

ETF News

www.eugenetreefoundation.org

• NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION •

City's Tree Code Needs More Fine-tuning

by Lisa Theobald and Phil Carroll

"I am very bummed out about the removal of the old willow tree on the (northwest) corner of 8th and Chambers. What happened?"

—from a recent e-mail sent to ETF

In the summer 2006 issue of *ETF News*, Whitey Lueck discussed the importance of being vigilant. Eugeneans are a conscientious bunch. Not only are we vigilant observers of nature's seasonal idiosyncrasies, but we also notice when nature is abruptly altered by the chain saw.

Lisa Theobald



While most tree-cutting is legal according to our current tree code, many of us wish the code could be revised to protect large trees like this one.

As an organization whose mission includes advocating for the planting, maintenance, and restoration of the urban landscape, ETF regularly receives comments, questions, and pleas for help from members of the community who are distressed by the removal of trees. Sometimes, ETF can and does intervene in these matters, and sometimes the intervention occurs in time to save some trees from the chain saw. But sometimes trees do come down. As much as this breaks our collective hearts, we are all bound by "best arboricultural practices" and by current ordinances created and enforced by the Eugene city council and staff.

"Best practices" in arboriculture can be debatable issues, though most arborists wouldn't argue that a tree rotten through the core could be considered a hazard if it's leaning over somebody's

house. But are Eugene tree ordinances debatable, too? Truth is, they can be, because they're not very clear, and this reduces their effectiveness and makes them difficult to enforce.

Anybody can get a copy of Eugene city code to read about tree removal laws—it's even available on the Internet. But it takes time, patience, and perseverance to wade through the technical aspects of the documents and to wrangle your way through information spread across several pages in several different parts of the code.

Because of this, one of ETF's long-term goals is to help the city clarify, simplify, and unify its code regarding tree removal. ETF also hopes to see city code include provisions for assessing a site's natural resources early in the land development process, and for preventing land clearing before a tree removal application is filed. Unfortunately, at present, land clearing often occurs before the application is filed because of the way the code is written.

Many cities require some minimum compensation for tree removal, even on private lots, in the form of money paid to a city tree fund or the planting of replacement trees. Not so in Eugene! City code allows owners of most residential parcels (anything less than 20,000 square feet) to cut as many trees as they want for any reason.

As for tree removals on sites slated for development, Matt Denberg, Planning and Development tree code enforcement officer, says "the code actually states that if trees are in the way of construction, the city has little power to encourage you to move those structures." Clearly, Eugene's tree code needs revision. The challenge is to allow for forward-looking, flexible processes that don't hamper development that can benefit the city, but that also fully consider and plan for the continued health of our urban forest.

Recently, Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals heard arguments in a case that partly centers on how Eugene's tree preservation rules are applied to development proposals. ETF was instrumental

Continued on page 2

Fall, 2006; Vol. 9, No. 4

ETF Board of Directors

Alby Thoumsin
President (education)
Lisa Theobald Secretary
Erik Burke
Phillip Carroll
Jim Gent
Jeff Lanza (planting)
Jane Renfro Smith

Newsletter Editor: Whitey Lueck
Newsletter Layout: Helen Liu
Bookkeeper: Jennifer Salvatore

Mission Statement:

To enhance community livability for present and future generations through the collaborative stewardship of Eugene's diverse and vibrant natural landscape



EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 12265
Eugene, Oregon 97440
Voice Mail: (541) 284-9854
www.eugenetreefoundation.org



President's Column

Fall already? It always seems like summer is the shortest season, don't you think? I can tell you that a part of that sensation of speed was that ETF was very busy. The Board has been actively pursuing new candidates (there are still plenty of opportunities—just contact us!), applying for and receiving a grant from the Oregon Department of Forestry, and preparing for a retreat in early November. In the field, the Tree Stewards had half a dozen mornings of intense street tree pruning where they all learned to use their new skills and help the City of Eugene's NeighborWoods program.



Thank you ETF Supporters!

Steven Adamson

Stu Adler

Ahlijian's Tree Maintenance

Elliot & Priscilla Aronin

Bill and Christie Asporen

Fred & Sandra Austin

John F. Bailey

Brian & Kathie Barber

Beverly Barr

Ruth Bascom

Amy Beller

Ted & Maria Berg

Connie Berglund

Eleanor Berryhill

Ann Bettman

Sharon & Jim Blick

Shawn & Melva Boles

Jim & Judie Borg

Jake Bradshaw

Jonathan Brandt

Larry Brink

Andrew Britz

Keiko Bryan

Alma Buck

Erik & Jessyca Burke

Anne Burrowes

Donald Burton

Hal Busby

Cameron, McCarthy, Gilbert & Scheibe Landscape Architects LLP

Linda Carnine

Phillip Carroll

Gary Carter

Deborah Carver

Bob Cassidy

Lynda Christiansen

Elizabeth Churchill

Robert D. Clark

Suzanne Clark

Shaul Cohen

Margaret Cox

Barbara Cowan

Garr & Joan Cutler

Bruce S. & Cecile Davison

Liz and Larry Deck

Joanna deFelice

Helen Denzler

Leona Devine

Hal Dillon

Jerome Diethelm

Diane Diethelm

DLA Inc.

