

SUFA E-News Winter 2022



Welcome to the Winter 2022 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.

Branch Out Sunnyvale Applications Available

Don't miss this great opportunity to increase your own urban forest. Branch Out Sunnyvale is currently accepting applications for spring plantings. Apply today to receive a low-cost tree and the support needed to select and care for it.

The City of Sunnyvale has allocated funds to subsidize 50 private trees and has contracted with Our City Forest of San Jose to implement the Branch Out Sunnyvale program.



The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. - Chinese proverb

To participate, the homeowner will visit the program website, fill out an application, and pay the \$50 fee. Our City Forest will communicate with the homeowner to discuss tree selection (based on location and size), provide the tree, plant the tree, and educate the homeowner on care of the tree. Sunnyvale will reimburse Our City Forest \$300 for the trees that have been planted.

Visit <http://www.sunnyvaltetrees.org/branch-out-sunnyvale/> for more details on the program.

Visit <http://www.ourcityforest.org/sunnyvale> for the application.

Please note: SUFA and the City of Sunnyvale are very aware of residents' concerns about additional water use during a drought but are agreed that the long-term benefits of planting a tree far outweigh the immediate cost of the water used to maintain it. A newly-planted tree requires only 10 - 15 gallons of water per week.

For excellent information on how much and how often to water your trees, as well as how to save both water and trees during the drought, visit the website for Canopy (Palo Alto's urban forest group): <https://canopy.org/tree-info/caring-for-trees/trees-and-water/save-water-and-trees/> and the State of California's website, Save Our

Water: https://saveourwater.com/trees?mc_cid=14ab57b0a2&mc_eid=62db1bbf59



"I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues."

The Lorax

Advocacy Coordinator Needed

Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates is in need of a Lorax - actually, a volunteer Advocacy Coordinator. This position would involve speaking during the public commentary periods at City Council and Planning Commission meetings on behalf of Sunnyvale's urban forest. A long-term goal would be to develop a team of volunteers to take on this task as well as to advocate to businesses for the preservation and addition of trees on their property.

If you would like more information or would like to volunteer please contact us at info@sunnyvaletrees.org.

Cork: Nature's Sustainable Building Material

Cork has been widely used for many years in the making of wine stoppers, bulletin boards, floor tiles, and table trivets. Now it is being recognized as one of the most sustainable building materials because of its low cost, light weight, effectiveness as insulation, aesthetics, and sustainability.



Cork oak on E. Eaglewood

Cork comes from the water repellent outer layer of the cork oak tree grown in Mediterranean regions (*photo: below right*). No trees need to be cut down to harvest the cork and it is easy to recycle.

Cork trees are allowed to grow for 25 years, after that time, their cork can be harvested every nine years (*photo: below middle*). Cork trees can live to be 300 years old and, the older the tree, the better the quality of the cork. Cork currently is used to create interconnecting blocks, roof tiles, and building insulation. Being native to the Mediterranean climate, cork trees can thrive here in Sunnyvale.

This article was sourced from the following: **10 Eco-Friendly Building Materials | Sustainable Design** www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsQBSVJoVo4

#1 Cork (0.39 - 1.50 mins)



The iconic cork oak at the Sunnyvale Library

We continue our series featuring common Sunnyvale street trees with information about the trees presented in an interview format. These are trees you'll see as you walk or bike through Sunnyvale neighborhoods or parks.

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

Fern Pine: Sure. It's gets a little confusing, though. For many years I was called *Podocarpus gracilior* but recently, the taxonomic botanical powers that be have reclassified me into a new genus and I am now known as *Afrocarpus falcatus*. But goodness, please just use what all my friends call me - Fern Pine.



Tree on the Street Interview: Fern Pine

SUFA: So, Afrocarpus? Are you native to Africa?

FP: Indeed. Specifically, eastern South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. I am one of the few conifers native to the continent of Africa.

SUFA: Wait! You're a conifer? Where are your cones?

