

SUFA E-News Winter 2024



Welcome to the Winter 2024 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.



Join SUFA in
Supporting the Cherry
Chase Natural Area

Add your support to Study Issue DPW 24-08 titled "Explore the Feasibility of Converting the PG&E Lots Facing Ramona Avenue, Lois Avenue, and/or Dona Avenue into an Open Green Space Linear Park for the Community." by contacting the City Council at council@sunnyvale.ca.gov.

The Cherry Chase neighborhood contains several small plots of land that are owned by PG&E and the city, but which are not actively used. These plots are fenced off and are minimally maintained. A proposal has been made to convert these lots into a nature area and neighborhood open space. Per the proposal, the city will work with PG&E to gain access to the land which will then be planted with native, low-water trees and plants.

Recognizing the value that trees add to the environment, the proposal calls for the planting of a Miyawaki pocket forest, which will serve as a test case to learn how to successfully implement this type of tree planting in Sunnyvale. A Miyawaki pocket forest is a dense planting of native trees, shrubs, and groundcover that will grow rapidly and will jump-start the effort to replant these unused lots. Tree plantings will help reduce the urban heat island effect and help manage stormwater runoff.

SUFA fully endorses this project as it will increase the usable open space within the city and provide a location for increased tree canopy.

Please show your support for this study issue by contacting the City Council before February 14 at council@sunnyvale.ca.gov.

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The City Council will review this proposal at the study issues workshop on February 15. Please send in your comments before February 14 and reference the study issue. The study issue is DPW 24-08 "Explore the Feasibility of Converting the PG&E Lots Facing Ramona Avenue, Lois Avenue, and/or Dona Avenue into an Open Green Space Linear Park for the Community."

The organizers have done extensive research for this proposal. A summary can be found on the project flyer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yFVFPbel-Qyv9GlwSZLKS5HqT15POO8/view>



A Miyawaki pocket forest showing the dense, sustainable growth possible after only 5 years. Miyawaki forests create community, provide habitat for native species, and fight climate change.



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 Library Cork Oak

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

Cork Oak: Sure. *Quercus suber* is the Latin name. *Quercus* is the genus for all 400 - 600 or so species of oak tree and *suber* means...are you ready? -"Cork!"

SUFA: So, you are the tree that provides us with cork.

Cork Oak: Indeed. My relatives in Spain and Portugal provide most of the cork in the world which is used for heat and sound insulation, flooring, shoe soles, and for you sports fans - badminton shuttlecocks, cricket balls, and fishing rods. Over 70% though is made into corks for bottles. Fun fact: Portugal alone produces 40 million corks per day!

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Hand harvesting of cork bark (above, left), the production of cork stoppers (above, right) and the thick, insulating bark of the cork oak.

SUFA: So, my understanding is that the cork is actually your outer bark and is actually dead cells. Please tell our readers how the harvesting process works.

Cork Oak: Ah! Happy to. Since the cork is dead tissue, it can be removed without harming us. We cork trees simply grow a new layer. Somewhat like shearing a sheep except that, unlike wool, it takes 9 – 12 years for the cork to regrow to where it can be harvested again. (Use this link to watch a fascinating 5 minute video on the harvesting of cork bark and the production of cork stoppers) <https://www.businessinsider.com/wine-cork-stoppers-portugal-oak-tree-2021-2>

SUFA: Wow! Is that painful? Does it tickle?

Cork Oak: Not at all. It's all very carefully done with an ax by hand so as not to damage the live part of the tree that will regrow the cork. Oh, and I should mention that our thick, insulating bark makes us very well adapted to survive forest fires – much like my buddies across the Library plaza – the redwoods.

SUFA: You are definitely a sustainable resource. Tell our readers more about your environmental importance.

Cork Oak: Yes, the cork oak groves in Spain and Portugal are protected ecosystems. Not only do we absorb a lot of carbon from the atmosphere but we're home to some amazing species threatened with extinction - the Barbary ape, the Iberian lynx, and the Spanish imperial eagle. Here in Sunnyvale, I'm only home to gray squirrels and lots of local birds and bugs. But, it's all good.

SUFA: Cork oaks can live between 200 – 400 years. Our city arborist did some research and noted that in 1948 aerial photos show this whole area as being orchard and he is guessing that you may have been planted after 1948 but prior to the opening of the Library in 1960. Can you confirm that?

Cork Oak: Oh, goodness, no! Time is a blur to me. All I can say is that children I used to see coming to the Library I now see walking past bringing their grandchildren to toddler story time.

SUFA: How great is that! Lastly, we always ask our tree interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What would you say?

Cork Oak: Three words: Shade, habitat, and drought tolerance. Okay, that's four words....

Tree Events for All Ages this Spring at the Sunnyvale Public Library!

Are you in need of some fun, educational, and community-building activities this winter? SUFA has you covered! As part of the Silicon Valley Reads 2024, "A Greener Tomorrow Starts Today", we have partnered with the Sunnyvale Library to bring you these interesting and informative programs.



Saturday, March 2, 11am - 11:30am: Toddler Storytime (ages 1 - 3)

Listen to the librarian read books about trees. SUFA will also show samples of tree parts and will conduct an exciting experiment for everyone.

Saturday, March 2, 1:30pm - 2:30pm: Child Friendly Tree Walk at the Library Plaza (K-5th grade)

Meet at the Library Program Room for a short presentation about Sunnyvale's urban forest. It will be followed by a tree walk at the Library plaza. We'll learn about three trees on the plaza and have activities related to each.

Two more SUFA events will be sprouting up later in the spring in partnership with the Sunnyvale Library, so please mark your calendars!

Saturday, April 20, 11:00am - 3:00pm: Earth Day Celebration (on Olive Ave. between City Hall and the Library)

Visit SUFA's table and enjoy interactive activities for kids. Learn about our urban forest and what you can do to help make it grow. And, join us on a 30-minute tree walk featuring the trees at the new Civic Center park.

Saturday, May 11, 2:00pm - 3:30pm: SUFA Talk/Tree Walk

Learn about Sunnyvale's urban forest and then take a tree walk at the new Civic Center park.

Join SUFA at one or all of these events to learn about our beautiful urban forest and how we can protect and expand it. We look forward to meeting you and sharing our love of trees!

And... you can help us spread the word and share the importance of trees by handing out flyers of our tree walk events, helping to staff our Earth Day table, and/or assisting with activities at our kid-friendly tree walk.

Volunteers are welcome for the Toddler Story Time, the Kid-Friendly Tree Walk, and Earth Day activities. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please contact us at info@sunnyvaletrees.org.

The Sunnyvale Urban Forest Management Plan Needs Your Support!

The Sunnyvale Urban Forest Management Plan (SUFMP) was approved in 2014, with the goal of planting 29,000 new trees in the city.

The plan calls for 14,000 new trees in commercial areas and 15,000 new trees in residential areas. Of those, 5,000 are to be planted as street trees. The city has identified 5,000 open spots for street trees, but these spaces are still awaiting any plantings.

After 10 years, very little progress has been made. The city has cited budget and staffing constraints, but those issues will not be resolved until the city prioritizes and funds this program.

It is important that the residents express their desire for these trees and put pressure on the city to provide the funding necessary to plant them.

To fully implement the SUFMP, the city should also develop requirements to protect existing trees and plant new trees when properties are redeveloped or renovated.

The full text of the SUFMP can be found on the SUFA website at <https://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/urban-forest-management-plan/>

Visit us at: www.sunnyvaletrees.org

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