

ETF News

www.eugenetreefoundation.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

ETF Gets Help from State of Oregon

by Phil Carroll

ETF has entered into a pioneering arrangement with the Oregon State Department of Urban and Community Forestry (UCF). Of the several hundreds of Oregon groups and municipalities to which UCF has offered technical and financial assistance to in the past, only two, the City of Redmond and ETF, were selected for this new assistance program. Unlike past UCF programs, the new partnership now aims to improve general organizational effectiveness rather than targeting specific urban forestry projects. More than just supporting a tree planting or an educational project, for example, UCF hopes to increase the capacity for such projects through improving the organizations themselves.

Our work with Kristin Ramsted, Community

Assistance Forester, and Paul Ries, UCF program manager, began in the spring, and on Saturday, July 30 we held an all-day facilitated retreat to reaffirm our mission and layout a new strategic plan. Over the next several months, UCF will help us finalize the details of the plan as well refine our approach to ongoing challenges, such as Board of Directors recruitment and volunteer management, all at no cost to ETF.

We are very pleased to have been chosen for this new project, and very grateful to receive such high quality advice and assistance. The Board is committed to implementing the elements of the plan to the best of our ability, and we hope you will notice the difference in the months and years to come.

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Trees for Commercial Districts

by Whitey Lueck

Many business owners recognize the important economic and environmental benefits that trees and other vegetation can provide for them, for their customers, and for their community. But they are sometimes hesitant to plant trees (or come to regret their decision after trees are planted) due to misconceptions about how trees grow and develop over time.

Understandably, many businesses are concerned with the visibility of their building, their display windows, and their signs. A common refrain one hears when recommending that trees be planted in a commercial area is, "That's fine, as long as they won't block my signs." Often, owners

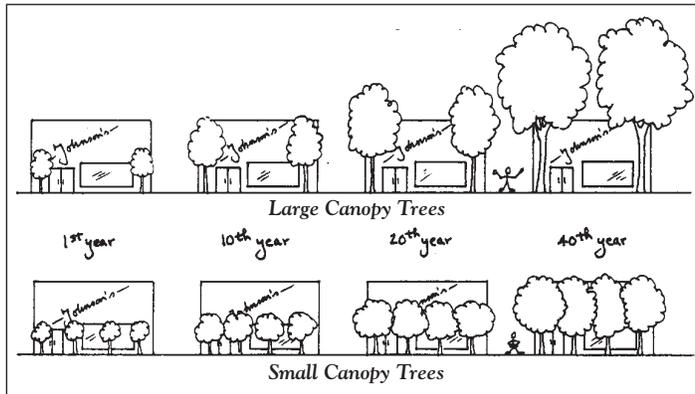
insist that only "small" trees be planted in an effort to meet their primary criterion. But small-

canopy trees, by their very nature, are likely to cause more visibility problems than larger-canopy trees ever would.

Indeed, as smaller-canopy trees mature, they can completely obscure the view of an adjacent

building. And efforts to maintain visibility are invariably directed at the trees, whose canopies are then topped or "gumdropped" in an attempt to control their growth. But such severe pruning is not only an extra expense and a maintenance headache, but it often results in even denser

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Mission Statement:
Working to protect and enhance the long-term health of Eugene's urban forest.



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President's Column



The draft annual report of the Eugene Planning Commission, presented to City Council on July 27, includes a work program listing the many issues the Commission may consider in the months and years ahead. Issues identified as high priority—such as mixed-use centers and the inventory and protection of Eugene's streams and wetlands—are listed first, followed by "ongoing" items, and finally "other." At the bottom of the "other" list, second from the last, is item number 42—"Deal with LUBA remand concerning... Chapter 6 tree provisions."

Some of you will remember a few years ago, when after several years of hard work on the part of city staff and concerned citizens, Eugene adopted a new land use code. Among the many new provisions of that code were tree and natural resource protection standards that promised better preservation of our increasingly scarce urban greenscape. Some of the updated code was found to be faulty by the Oregon Land Use Board of

Appeals. Following that decision, the city was forced to re-adopt older standards as part of a new code, leading to ongoing confusion and insufficient tree standards. At that time, spring of 2002, staff and elected officials indicated their interest in correcting the new code's errors and implementing improved protection standards.

In the intervening three years, this item has fallen to the bottom of the list. It's time now to remind our city councilors that we consider tree preservation as equal to other concerns when planning new construction. With the progress ETF is beginning to make with staff on tree removal procedures, the upcoming amendment process for the land use code, and with three councilors showing their interest in following through on correcting past errors, the time is right to push forward. I encourage you to call your councilor and find out how you can help get tree protection back on the front burner.

Phillip Carroll, *President*

Trees in Bloom

by Whitey Lueck

Most tree species in our area flower for a relatively short period of time—two to three weeks—and between the months of March and June. The silk tree (*Albizia julibrissin*) is an exception.

The fluffy, pink, fragrant flowers of silk trees first appear in July, and many years, the trees are still blooming in early October. What a treat!

Although sometimes called a mimosa, that name is best reserved for the true mimosa or "sensitive plant" (*Mimosa pudica*), a low tropical shrub—also grown as a houseplant—that folds together its leaflets when touched. Silk trees fold together their leaflets, too, but only at night and not in response to touch.

