



Sunnyvale Urban  
Forest Advocates  
[sunnyvaletrees.org](http://sunnyvaletrees.org)

## “Trees of Distinction” Self-guided car or bicycle tour through Sunnyvale

How to use this guide: The ROUTE for the tour is in **RED**. The tree information is **GREEN**. When possible, the tree information is on the same side of the page as it is on the street (IE, trees on the **RIGHT** are written on the right, and vice versa). Anything written in **BLACK** is additional historical, anecdotal or otherwise interesting information. An alphabetical list of the Trees of Distinction is available at [sunnyvaletrees.org](http://sunnyvaletrees.org).

While touring, please obey all traffic and parking regulations. Please respect private property owners and remain off private property and do not disturb the homeowners.

**Starting point: Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum at the Sunnyvale Community Center, 570 E Remington Drive (<http://heritageparkmuseum.org>) .**

The museum itself is a recreation of the original Murphy house, the first frame house assembled in Sunnyvale in 1849 (but built in Maine and shipped around the Cape). The Murphy family, led by Martin Murphy Sr, was part of the first wagon train (the Murphy-Townsend-Stephens Party) to cross the Sierras in a covered wagon on the same trail the Donner Party was trapped on two years later. Martin Murphy Jr was part of the group that rescued them after their ill-fated voyage. (More info on the Donner Party: <https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/donner-party>)

There are many beautiful trees on the premises, both at the museum and at the community center. This museum chronicles the history of Sunnyvale in a fun and lighthearted way. Everyone is encouraged to visit the museum, but if it is not open, a short history of Sunnyvale is available at: <http://sunnyvale.com/story/more-history-of-sunnyvale/395891>

For a six minute video with vintage footage at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eNlvhgzgmbc>

A very comprehensive history of the Santa Clara Valley can be found at:

<https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/santaclara/history.htm>

## TOD: The Heritage Oak, Coast Live Oak

The first Tree of Distinction is one of Sunnyvale's best known and most beloved trees, the Heritage Oak. The tree is located on the far side of the pond, near Remington Drive. This Coast Live Oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, is estimated at 250 years old and can be seen in the very first aerial photos of Sunnyvale, circa 1948 (This and many other aerial photos are available at <https://www.alamy.com/>) At that time, it was part of the Pavlina Ranch, and it was the major landmark used when giving directions to the town of Sunnyvale. It is a remnant of the original Oak coverage of the valley which has mostly been replaced in the first by tidy agricultural lines and then by suburbia. Only a smattering of orchards remain in the valley, including the Heritage Orchard next to the museum.

More information about the native Ohlone Tribe can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamyen\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamyen_people)

Be sure to note the three original Hendy Iron Works lamp posts outside the entrance gates of the Sunnyvale Heritage Museum. Very few of these artifacts still exist, but at one time they were a common sight in Sunnyvale, as almost all the local lamp posts, metal grates, gates and other pieces of industrial worked metal originally came from the Hendy Iron Works. The occasional sidewalk or iron grate can still be happened upon, often in great working order. The museum also houses an original Hendy sewer cover. One of the largest and most iconic pieces of ironwork from the Hendy factory is the Third Street Bridge in San Francisco. This bridge, also called the Lefty O'Doul Bridge or China Basin Bridge, is a drawbridge connecting the China Basin and Mission Bay neighborhoods of San Francisco, carrying Third Street across the Mission Creek Channel. It has been in operation since 1933, but is currently undergoing renovations to improve its integrity and to reduce corrosion. The repairs are scheduled to be completed in 2020. For details about the repair work and an interesting little video about the history of the bridge, see: <https://sfpublicworks.org/ThirdStreetBridge>.

Find out more about the Hendy Iron Works and their role in early Sunnyvale at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua\\_Hendy\\_Iron\\_Works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Hendy_Iron_Works)

And a short video about Charles Moore, the head of the company during WWII at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eNlvhgzgmbc>

Exit Michaelangelo  
Left Remington

Notice the Large Italian Stone Pines across Remington as you make your left turn. Driving along Remington, the tall and majestic trees you see on both sides are Liquidambar. These trees are one of the most common street trees in Sunnyvale (also one of the most hated...see the supplemental tree guide for the reason why)

Right Sunnyvale-Saratoga  
Merge RIGHT onto Sunnyvale Ave

In the center divider where Sunnyvale-Saratoga splits into Mathilda and Sunnyvale, the tall trees are Canary Island Pines.

TOD: Official Sunnyvale Heritage Tree at  
545 S Sunnyvale Ave, a Monkey Patch, Araucaria araucaria.

There are other notable trees on Sunnyvale Ave. on the right after Olive are a number of Ginkgo Bilobas, another common street tree in Sunnyvale.

Around the parking lot before Washington are a number of Italian Stone Pines.

