

SUFA E-News Winter 2023



Welcome to the Winter 2023 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.

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

The Lorax



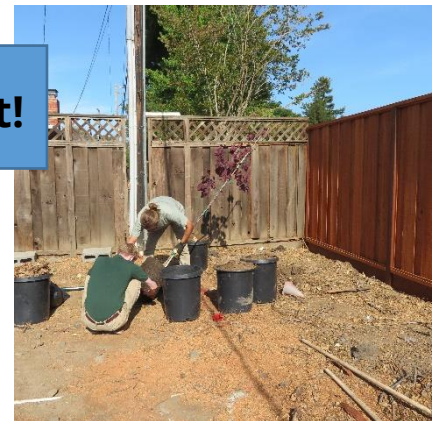
Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates is in need of a Lorax - actually, a volunteer Advocacy Coordinator. This position would involve speaking during the public commentary periods at City Council and Planning Commission meetings on behalf

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.

Branch Out Sunnyvale – Don't Miss Out!

The Branch Out Sunnyvale program still has a few trees available, so get yours today. For the low fee of \$50, the homeowner will receive help with tree selection, delivery of the tree, planting of the tree, and education on how to care for the tree.



Spring plantings are being scheduled and it is a perfect time to plant so that your tree is established by summer.

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

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

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.



Tree on the Street Interview: The Carob

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

Carob: You bet! I am a carob tree or, in scientific terminology, *Keratonia siliqua*; *Keratonia* comes from the Greek keration meaning carob pod and *siliqua* meaning curved pod. We're actually a member of the pea family. Colloquially, we're called the St. John's bread or the locust bean – some folks think our pods look like locusts but I'm not convinced.

SUFA: And are you a native?

Carob: No, carobs have been cultivated in the Middle East for over 4,000 years and we've branched out so to speak. The Spanish brought us to Mexico and South America and the British introduced us to South Africa, India, and Australia. We thrive in Mediterranean climates so I love it here in Sunnyvale.

SUFA: And why are carobs planted the world over?

Carob: Mostly for our fruit (pods) but also for our wood. Our wood is very hard and coarse-grained and was often used to make excellent tool handles. These days, it's mostly used in woodworking – furniture, cutting boards, and jewelry. Also, it burns very long and is excellent for smoking meats.

SUFA: I read that, like the Ginkgo, carobs are dioecious and a tree either has all male flowers or all female flowers.

Carob: Indeed, but only we ladies produce the pods which are so important to humans.

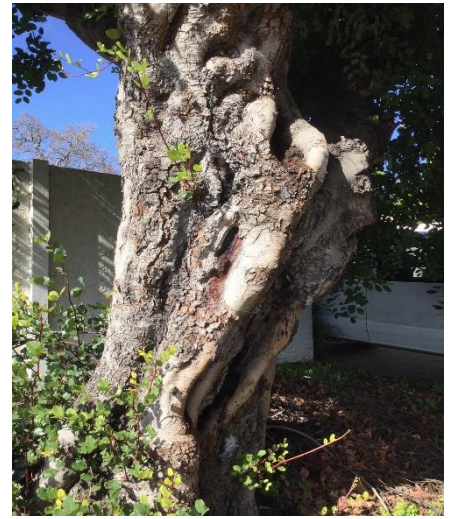
SUFA: Please tell me about your pods.

Carob: Okay. How much time do we have? Well, first the flesh of our pods is extremely sweet and can be eaten right from the pod, although some folks claim you have to get past a stinky cheese kind of smell first. Then, if you dry, roast, and grind the flesh you get carob powder – often used a substitute for chocolate. It has lots of calcium, no caffeine, and virtually no fat. And wait, there's more...the seeds contain a sugar which is used to make locust bean gum or guar gum which is used as a food thickener. And...speaking of carob seeds, I have a jewel of a story to share about them.

(Continued on next page...)

SUFA: I'm all ears!

Carob: Okay! So, carob seeds are very, very uniform in both size and weight and, back in the day, they were used to indicate the purity of gold. A solid gold Roman coin known as a solidus weighed as much as 24 carob seeds – hence the term 24-karat gold being used to define something that is pure gold. And, since the weight of carob seeds is almost uniformly .2 grams, this weight was established as a measurement for the weight of diamonds – a 2 carat diamond then weighs .4 grams. Who knew?!



Carob bark and trunk

SUFA: Any last thoughts on carob seeds?

Carob: Well, yes. Your astute SUFA readers may think you didn't use spell check because in writing you need to use karat to refer to a unit of pure gold and carat for the unit of weight of a diamond but they both come from the Greek word keration meaning, if you remember, carob pod. That's a lot of information about carob pods. I was thinking of putting it all together and doing a podcast. What do you think? Everyone seems to have a podcast these days.

SUFA: Yes, well...lastly, we always ask our street tree interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What would you say?

Carob: Well, being of Mediterranean origin we are very drought tolerant. At maturity we provide loads of shade and are also pest resistant and frankly, we're lovely to look at. We have glossy, deep-green leaves, gorgeous bark, and amazing trunks. We are known, however, to not be super friendly to sidewalks or power lines.

SUFA: Thanks! Your honesty, if not your humility, is very refreshing.

Carob: So is my shade. And you're welcome!



Carob leaves, pods, seeds, and powder

We are in the process of scheduling monthly tree walks for this spring and summer.

Upcoming Tree Walks

We are excited to add a walk at De Anza Park this year, and will again offer a child-focused activity walk at Serra Park. We also hope to be able to return to a complete tree walk of the Civic Center/Library now that construction of City Hall is nearing completion. Check the website sunnyvaletrees.org for updates on tree walks.



If you just can't wait to get out and enjoy the blooming trees 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, Lakewood, and Ortega Parks. 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.

Visit Us at Earth Day at the Sunnyvale Library

The Department of Environmental Services is sponsoring a variety of organizations at its Earth Day event on the library plaza. SUFA will have an information table and also host a tree walk of the Library/Civic Center. Stop by and say hello and learn how you can help our urban forest. Better yet, join other volunteers and help staff the SUFA table - no experience necessary!



Earth Day Event at the Library

April 15, 12-3pm

If you'd like to volunteer, please email us: info@sunnyvaletrees.org.



It's Time to Plant!

Spring is a great time to plant a tree. Trees planted in spring will be able to establish their roots by summer. Even with all of the recent rain, the City is aware of residents' concerns about additional water use, but is confident 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 required only 10-15 gallons of water per week.

How do I pick the right tree for the right place? Here are some websites to help you with that crucial decision as well as sites that will show how best to plant and care for whatever trees you choose.

1. [canopy.org/tree-info/planting-trees/](https://www.canopy.org/tree-info/planting-trees/)
2. [pge.com/righttreerightplace](https://www.pge.com/righttreerightplace)
3. [treesaregood.org/treeowner](https://www.treesaregood.org/treeowner)
4. selectree.calpoly.edu

Looking for a street tree?: The City of Sunnyvale will plant a tree on the public right-of-way of your home or building for no cost. Call the Sunnyvale Parks Division at 408-730-7501 or visit <https://www.sunnyvale.ca.gov/homes-streets-and-property/streets-and-trees/trees>.

Still undecided about the need to plant a tree? Check out these websites that share a multitude of reasons why trees benefit not only our environment but our health and our economy:

- www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/benefitsoftrees
www.vibrantcitieslab.com

Visit us at: www.sunnyvaletrees.org

Copyright © 2023 Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates, All rights reserved