FP: Alas! More confusion. Fern pines don't produce the typical woody cones of most conifers. Our cones are small, fleshy, and greenish-yellow. They are indeed edible but a bit resinous I've been told.



SUFA: Tell me more about your roots in Africa.

FP: Just my roots? Not my bark, leaves, and branches? Sorry. Couldn't resist. Ahem. Yes, well here in the U.S. I am considered an ornamental tree but in Africa I am grown for many reasons, most especially for my wood which is used for furniture, roof beams, floorboards, and in shipbuilding. My bark contains tannin which is used in tanning leather. My bark, sap, and seeds are also all used in traditional medicines.

SUFA: We always ask our street tree interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What are your attributes in that regard?

FP: Well, coming from Africa I am, of course, drought resistant. I can grow in poor soil and do well with ocean wind and air pollution. I'm also good at throwing shade – Oh! I mean that in a good way, as in the-reducing-the-urban-heat-island effect kind of way. And lastly, I am also deer resistant - obviously not a concern here in Sunnyvale. (Whispering an aside: *Although, I've heard through the grapevine that Sunnyvale may be in the market for some crow-resistant trees*).

SUFA: Well, thank you so much for your time. I'll let you get back to your main job of capturing CO2 and producing O2 for us mere humans.

FP: You're welcome. I'm here to help.

Lakewood Park Tree Walk and Map

SUFA will be resuming monthly tree walks with a new addition to our collection - Lakewood Park. The walk is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 9th. Please check our website (sunnyvaletrees.org) or watch NextDoor for further details.



If you just can't wait for the walks to resume you 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 Lakewood, Washington, Ponderosa, Murphy, and Ortega Parks, as well as the Library/Civic Center. But, 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.

The Importance of Watering Trees During a Drought



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 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/>



My Dogged Attempt to Grow a Dogwood

by Kim Walter

Last year, for my 50th birthday a friend gave me a beautiful little flowering dogwood tree. I promptly named her Florida, after her Latin name, *Cornus florida*. My mind was filled with images of my front yard awash with blooms and shade in the years to come. I was excited, as she was the first tree I had ever actually planted at my house. My son did the hard digging for me, and, when he was done, she crowned our yard like a jewel amongst the deadened grass.

I diligently watered her and talked to her, but I noticed that she did not seem to be thriving. In fact, it seemed like every time I looked at her, she seemed smaller and sadder. First, her three flowers fell off and no new buds replaced them. Then her leaves began to fall off. I felt only mildly alarmed knowing that she is deciduous but then again August seemed a bit early for her to be dropping her leaves. I'm sure that every member of my family thought the tree simply needed water, and, unbeknownst to each other, "helped" by watering poor Florida.

I finally talked with my friend who had given her to me, and we compared notes on our sister trees, as she had also purchased one for herself. Alas, hers was flourishing and hadn't lost its leaves yet. Hers had even grown a little in the rich and fertile soil where she lived in the mountains. I told her I thought mine was dying, so she came over to see if there was anything she could do.

She first ascertained that, despite its appearance, it was still clinging to life. She then dug it up and discovered to our dismay that the soil didn't drain well and Florida was essentially drowning. There was a small amount of root rot, but she felt that the tree could recover. She planted it in a large pot on my patio and told me not to water it for at least a month. And, after that, only sparingly.

While she planted it, she went over some basic tree planting guidelines that I would like to share: Dig a hole at least twice as wide (up to four times as wide) as the pot your tree is in, but not too deep, because you don't want to bury the root crown. Compost is great to mix in around the tree, especially to help break up clay soil, but it also helps sandy soil retain moisture. The tree needs weekly deep watering for the first couple years until it gets established. It's vitally important that the soil drains, so you might want to first try filling your hole with water and making sure it drains to avoid a problem like I had.

As for my poor little Florida, I'm still waiting to see if she recovers. I'll let you know. More information on tree planting and care is available at: arborday.org/trees/tips.

Visit us at: www.sunnyvaletrees.org

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