ■

Distinguishing “Hybrids” from “Cultivars”

Commenting on the article about Paul and Jean Garrett’s backyard fruit trees in our last issue, local arborist Barrie Coate noted that we incorrectly referred to the Garretts’ trees as “grafted hybrids.” We should have called them “cultivars.”

“Most named forms of plants are not hybrids, but selected cultivars of the species involved,” explained Coate, a master arborist who has trained many in his profession. A hybrid is produced, he explained, when two genetically different parents are brought together to create seeds. Many commercially available annual plants, such as petunias or tomatoes, are hybrids bred for certain characteristics such as color or hardiness.

Cultivars, on the other hand, are clones produced from asexual methods such as budding, grafting, air layering or cuttings. Named cultivars are “usually the result of an astute nurseryman noting individual mature plants with desirable characteristics and reproducing them asexually,” Coate explained.

The Blenheim apricot in the Garretts’ yard, for example, is not a hybrid, but is the “progeny of a superior individual apricot tree noted by a fruit tree grower and reproduced by budding onto wild plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) rootstock.”

“While various rootstocks may be used,” Coate added, “the finished product, *Prunus armeniaca* ‘Blenheim,’ grafted onto the rootstock [is] genetically identical to the original individual Blenheim tree.” In other words, a Blenheim apricot is a genetic clone which has been replicated many times. ■

Tree Gift Donations July 1, 1998 to Jan. 13, 1999

Tree gifts are a wonderful way to commemorate life’s passages. Births, deaths, birthday, weddings, and other major milestones can be remembered with a donation of \$50 to Canopy. An entry will be made in Canopy’s Gift Tree Registry and an attractive card indicating that a tree has been planted in honor of the occasion will be sent to the person(s) you designate.

The following people gave gifts in honor of Joe Hirsch’s birthday: Lesley Rappaport, David & Susan Apfelberg, David & Karen Druker, Gerald Friedland, Paula Kasler & Simon Brafman, Dolores & John Piazza, Maureen & Paul Roskoph, Olive & Richard Waugh, David & Caroline Zlotnick

Other Tree Gifts

Given by...

Sally Bemus & Pat Burt
Robin Clark
Darrell Duffie
Marcia & Jack Edelstein
Glynn Capital Management
Ben & Ruth Hammett
Joe & Bette Hirsch
Joe & Bette Hirsch
Caryn Huberman
Leannah Hunt
Julie & Jon Jerome
Jeanne Kennedy
Rebecca Leon & Mike Kast
Celeste McInerney
Kathy Schmidt
Steve Staiger &
Reference Library Staff
Megan Swezey Fogarty
Michael Wagner
Stewart Kiritz & Sally Schuman

In honor of...

Katy Burt
Keith Clark
Kathy Roberts
Andrea Stryer
Jan Morton
John Hammett
Paul Roskoph
Maureen Roskoph
Dr. Michael Loughran
Page Sanders
Kitty & George Wheaton
Susan Wilson
Susan Wilson
Daniel Joseph McInerney
Anne & Eric Kastner
Patricia Dentinger
Michael Fogarty
Trevor Wagner
Our son Gabe

Given by

Anonymous
Lu & John Bingham
Griff Derryberry & Kathy Stiles
Robin Erickson
Merrill & Alicia Newman
Roz & Roger Route
Debbi & Chuck Sizemore

In memory of...

Pami Djerassi
Mrs. Ada Ohrnstiel
Robert W. Derryberry
Ted Johnson
Louise Renfrew
Russell K. Revell
Lorraine Brady

Meet Some Deciduous Magnolias

The big bursts of pink and white flowers you see on trees in early spring are from the magnolia family. These showy trees are beautiful garden ornaments, and generally grow well in the Midpeninsula.

When planting, choose a sunny spot with well-drained soil and add lots of organic material. Keep grass out of the watering basin.

Available now in nurseries, magnolias have been developed with many colors and flower shapes. Strybing Arboretum in San Francisco is a good place to see what the varieties look like. Call them at (415) 661-0822 to ask when they are in full bloom.

Magnolia Stellata or Star Magnolia

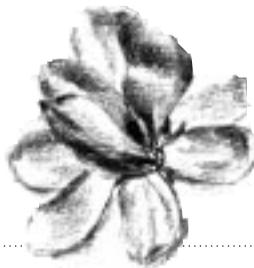
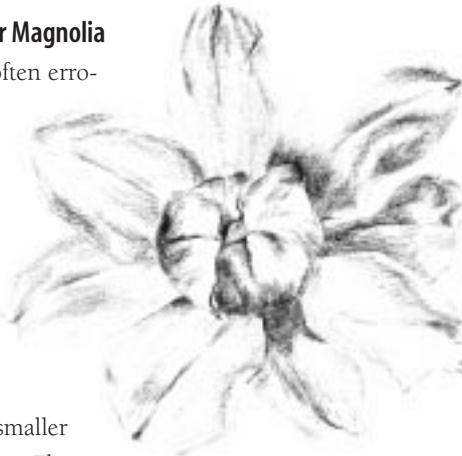
The Saucer Magnolia (often erroneously called the tulip tree) grows to 25 feet and with equal spread. The flower is white to pink or purplish red and about 6" across.

Magnolia soulangiana or Saucer Magnolia

The Star Magnolia is a smaller tree with a smaller flower. The flower is white to pink with narrow, strapshaped petals. Profuse bloom in late winter, and early spring. Gamble Garden Center at 1431 Waverley Street have several just about ready to burst into bloom. ■



This beautiful specimen tree—saucer magnolia—is currently in full bloom and is located in front of Palo Alto's main library on Newell.



Feedback Wanted on Palo Alto Tree Ordinance

Palo Alto's tree preservation ordinance, which went into effect two years ago in January 1997, currently protects two species of native oaks (Valley and Coast Live) on private property which are at least 11.5 inches in diameter.

When the City Council passed this law in 1996, it was agreed that it would be brought back after a year for review and the possible addition of other species. Because of the press of other Council business last year, however, the review was postponed, and the opportunity will come around this spring for further input regarding the ordinance.

Since Canopy's mission is to be the non-profit "advocate for Palo Alto's community trees," we want to hear your thoughts about our city's tree ordinance:

- Are you satisfied with the protection now provided to heritage oaks?
- Should the ordinance be expanded to include other species?
- Is the ordinance an unnecessary regulation?

Share your thoughts with us about whether the City is doing enough to preserve our community trees, and we will forward them to the City Council this spring. Mail your comments to the Canopy office (see address on back) or e-mail at info@canopy.org. ■

Planting Our Future Forest

