

EUGENE LEGACY TREES



View of the Jefferson Street horsechestnuts in late summer of 2005.



Legacy Tree Number 7 *Jefferson Street* *Horsechestnuts*

Aesculus hippocastanum

Location: Jefferson St. between 7th and 10th Avenues

Height: on average 65 feet, highest: 95 feet

Canopy spread:

Diameter: on average 3 feet, largest: 54 inches

Age: estimated to be 80-90 years old

The horsechestnuts that stand on the west side of Jefferson Street between 7th and 10th Avenues are widely recognized for their showy white blossoms in early spring and their spiny, bulky fruits in the fall. This row of 23 trees is a remarkable welcome to visitors and residents driving into town from Highway 126, and marks Jefferson Street as south Eugene's venerable north-south connector.

Aerial photographs from the 1930's and accounts from long-time residents indicate that the trees were planted sometime in the World War I era. The ETF Legacy Tree Committee was unable to locate specific information about this planting, which has the appearance of an intentional effort to create a significant and distinctive stand of street trees.

Horsechestnuts are widely planted in Europe but less so in the United States. They are native to southeastern Europe, and though not edible and not related to the true chestnuts (*Castanea*), their nuts are gorgeous and smooth to the touch. The nuts are also viable here in Oregon, and are listed as moderately invasive by the Emerald Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon. Horsechestnut seedlings are invading sections of Hendricks Park. The nuts are not widely dispersed by wildlife, so this stand of trees is likely not contributing to native habitat loss.

It is increasingly rare to find large single-species street tree plantings, as pests and disease are more easily transmitted to neighboring trees of the same type and thusly more varied plantings are undertaken today. This grouping, however, has obviously fared well, and could continue to thrive for many years.



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To view all the Legacy Trees, go to www.eugenetreefoundation.org