

# SUFA E-News Winter 2025



Welcome to the Winter 2025 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.

## Planting Roots: How One Person Sparked a Neighborhood Tree Movement

The Heritage District Tree Planting Program has been making waves thanks to the dedicated efforts of a committed team led by Ken Rheaume. While walking his dog every day, Ken noticed that, while some streets in his neighborhood were shady and beautiful, others lacked street trees. He wanted to see city trees planted

in all the empty spaces including those currently covered with concrete. He enlisted the aid of neighbors Steve Burke, Penny Hutchinson, Sunil Khatana, Neeti Khatana, Josh Martin, and Kim Martin. With guidance from SUFA and our former Sunnyvale City Arborist, Leonard Dunn, this inspiring initiative to plant more street trees has brought the community together and will enhance the neighborhood for years to come. Here are Ken's thoughts on how the Heritage District neighbors achieved their goals:



**Recruit Volunteers with Diverse Skills:** Ken emphasized the importance of recruiting volunteers with specific skill and interests, such as volunteers to design flyers and other folks to knock on doors.

**Set Realistic Goals:** Setting achievable targets has been key to maintaining momentum and motivation with this project.

**Emphasize Benefits:** Highlighting the personal advantages of street trees, including increased safety, property values, and traffic calming, alongside environmental and climate change benefits, has resonated with residents.

**Application Process:** The application for a street tree was conveniently printed on the back of the informational flyers distributed to residents.

**Phased Approach:** The group decided to delay the second round of flyer distribution until after the first several trees were planted to manage the process effectively.

**Community Input:** Neighbor feedback focused on the types of trees they preferred, rather than expressing unwillingness to water them.

**Watering Volunteers:** Heritage neighbors have agreed to step up to water newly-planted trees, ensuring their growth and survival.

**If you would like to spearhead a similar program in your neighborhood, please contact SUFA at [info@sunnyvaletrees.org](mailto:info@sunnyvaletrees.org) and we will help get you started.**

Looking for a fun and engaging way to explore the natural beauty of Sunnyvale? How about a no-cost, private tree walk with your friends or organization?

The Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates (SUFA) are thrilled to offer exclusive tree walks for groups at many of our beautiful parks. Whether you are a nature enthusiast, a curious soul, or simply looking for a unique adventure, our tree walks are perfect for you!



## Discover the Wonder of Sunnyvale's Trees with a Private Group Tree Walk!

### •Why Join a Tree Walk?

- Connect with Nature: Experience the serene beauty of our parks and learn fascinating facts about the diverse tree species in Sunnyvale.
- Interactive Learning: Our knowledgeable guides will lead you on an educational journey that's both fun and informative.
- Bond with Your Group: Spend quality time with friends, family, or fellow organization members in a refreshing outdoor setting.

**How to Get Started:** Gather your group of up to twenty people (minimum of five participants) and reach out to us at [info@sunnyvaletrees.org](mailto:info@sunnyvaletrees.org) to schedule your tree walk. Tree walks are available from May through September.



### Tree Walk Parks



Ponderosa, Ortega, Serra, De Anza, Murphy, Lakewood, Washington, and the Sunnyvale Civic Center are all available for tree walks. Don't miss out on this opportunity to explore and appreciate the natural treasures of Sunnyvale. Contact us today to set up your walk.

### Fall Special Offer: Child-Friendly Tree Walk at Serra Park!

Got little adventurers aged 5-10? We have a special child-friendly tree walk designed just for them at Serra Park. It's a fantastic way for kids to connect with nature and learn in an exciting, hands-on environment.







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. Goodness! I've never interviewed more than one tree at a time. I think one of you agreed to be the spoketree?

**Cedar:** Yes. We're all shy but I drew the short twig and will do the talking. I'm Deo, behind me is Dara and to my left is Cedrick.

## Tree on the Street Interview: The Deodar Cedar

**SUFA:** Well, a pleasure to meet all of you. Could I get your common and scientific names as well?

**Cedar:** Sure. We are commonly known as deodar cedars and our Latin name is *Cedrus deodara*. *Cedrus* meaning "cedar" from the Greek word Kedros. *Deodara* comes from Sanskrit meaning "wood of the gods".

**SUFA:** I'm guessing you're not California natives.

**Cedar:** Correct. We are native to mountainous regions of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, and India. We grow in areas between 5,000 – 10,000 feet in elevation. We're the national tree of Pakistan and the state tree of Himachal Pradesh, India.

