

SUFA E-News Spring 2021



Welcome to the Spring 2021 issue of the Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates (SUFA) newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will keep you informed about how you can participate in SUFA's efforts to increase the tree canopy in Sunnyvale through education, tree plantings, and advocacy.

Thank you, Deborah and Farewell!

Deborah Marks, founder of Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates (SUFA), is moving out of the area in June. Deborah has been instrumental in raising awareness of the importance and benefits of trees for our Sunnyvale community. Through her leadership and advocacy, Deborah encouraged the City to create the Sunnyvale Urban Forest Management Plan, which was adopted in 2014.

Deborah was a frequent presence and presenter at City Council meetings advocating for the preservation of trees from development. Due in large part to her efforts, trees are now often considered during early phases of development while they can still be protected.

In addition to speaking at City Hall, Deborah spoke to numerous community and neighborhood groups and staffed the SUFA information table at a variety of community events to further the word about the importance of planting trees and preserving Sunnyvale's urban forest.



As president of the Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates, Deborah helped oversee efforts such as the creation of its website, group tree walks through our parks, and city council candidate forums to discuss the Sunnyvale urban forest. Her coordination through SUFA with the City has resulted in numerous neighborhood tree plantings. Her most recent endeavor involved leading SUFA and the City through a several-years-long process to enable private tree plantings to be subsidized.

The Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates would not be here without Deborah. Innumerable trees in our Sunnyvale community wouldn't be here without Deborah. We are grateful that Deborah had the passion, vision, and determination to speak out for the trees of Sunnyvale. We thank her for all her years of work on behalf of the Sunnyvale urban forest and we wish her well on her next adventure.



Deborah in action.



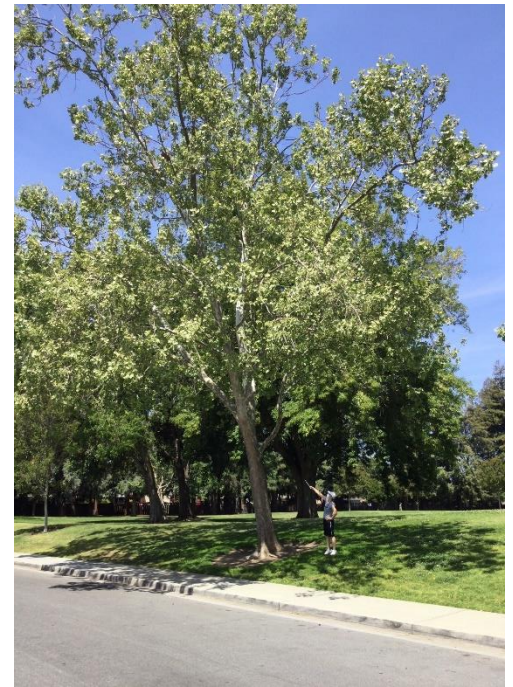
Tree on the Street Interview: The London Plane Tree

SUFA: Thank you for being willing to be interviewed by Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates. First, can I get your full name?

London Plane: Brilliant! Of course. I'm *Platanus acerifolia* – more commonly known as a London plane tree. Make sure that you spell that p-l-a-n-e, not p-l-a-i-n. I am anything but plain. My bark is especially worth admiring. I've been told it looks like a delicate jigsaw puzzle or a camouflage pattern.

SUFA: Your bark is indeed lovely. But I have some questions about your name. First of all, where does "plane" come from?

LP: Well, there is some disagreement among experts but most think it is derived from our genus *Platanus* coming from the Greek word "platys" meaning "ample". We are jolly ample – in height, breadth, leaf size, and the amount of shade we provide.



SUFA: And why London? Why not Louisiana, Paris, France, New York, or Rome?

LP: Ah, yes, interesting story that. We actually have somewhat of a shady past, if you'll pardon the pun – being a hybrid between the Oriental plane (*Platanus orientalis*) and the American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*). This liaison seemed to have occurred in London sometime in the 17th century. Taking a cue from the plane tree-lined streets in Paris, we were planted en masse during the Industrial Revolution and flourished in spite of all the soot and air pollution. We now comprise over half of the trees in London.