Joy Dresie

Arica Duhrkoop-Galas

Jo Dunsmoor

Mike Duran

Denise Earle

Greg Edblom

Jeanie Edwards

Rina and Lee Eide

Robert Emmons

Audrey Erickson

Dave Eshelman

Bill Evans

Falcon Designs Fine Furniture

Fred Felter

Nancy Flesch

Linda Fuller

Marion Forgach

Monica Frank

Jerome Garger

We also had a call from the West University

Continued from page 1 **City's Tree Code Needs More Fine-tuning**

in bringing the matter to the state level. Depending on the outcome, this case could mean greater scrutiny of land use applications regarding tree removal, a big win for Eugene's trees.

ETF has also been successful in helping city staff, developers, and homeowners determine the best trees to plant in an area, identify which trees are most valuable on a piece of property, and determine whether proper studies of an area have been undergone before trees are removed.

The Eugene City Council has taken notice,

Lazy Leaves that Don't Drop "On Time!"

by Whitey Lueck

Some deciduous trees just cannot seem to make up their minds in autumn. Their leaves color up just like other trees' leaves, but then they refuse to fall off the tree! Instead, they turn brown and remain on the tree as autumn turns to winter. Pin oaks are one of the most common trees in our area that have delayed leaf drop. But other oaks (e.g. red, scarlet, English, and Oregon white) also exhibit this phenomenon, as do beeches, hornbeams, and sugar maples.

For leaves to fall off, an abscission zone (or layer of dead cells) must form at the base of the leaf's petiole or stalk. In trees with *marcescent* leaves, however, the abscission zone remains alive even after the leaf's blade and most of the petiole have died. The leaf thus has no choice but to hang on. Many marcescent leaves may be physically ripped off the tree during winter storms, but their petiole bases usually remain until spring.

For some local landscape maintenance people and homeowners, marcescent leaves are seen as a real pain. After



Oregon white oak

Neighborhood (WUN) to discuss the possibility of intervening to help preserve a large bigleaf maple that is slated for removal. The so-called Lemon Tree—named for a Mrs. Lemon—is located at the corner of Mill Street and East 13th Avenue and shows all the signs of having become an imminent hazard to passersby and nearby structures. Despite the warning signs, WUN wishes to go further than just accepting the removal of the tree, and wants to see if its removal could be postponed by opening a discussion with ETF and the City of Eugene. To my knowledge, the tree is still standing at this time and ETF has re-contacted WUN. This demonstrates the high level of concern some of our citizens have for public trees. To be continued...

Alby Thoumsin, President

recently expressing concern about tree issues and recommending that city planning staff work with ETF to provide assistance in finding the best fixes for the code.

We do have ways of encouraging the city to make changes to tree ordinances and planning practices. Help us keep up the momentum, and encourage your city councilperson to keep trees high on the council's agenda. Become active and join ETF in efforts to improve tree ordinances. Let us hear from you!

all the other leaves have fallen, there's this dribble of leaves that fall all winter along from the pin oaks. The good news for these people is that marcescent leave are a juvenile trait and trees eventually outgrow it. Older trees of species with marcescent leaves may retain some of their leaves in the lower and inside portions of the canopy—the part of the trees that developed during its youth—but the upper and outer portions will lose their leaves "on time."

Interestingly, some individuals of each of the tree species with marcescent leaves are just plain precocious, and lose *all* their leaves even as youths! The row of pin oaks on the west side of the exhibit halls at Lane County Fairgrounds, for example, includes one individual that has always lost all of its leaves in fall.

So if you wish to plant pin oaks (or sugar maples, etc.) that will lose all their leaves when you think they should, just visit a tree nursery sometime during November. Select only those individuals that are already leafless—perhaps one out of every 10-20 trees will meet this criterion. It's that easy!

Now go outside and play in the leaves.

Between Mushrooms and Trees

by Alby Thoumsin

I like fall for a very particular reason: it's mushroom season! Mushroom-producing fungi are present year-round but autumn is the best time to see their best-known feature, the fruiting body or mushroom. Many mycologists (mushroom enthusiasts), are concerned foremost with which one is edible and which one is not. But as an arborist, I like to focus on the dangerous ones...not with regard to their edibility, but for their potential to create hazardous trees.

As trees age or are wounded or stressed, they become more susceptible to diseases which often arrive via fungal spores. These spores find a favorable environment for the development of the fungus, which is part of the natural process of wood decay. Some of these fungi are common in the Willamette Valley and are easily identified. One that I am sure most of you have seen is called *Ganoderma applanatum* or white mottled rot. Its sometimes spectacular fruiting body is a conk (long-lived, hard mushroom) also known as the "artist's conk" because of its white underside where any drawing will remain permanently. The top side is light brown and powdery with a white "lip" at the outer edge. *Ganoderma* can live off the tree for years, becoming bigger as time passes. This conk digests the lignin and the cellulose (two main ingredients of wood) at about the same pace, leaving a mush of wood fiber resembling a sponge when the rot is advanced. It is very common at the base and in the folds of old bigleaf maples but can also be seen on many other trees.

