

# SUFA-News Summer 2022



Welcome to the Summer 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.

## Plant a Low-Cost Tree with the **Branch Out Sunnyvale Program!**

**Branch Out Sunnyvale** still has spaces for fall plantings - the ideal time to plant a tree. For only \$50 you can have a tree planted on your property! You will be advised on tree selection and care requirements and the tree will be delivered to your home and planted - all courtesy of Our City Forest. The remaining cost is being taken care of by the City of Sunnyvale in an effort to increase our urban forest.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

~Chinese Proverb



## Advocacy Coordinator Needed

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

*The Lorax*



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](mailto:info@sunnyvaletrees.org).

\*\*from The Lorax by Dr. Suess



**EVERY  
TREE  
COUNTS**

**Contact City Officials  
on Behalf of  
Sunnyvale's Thirsty  
Trees!**

The trees of Sunnyvale are suffering from lack of water.

Let's put some pressure on our city officials to take action before it is too late.

We ask that you send a note to the City Council and others noted below asking them to prioritize watering trees.

While the Public Works Department is working to improve the current situation, it is important to let the city know that a clear, long-term commitment to provide the resources to water our trees is essential.

Please feel free to use some of these talking points, but also add a personal note (is there a tree or park of particular concern to you?):

The city has invested in the trees on our streets, in parks, medians, and other public spaces and it is more cost effective to save the trees we have than to remove and replace them.

- Many residents have removed their lawns and rely on our city parks for green grass and shady, welcoming trees both of which require continued watering.
- Drought-weakened trees are a liability that can be prevented by proper tree care.
- The community benefits from trees are essential to the physical and mental well-being of our residents.

SUFA is not the only group concerned about watering trees. Two recent policy announcements, developed by a variety of groups, reinforce the importance of maintaining trees even during a drought.

- The **Save Our Water** campaign explains how vital proper tree care is to the urban forest. This document was released by the USDA Forest Service, CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Department, and others. The document advises communities to water trees even during the drought and provides watering tips.

- The 7/22/22 Sunnyvale City Manager's Report discusses the recent announcement from the State Water Resources Control Board that exempts some areas with trees from the turf irrigation ban.

Send your comments via Access Sunnyvale  
(<https://sunnyvale.dynamics365portals.us/>) or direct email to:

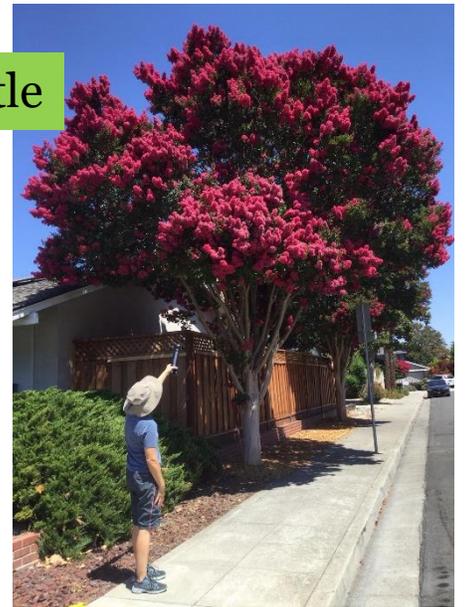
- Mayor: [kleincouncil@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:kleincouncil@sunnyvale.ca.gov)
- City Council: [council@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:council@sunnyvale.ca.gov)
- City Manager: [citymgr@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:citymgr@sunnyvale.ca.gov)

## Tree on the Street Interview: The Crape Myrtle

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?

**Crape Myrtle:** Of, course - but how much time do you have as it is very confusing?!



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

**Crape Myrtle:** Of, course - but how much time do you have as it is very confusing?!

**SUFA:** Please be thorough. Inquiring minds want to know.

**CM:** Well, first off confusing-wise, I'm not even in the myrtle family. Go figure! I'm in the family *Lagerstroemia*, named by Carl Linneaus to honor his friend Magnus von Lagerstrom who introduced us to the west.

**SUFA:** So where do crape myrtles hail from then?

**CM:** We're from Asia and Oceania - India, China, Japan, and northern Australia. In China we have a wonderful nickname - the "monkey slip tree" because monkeys cannot climb up the slippery bark on our trunks.

**SUFA:** But I see your name on the web as crape myrtle, crepe myrtle, and crapemyrtle!

**CM:** Yes! It can make one dizzy. "Crepe" comes from the crepe-like texture and look of our lovely blossoms but historically, "crape" has been used. Horticulturalists prefer "crapemyrtle" because, as I mentioned above, we are actually not myrtles at all. But, enough about confusing names! Let's talk about how lovely I am!