SUFA: Why were you so successful in such an urban environment?

LP: Righto! Good question. A major reason is our lovely bark, which, while having no bite, has the ability to break away in large chunks which allows us to rid ourselves of pollutants.

SUFA: Your species is the most planted urban street tree in the world. What other attributes do you have that make you so successful?

LP: Jolly good question. In addition to being resistant to air pollution we are also resistant to dust and root compaction, and we provide lots of shade to hot, urban streets. Also, we can have our new growth cut off every year (pollarding) to keep us under all the wires cities seem to have these days. In spite of all that shearing we can still thrive.

SUFA: And you have a cousin who is a native to our area.

LP: Indeed! The California (or Western) sycamore – *Platanus racemosa*. I'm afraid to say though, that despite being a native, my cousin prefers moist, riparian areas so is not often used in urban landscaping.

SUFA: We're here at Las Palmas Park. Where else can you be found in Sunnyvale?

LP: Oh, we are all over. We're the 6th most common street tree in the city and also can be found in many parks. My chums that line Murphy Street are the most well known. I'm glad to be here, though. Don't think I could stand all that noisy nightlife.



SUFA: Well, thank you so much for your time and for sharing such interesting information.

LP: The pleasure was indeed mine. Cheerio!



The unique bark and seed balls of the London plane tree.

Civic Center Modernization - Tree Moving Project



Construction for the Civic Center Modernization project is in progress and one of the first steps was to protect, relocate, and remove trees surrounding City Hall. Most of the trees within the Civic Center site are being protected and remain in place, while some will be replaced or relocated. The large grove of redwoods, currently next to City Hall is being preserved and will become the focal point of an amphitheater. Any redwood trees being removed will be salvaged to be used for furniture, art, and

other items within the new City Hall. A total of twelve trees have been relocated, including the two large camphor trees on the north side of the existing City Hall. The process for successfully relocating trees is extensive and includes many delicate steps to ensure the safety of the trees.



The City Hall camphor trees prior to construction and moving a 250,000 lb. camphor with a 60 ft. canopy.



The Importance of Watering Trees During a Drought and How to Do It

Why bother watering trees in a drought? Here are a few reasons as cited by Our City Forest:

- Trees are long-term investments due to their ability to increase property value, reduce energy and water use, and capture carbon from the atmosphere.
- Tree cover saves water by reducing evaporation from water sources and the soil.
- Tree cover shades and cools and reduces the "heat island effect" found in urban areas.

For the full article by Our City Forest:

<http://www.ourcityforest.org/blog/2015/10/21/why-planting-trees-in-drought-isnt-a-bad-idea>

For an extensive article on the effect of drought on trees and how to mitigate it:

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/fnr/fnr-483-w.pdf>

For two articles from local urban forest groups on how and when to water your trees:

Our City Forest (San Jose): <http://www.ourcityforest.org/blog/2015/2/26/the-ultimate-watering-guide>

Canopy (Palo Alto): <https://canopy.org/tree-info/caring-for-trees/trees-and-water/watering-guidelines/>

Coming Soon: Tree Walk Map for Lakewood Park

SUFA's group tree walks remain on hiatus but you, or you and your family, can still enjoy them on your own by using the tree walk maps found on our website. Just click on this link: sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps and you'll find maps for our walks at the Civic Center/Library as well as Washington, Ponderosa, Murphy, and Ortega Parks. In addition, we are currently working on a map for Lakewood Park so watch the website for that. **And, please note, that while some of the trees on the Library side of Olive may be viewed, the trees surrounding the Civic Center are currently not accessible because of ongoing construction.** So, print a tree map, put on your walking shoes, and enjoy our beautiful spring weather while learning more about the wide variety of trees that comprise the urban forest in Sunnyvale.