This tropical-looking tree is hardy in our area, and it grows vigorously when it is planted on well-drained soil and receives ample summer water. It is a short-lived tree, however, seldom reaching more than 30 or 40 years of age.



It Beats The Mall

After school is over for the year and summer arrives, many of us try to keep our kids busy doing something fun, educational, and hopefully outdoors (that was my preference as a kid anyway!).

However, when it rains one day out of two, as it did this past June, the options seem to decrease dramatically. But I found something that can be done in almost any kind of weather: start a leaf collection.

It all began as I was driving my daughter, Raven, to school in early May, as trees were showing their brand new leaves. We always have great discussions during the ten-minute drive and she amazes me with her “steel trap” photographic memory.

So I started to talk to her about the trees we saw along the road, showing her the many different species as we drove along. The next day, we played “I spy” and she blew my socks off by pointing at the trees I had shown her the day before and identifying them. Raven is almost six years old, and within a week, she mastered the names of at least 15 trees!

We tried a different approach a week or two later and went to a park where there are a lot of mature trees. As we walked, we picked up leaves and then looked up the name of each tree in a tree guide. She really liked doing this and quickly developed a love for trees.

This experience was a little bit like an encouragement for the cause of ETF, where I saw that a simple game and an early exposure to trees triggered a new passion for my daughter. Of course, our next game would be a leaf collection.

Early summer is the best time to start it because the leaves are still in a good shape. They are fully developed, most of them are still intact and do not show signs of insect attack or disease, and most years, they haven't yet had a chance to be burned by the summer sun.

Here's how to do it. Grab a few Ziploc bags (the bigger the better), comfortable shoes, and some snacks and water. Kids love

adventure, so the more you plan it, the more it looks like a special event. You might want to head for the nearest park or just scout the neighborhood, but I guarantee that you'll find plenty of different species. Once you really look at trees, you begin to see all the differences.

If you find a leaf that's new to you, and the tree is on private property, I recommend knocking on the door and politely asking them if you can get that special leaf. They *always* say yes. Actually, they usually say, “You can come back in the fall and pick all of them if you want to!”

Okay, your bags are full of leaves and it's time to get back to civilization. My advice is not to try to identify your leaves right away (unless you have only a few), but rather to press them. Pressing leaves is one of the best ways to preserve them and is easy to do. Because some of your leaves might be fairly large, you'll need sheets of paper that are at least 8 1/2 x 11 inches.

Lay the leaf flat on one of the sheets and cover it with another one, like a sandwich. Take the “sandwich” and lay it between some heavy books (old phone books work great), and voilà! Some stores sell pressing books in which you can press plenty of leaves.

After a week or two, your leaves should be dry and ready to be identified. The next step is at least as fun as the first one. Unless you already have a tree guide, I suggest you take a trip to the library and look at two or three different guides, to improve your chance of identifying the leaves.

The whole process can take as long as you want to, since there are hundreds of different species of trees to pick from and depending on your child's enthusiasm (and your own), you could be busy for days. Doesn't this beat The Mall?

Until next time!



Alby Thomsin is a certified arborist and is chair of ETF's education committee.



ETF Newsletter

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, it may be because someone you know thought you'd be interested in ETF's work. Or you may have signed up at an ETF activity. If you'd like to learn more about our work or about Eugene's urban forest, check out our website www.eugenetreefoundation.org, or leave us a phone message at 284-9854. This newsletter is also available electronically. Send us a note at survey1@eugenetreefoundation.org, to let us know if you prefer to receive the electronic version.



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Tree Walks

Two Tree Walks remain in 2005. All Tree Walks start at 1pm, rain or shine. Dress appropriately. Questions: please call Alby at 284-9854.

Saturday, Oct. 8th.
Whiteaker neighborhood.

Northwest Eugene. Meet at the corner of Fifth and Monroe.

Saturday, Oct. 22nd.
Northeast Eugene area. Meet just south of Cal Young and Spyglass.

Eugene Celebration

ETF will have a booth in the Eugene Celebration community causeway, Sept 30-Oct. 2. Please call us at 284-9854 if you would like to help staff our booth.

Continued from page 1 ***Trees for Commercial Districts***

growth low in the canopy, thus exacerbating the problem. Eventually, the owner comes to resent the trees altogether and they are finally removed.

The loss of trees in such instances is tragic enough, especially where they probably won't be replanted for a long time. But more importantly, our community sometimes loses a one-time tree advocate when, with a little bit of forethought, the whole sorry mess could have been avoided.

Business owners need to carefully weigh the benefits and drawbacks of planting trees near their businesses. And they need to recognize that, at least when young, any tree will reduce building visibility to some degree. But with proper selec-

tion of individual planting sites and species, it is always possible to incorporate trees while at the same time maintaining superior visibility.

The most successful way to have trees and good business, too, is to plant a small number of large-canopy trees, rather than a large number of small-canopy trees. Over time, the former can have their lower limbs removed, until their canopies are completely up and "out of the way." Such an approach eventually results in an elevated canopy that provides both welcome shade and an attractive setting, making the business even more appealing to customers and passersby.