(Cross railroad tracks)  
Left Hendy  
Right Frances

This is an older part of Sunnyvale, as evidenced by the small homes and the big trees. Driving down Frances, there are many gorgeous trees all around, but four addresses stand out as having exceptional trees of distinction. They are:

116 Frances: Valley Oak, *Quercus lobata*

199 Frances, Shamel Ash, *Fraxinus uhdei* (Wenzig) Lingelsh

225 Frances, 2 Camphor trees, *Cinnamomum camphorum*

288 Frances, 2 London Plane trees,  
*Platanus x acerfolia*

## Right California

### CROSS Sunnyvale Ave to Martin Murphy Jr. Park

Martin Murphy Jr Park is the site of the Murphy family homestead in Sunnyvale, whose original house was the first wood frame house built in Santa Clara County. Built in Bangor, Maine and shipped around the Horn, it was reassembled in 1849 and became the site for nearly every significant social or political gathering in Santa Clara Valley during the Gold Rush.

For more information about the Murphy homestead, go to:

<http://www.heritageparkmuseum.org/murphy.html>

Be sure and look across California Ave from the parking into the first cul-de-sac in Sunnyvale, Oak Court. Here resides one of less than a dozen iron lamp posts created by the Joshua Hendy Iron Works remaining in the state of California. It was installed in 1937. Others include the three at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum at the beginning of this tour, some in Chinatown of San Francisco, on Franklin Street in Santa Clara and at History San Jose Village.

TOD: The enormous Valley Oak, *Quercus lobata*, in the parking lot, is the first of the many distinctive trees at the park.

TOD: The two date palm trees in the middle of the park, as well as the valley oak in the parking lot, and the five eucalyptus trees, are all that remain from the site of the original Murphy family homestead, and all are well over 100 years old.

TOD: The large Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) in the middle of the park is an interesting and unique tree.

Walk around and enjoy all the nice trees (you can even do some lawn bowling). The Murphy Park Tree Walk map is available at <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/>

**CARS: Go back the way you came on California**  
**BICYCLES: turn left on Sunnyvale, right on Washington and left on Taafe**

This street has some of the worst prunings that I have ever seen. Notice the otherwise beautiful and healthy Afrocarpi that line the street, with their cruelly chopped tops. This is an example of how tree maintenance has changed through the years in Sunnyvale. The older technique involved cropping the trees to avoid the wires, which resulted in misshapen and disfigured trees. Current Arborists attempt to work around limitations without unnecessary butchery and arborcide.

**OPTIONAL DETOUR to Libby's can: Continue ACROSS Mathilda on California.**  
Left on Sobrante, into the Sobrante Center. View the Libby's can and experience Sunnyvale's history as the "Garden of the World" at:  
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/libby-s-water-tower>

**Return to California going the direction you came and make a right on Mathilda**  
Notice the replica Hendy Works light posts on the overpass, paying double homage to the history of Sunnyvale as we pass over the train tracks that first brought prosperity to this area.

**Left on Washington**  
**Right on Taafe**

**TOD: Notice the group of assorted trees on Taafe to your left. They mark the site of the original Sunnyvale civic center (see "Variety tree Grove" on tree guide for details).**

**Right on McKinley**  
**Left on Mathilda**  
**Right on Olive**

**(Optional: Park at the library to enjoy the Civic Center Tree Walk - map available at**  
<http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/>)

The entire civic center area is FULL of trees, more than 700, consisting of over 40 different species. The nearby Charles Street Gardens (433 Charles Street) offers a spot where residents can get a garden plot or attend a gardening class given by the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County.

(More information available at: <http://charlesstreetgardens.org/csg>)

This area is due to begin construction on a new city hall starting 12/2019, so the future tree population will change somewhat.

The **\*\*Civic Center Tree Walk\*\*** (available on <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/>) reflects the civic center layout PRE-construction.

Right on Pastoria

TOD: 467 S Pastoria, Coast Live Oak

Left on Washington

\*\*Washington Park Tree Walk\*\* (also on <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/>)

The theme of Washington Park is Australia and the South Pacific, so we see many species of plants and trees native to Down Under. It was Sunnyvale's first park and has an interesting history as an army base during WWII, which is the significance of the memorial gun in front.

More information: <http://www.militarymuseum.org/SunnyvaleOrdnanceDepot.html>

Left Sunset

Notice the group of redwoods at the Washington/Sunset side of the park. All juvenile trees- approximately 70 years old

Left on W. McKinley

Right Pastoria

TOD: Redwood trees at Pastoria/Olive were saved from destruction in 2017

Cross El Camino

For "historical" information about El Camino Real, the road said to connect California's 21 Spanish missions, see: <http://californiamissionguide.com/california-mission-history/el-camino-real/>

The "truth" about El Camino Real: <https://www.kqed.org/news/11621122/el-camino-not-so-real-the-true-story-of-the-ancient-road>

Alternate info about the El Camino bells:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/paffairs/faq/faq62.htm>

Right Danforth

TOD: Southern Magnolia (in field at Cumberland School) - This tree was preserved when the field was put in at the school. A nice example of nature coexisting with suburbia and of responsible architecture that works around the existing landscape.