**SUFA:** Wow! You grow at ten thousand feet and yet do well here almost at sea level.

**Cedar:** Indeed. We are well-adapted to live where there are moist winters but hot, dry summers. Unlike you humans, thin air in the mountains doesn't bother us. And, you provide more than enough CO<sub>2</sub> for us to take in easily in here in Silicon Valley. Many thanks!

**SUFA:** You can grow quite tall, right?

**Cedar:** Oh, yes! Under favorable conditions we can grow up to 3 feet per year and get as tall as 80 feet. We have a cousin in Sacramento Capital Park that is 100 feet tall and is officially registered as a California Big Tree. All three of us aspire to that title!

**SUFA:** I know you're shy but tell us about the attributes of deodor cedars.

**Cedar:** Oh! Where to begin? Well, we have a lovely pyramidal shape, year-round blue-green foliage, and graceful, drooping branches so we make a beautiful landscape tree. Our wood is durable and very resistant to rot, and has been historically used to build temples, and is exclusively used to build the famous houseboats of Srinagar, Kashmir.

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**SUFA:** Anything else?

**Cedar:** Oh, yes. Our wood contains a wonderfully aromatic oil that is used to make incense. It's also used in aromatherapy, soaps, perfumes, and household cleaning products. Ironically, while you humans love the smell, bugs hate it and our oil is often used in insect repellents.

**SUFA:** Well, thank you! You've been very informative. Lastly, we always ask our interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What would you say?

**Cedar:** You mean besides being beautiful? Well, mostly because we are so well adapted to living in dry climates and don't need water other than winter rains. We're not the best street tree as we can get so big, but we make great additions to parks, schools, and commercial landscaping. The three of us are here in Ponderosa Park but look for us all over Sunnyvale. Oh, and thanks for the interview. Maybe I'm not as shy as I thought...

The graceful, drooping branches of needles and the large cones of the deodar cedar.



Different color beads represented the many stages of the water cycle: Sun (yellow); clouds (gray); rain (light blue); snow (white); oceans (dark aqua); lakes (light aqua); puddles (sparkling brown); soil (brown); plants and trees (green).



## Celebrating Trees and Nature: SUFA's VIP2U Day at Resurrection School

On January 29th, the Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates (SUFA) were delighted to be invited to Resurrection School's Very Important Person To You Day (VIP2U). As one of the featured stations, SUFA provided engaging activities for all the students and their VIPs.

SUFA's presentation began with a discussion on the importance and benefits of trees and our organization's efforts to protect and expand the urban forest in Sunnyvale. Following this, the participants were treated to a presentation about fruit-bearing trees, highlighting the beauty and advantages of having them in our backyards to provide fruit year-round.

Students and adults both appreciated the display of various fruits and vegetables harvested from the backyard garden of one of our volunteers. The importance of composting was also emphasized. A display of live worms illustrated their crucial role in the composting process. The final segment of the presentation was the water cycle bracelet activity. Participants used pipe cleaners and colorful beads to represent the stages of the water cycle—condensation, precipitation, and collection. The last bead, a green one, symbolized trees and plants and demonstrated how they contribute to the process of transpiration, returning water to the atmosphere through their leaves.

Over 100 participants proudly wore their water cycle bracelets as they left the room, reminded of the importance of trees and the value of growing our own food. The presentation provided new insights and reinforced the need to care for our beautiful city and planet.

# Spring is the 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 requires only 10-15 gallons of water per week for the first 2 - 3 years of its growth.

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



**The City of Sunnyvale Earth Day Festival**  
Saturday, April 5; 11am - 2pm; on Olive Ave. by the  
Library.

Join us for a tree walk around the City Hall grounds or stop by our table to learn how you can help the urban forest. Or volunteer to help staff our table. No experience necessary! To help, email us at [info@sunnyvaletrees.org](mailto:info@sunnyvaletrees.org).



Mark your calendars for an exclusive showing of the documentary "**Giants Rising: The Secrets and Superpowers of the Redwoods**" on Saturday, June 7, 3pm in the Program Room of the Sunnyvale Public Library. Details on how you can register TBA. In the meantime, save the date!

Visit us at: [www.sunnyvaletrees.org](http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org)

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