**SUFA:** You are, indeed! Tell us about your gorgeous flowers.

**CM:** Yes, they are special in many ways. They come in a variety of colors - white, pink, lavender, and red and are very long-lasting. In China our name translates to "one hundred days red". Also, we bloom in late summer when many other trees have finished for the year. Oh, and did I mention our bark, which we shed showing lovely color patterns underneath.

**SUFA:** I saw so many cultivars of crape myrtles when researching you. That made me dizzy as well.

*Continued on next page*

## ***Tree on the Street Interview continued.***

**CM:** You are so right! Originally, our most common species was the long-blooming *Lagerstoemia indica* ("indica" meaning "from India") but they were plagued by powdery mildew. Ick! Then a research horticulturist at the National Arboretum named Donald Egolf crossed *L. indica* with a mildew-resistant Japanese species, *L. fauriei*, and voila! Long-blooming, mildew-resistant trees! I now have over 440 cultivar cousins. Quite the family tree, if you'll pardon the pun. But it **is** hard to keep track of birthdays....

**SUFA:** Anything else you'd like to share with us about your species?

**CM:** Well, another important characteristic for prospective tree-planters out there. Our natural tendency is to grow with multiple trunks but we can easily be trained into single trunks as most of us are who are street and park trees. We are nothing if not flexible.

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

**CM:** Oh, where do I start? We are often maligned for not being a native and often used as a "replacement tree" but, hey, once established we are **very** heat and drought tolerant and do **not** cause sidewalk damage. An added bonus is our year-round beauty. We have gorgeous, long-blooming flowers in the late summer, amazing leaf color in the fall and, like our street tree buddies, the London planes, we have interesting, colorful bark when our leaves and flowers are gone in the winter.

**SUFA:** Well, thank you so much for your time. Happy blooming!



Single -trunked crape myrtles at Fremont High School (*left*) and multi-trunked crape myrtles in the Library plaza (*right*).

# Trees Come First During the Drought

*The University of California Master Gardener Extension Program has the following advice for saving trees during the drought.*

With no end of the drought in sight and water restrictions in place, Santa Clara County residents must make some tough landscaping choices right now – namely which plants in our yards should receive our limited supply of water? The answer is trees. Because trees take years to grow, they aren't as easily replaced as other plants. Besides that, trees provide shade critical to cooling our homes while releasing oxygen and reducing energy use.

When choosing which landscape plants to save, “trees come first,” said [Janet Hartin](#), UC Cooperative Extension area environmental horticulture advisor for San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Riverside counties. “Mature trees are instrumental in cooling urban heat islands and we can't afford to lose them and start all over,” Hartin said. “Shade from mature trees can reduce surface temperatures by as much as 65 degrees in asphalt-covered parking lots. Shade from a single tree can reduce these surface temperatures from 165 to less than 100 degrees when air temperatures reach 110 degrees. Even with air temperatures in the 90s, surface temperatures can reach 140 degrees.”

Hartin recommends watering trees away from the trunk, halfway between the trunk and the dripline – where the foliage ends and rain drips off the leaves – because “roots grow outward quite a distance as well as downward. Leave the hose on so the water is just trickling out,” she said. “You want water to seep into the soil and encourage the roots to grow deeper. The slow water flow will seep down a foot or so and the roots will follow, which will help anchor the tree. Move the hose around every half hour to hour in quadrants around the tree for more even watering.” Don't have time to move the hose? Hartin suggests getting a soaker hose and wrapping it in concentric circles 2 to 3 feet apart.

**University of California Cooperative Extension  
Drought and Landscape Tree Care Resources**  
Keeping Plants Alive Under Drought and Water Restrictions  
<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8553.pdf>

Prioritizing Trees Under Drought and Water Restrictions  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTKLLJgdLVk>

Tips to Keep Your Landscape Trees Alive During Drought  
<https://ucanr.edu/b/~IjC>

Landscape Tree Irrigation to Maximize Tree Health, Benefits, and Beauty  
<https://ucanr.edu/b/~YjA>

Landscape Tree Irrigation 101  
<https://ucanr.edu/b/~UjA>

Top 10 Ways to Conserve Water in Your Landscape and Garden  
<https://ucanr.edu/b/~tTD>



## Sunnyvale Shares Your Concern for the Redwoods



***Redwood trees, like the Civic Center grove pictured above, have been suffering because of the prolonged drought and subsequent water conservation efforts. Several residents have expressed their concern to the City. A response to one resident's query by Leonard Dunn, Urban Landscape Manager, is given below.***

Your concern regarding redwood trees in Sunnyvale parks has been referred to me for a response. The California coast redwood trees, our state tree, while being California natives, are not drought tolerant.