Turn around and Cross Hollenbeck

Visit Las Palmas Park with its Polynesian theme and replica Easter Island Heads. There are over 20 species of palm trees, tiki heads and a lagoon with blue water.

Right turn on Hyde Park  
Right on Rubis Drive  
Admire the tall and shady liquidambar on Rubis  
Left turn on Harvard  
Turn LEFT on Hollenbeck

TOD: 880 and 882 Hollenbeck Ave, two gigantic Sycamores that originally marked the driveway of the Bocks Ranch, planted in 1927.

These trees were originally planted in 1927 to mark the entrance to the Bocks' family farm and fruit orchard, which was at one time the largest cherry orchard in the world. The family patriarch, C.O. Bocks, was even referred to as "The Cherry King." The trees had to be special ordered at a nursery in rural San Jose, as such exotic trees were impossible to obtain in Sunnyvale at the time. Today, they serve as a reminder of how the early residents of Sunnyvale used unique trees and other natural landmarks as directional guides in this large and primarily flat valley, as in "Drive north until you see the large sycamore trees on either side of my driveway".

### Right Remington

TODs: The first part along Remington is occupied by many carob trees, *Ceratonia siliqua*. These can be identified by their ropey trunks, round leaves and, seasonally, large brown seed pods. Notice the many cork oaks right before Mary. These are easily identified by their distinctive pale, deeply furrowed, yet springy bark

Left Mary  
Right Rockefeller

There are beautiful Chinese Elms on BOTH sides of the street.

Left Lime  
Right Ticonderoga

Notice the beautiful, stately liquidambar that line Ticonderoga.

### Right Cranberry

1234 Cranberry, The Wright House - The oldest house in Sunnyvale hewn from native timber, first constructed in 1862-70. Home of the oldest holly oak (*Quercus ilex*) in California. The palm tree behind the house was planted in 1895 and eucalyptus, date palms and redwoods were planted around 1910. More information available at: <http://www.cherryhillna.org/files/wrightfarm> or <https://www.sunnyvalegarden.com/beyond/sunnyvale-landmark-wright-ranch/>

Interestingly, the current Wright Avenue that we know was the original driveway through the dusty orchards.

TOD: The street trees along Cranberry are impressive Coast Live Oaks. At 1173 Cranberry is an interesting droopy cypress and a large redwood graces 1193 Cranberry.

Continue forward and turn left on Rockefeller

Left Bernardo

Left Fremont

Right Wright

Pause before the church parking lot (look for white fencing) right before The Dalles (1025 The Dalles)

TOD: St Luke's Church, Valley Oak with treehouse.

This tree was saved after the congregation and residents of Sunnyvale refused to let it be cut down for construction. The compromise?

The new building became a treehouse that was specifically constructed so as to not hurt the tree.

TOD: Beautiful Ashes in back alley of the church and the gorgeous Coast Live Oaks out front.

Continue down Wright

Left Helena

Right Kennewick

Left Nisqually

TOD: Black Birches on BOTH sides of the street

Right Lewiston

Right The Dalles

TOD: Many significant Coast Live Oaks are visible in Serra Park on the right

Right Hollenbeck

Left Alberta

TOD: Notice the Jacaranda on the corner of Richelieu and Alberta (1540 Richelieu) and the huge Shamel Ash on the right on Alberta just after Richelieu



Cross Sunnyvale-Saratoga (Alberta's name changes to Harwick when crossing Sunnyvale-Saratoga/De Anza)

Right Bittern

TOD: Notice the many struggling Southern Magnolias that line Bittern on both sides

Left Inverness

TOD: You can park and go into Ortega Park which is filled with different tree species. The Ortega Park Tree Walk map is available at <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/tree-walk-maps/> and begins by the park headquarters.

Left Finch

TOD: Norfolk Island Pine in front yard at 1595 Finch

Right Durshire

TOD: Notice the many large Carob trees that line Durshire

Left Grackle

Right Duncardine

TOD: Large redwood tree planted 70 years ago in the backyard at 832 Duncardine (neat front door too)

Left Kingfisher

TOD: 1480 Kingfisher, street tree: Catalina Ironwood

TOD: Magnificent Melaleuca on Devonshire (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*)

First left off Kingfisher  
Left Dartshire

TOD: Dawn Redwoods at 814 Dartshire

Right Flicker

By now, the majority of the tree species lining the trees have already been mentioned.  
See how many you can identify!

Left Ashbourne  
Right Rembrandt  
Left Fremont  
Right Picasso  
Left Crescent  
Right Michaelangelo

TOD: The Heritage Orchard on left

Back at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum!

Information and photos of the Sunnyvale Heritage Orchard:

<https://heritageparkmuseum.org/sample-page/orchard-heritage-park>

Interesting links: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2011/09/22/driving-through-history-sunnyvales-roots-are-traced-through-its-street-signs/>

Interesting stories about California: <https://www.missionscalifornia.com/california-stories>