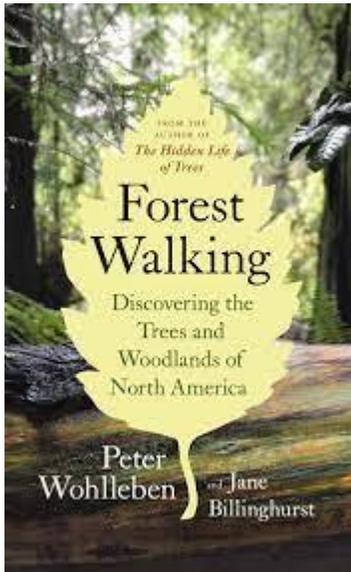
Outside the cool, fog-shrouded California coastal mountains, coast redwoods, *Sequoia sempervirens*, are quite demanding of water. Our recent and ongoing drought has allowed for their decline. During our last drought period where we were mandated to reduce landscape irrigation to conserve water, we reduced watering and, in many cases, eliminated non-functional grass areas, thereby eliminating routine turf grass irrigations. This saved water but it has led to the depletion of deep soil water that redwood trees rely upon. Ongoing, inconsistent winter rains have added to the problem. Our current water conservation mandate does not help.

There is hope. Even though many of these redwood tree look dead or dying, they are alive. We are watering these trees now, but not to the extent that we did when there was turf grass adjacent to them. They are beginning to recover. If you look closely at the trees at Serra Park there is new green growth coming from the branch tips. This new growth is in response to the renewed watering. We will be watching these trees closely to see how they do.

In the long term, many of the redwood trees in Sunnyvale, on both public and private property, will die out with the changes in our climate. There are alternative tree species that are more adapted to our Mediterranean climate and over time many redwoods will be replaced with such species.

We will continue to work on preserving the redwood trees at Serra and Washington Parks, and others. Big, mature trees are very valuable not only aesthetically but also because of their environmental value. These trees sequester large amounts of carbon dioxide and give off large amounts of oxygen as well as provide a serene, calming environment with which to enjoy our parks.

## Good Reads



Have you ever walked in the forest during the day or at night? Did you know you can use your five senses to explore your surroundings? Maybe you like detective work. By walking in the woods you can become a forest detective and understand the signs that nature provides us. Ready to explore? If so we recommend the book : Forest Walking: Discovering the Trees and Woodlands of North America by Peter Wohlleben.

Check out the synopsis with the link below and then check out the book from the Sunnyvale Library.

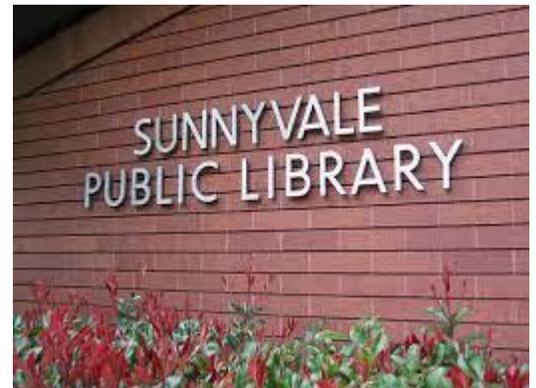
<https://sunnyvale.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S173C1924300>

Can't get to a nearby forest? You can always start by visiting the beautiful parks that we have in Sunnyvale. [Tree Walk Maps – Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates \(sunnyvaletrees.org\)](http://sunnyvaletrees.org)

## Presentation on the Urban Forest and Tree Walk

**Saturday, October 8th; 2pm in the Program Room at the Library.**

- Come and learn: What is the urban forest?
- What can I do to help and expand the urban forest in Sunnyvale?
- What native and drought-tolerant trees are best to plant?.



The presentation will be followed by an optional tree walk at the Library/Civic Center . (see below)

## More Tree Walks...

**Serra Park:** Saturday, September 24th; 11:00am - 12pm; 1730 The Dalles; meet at the flagpole; **Note: this will be a special tree walk designed for families with children.**

**Library/Civic Center:** Sunnyvale Public Library; 665 W. Olive Ave. Meet at the statue; **Note: This walk will take place at approximately 3pm following a SUFA presentation in the Library program room.**

Can't join us on these days? Do your own walk by downloading tree walk maps at <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/> (Library/Civic Center and Ponderosa, Washington, Lakewood, Ortega, and Murphy Parks).