The second conk I want to tell you about is *Phaeolus schweinitzii* or, more commonly, cubical butt rot, because of its ability during decay to form cubical pieces with the texture of Styrofoam. This amazing fungus resembles a piece of coral made of chocolate, with shelf-like layers. It can be found in early fall usually in the proximity of Douglas-firs. Starting in the roots, it can eventually travel over the years up to the lower part of the trunk (or "butt" of a tree) and on trees that are severely infected could cause the tree's trunk to break during violent storms.

More showy, but having the same effect on trees, is *Laetiporus sulphureus*, brown rot fungus, heart rot, or chicken-of-the-woods. Its bright yellow color explains the second part of its Latin name. Attacking both conifers and broadleaf trees, this handsome annual mushroom is at its best at the end of summer. Often seen jutting from an old wound, it will be found along the trunk and old branches, but also near the base of the tree and on the roots. Because its way

of decaying wood is similar to cubical butt rot, brown rot fungus needs to be taken seriously.

Last but not least for this short lesson on mushrooms is *Armillaria* root rot. There are a number of different root rots in the tree world. One of the most important ones—and one often triggered by humans—is *Armillaria*. Its common names are honey fungus, oak fungus, or *Armillaria* root disease. The *Armillaria* fungi represent a group of different root diseases that infect a very wide range of conifer and broadleaf trees. In the Willamette Valley, Oregon white oaks and Douglas-firs are prime targets, but I have also seen the disease attack even magnolias and dogwoods.

Armillaria mushrooms will be seen near the base of the infected tree and they grow in clumps. They are soft in texture with a color varying from light brown to golden—the color of honey! The cap can be 2.5 to 5 inches in diameter and sits atop a beige-colored stem with a distinct ring. Young and mature conifers will show oozing of resin a few feet from the ground when the disease is present at the root collar; sparse foliage with a "sick look" is a good indicator, too.

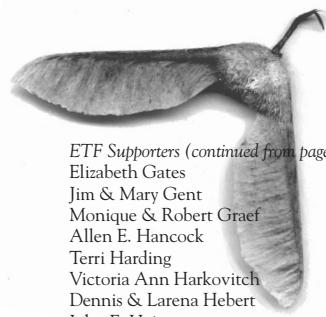
A tree is more likely to be infected by *Armillaria* root rot if it has been stressed for a while, especially by excessive moisture near its base. A perfect example is when established Oregon white oaks become part of a new landscape that includes an irrigation system. The trees, accustomed to dry summers, often receive far too much water. Decline often follows until the tree falls (even without wind), at which time few or no roots are left.

It is important to remember that conks and mushrooms are part of nature and only become a problem when trees are severely infected and close to a "target" (buildings, cars, etc.). Sometimes trees will have one or two, or may be all the problems described above at the same time and still be standing. It is important to identify the fungus precisely before condemning a tree. And for those of you who have plenty of room and trees that are away from your house, you might as well enjoy them as long as possible and think of removal as a last resort.

Okay, my tip this time...well, now you know what that weird thing growing by your fir tree is! And, to end on a positive note, *Armillaria* is edible!

Until next time!

Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.



ETF Supporters (continued from page 2)

Elizabeth Gates
Jim & Mary Gent
Monique & Robert Graef
Allen E. Hancock
Terri Harding
Victoria Ann Harkovich
Dennis & Larena Hebert
John E. Heintz
Catherine Heising
Joan Henry
Christine and Charles Heritage
Cliff Heselton
Mike and Deanna Hochstein
Jim & Carol Holm
John B. Holtzapfel
Mike Horowitz
Corinne Hunt
Sam Houston
Tasker Huston
Sachiko Itoh
Ilona Johnson
Doris & Bob Jones
Joan Kelley
Tim King
Alison & David Klute
Dorothy Knaus
Steve & Christine Koester
Bruce Kreitzberg
Cathy Kubacke
Kent Kulby
Kathleen Jaworski
Giny Landgreen
Tom Larsen
Richard Larson
Karen Leigh
Helen Liguori
Helen Liu
Sue Chung Liu
Jana Logan
Nena Lovinger
Linda Lu
Kate MacQueen
Mark Maguire
Marty McGee
Pam & Kevin McGraw
Ann Dhu McLucas
Glenn Meares
Vicky Mello
Sally J. Mills
Chuck Mitchell
Fred & Dee Mohr
Vicki Morgan
Mary "Krissy" Morris
Gerald Morsello
Erik & Ann Muller
Nearby Nature
Jean Dorl Nelson
Marie Nemir
Mel Oberman
Keith Oldham
Georgie Olsgard
Jerry & Kathy Oltion
Marriner Orum
Joyce & Harold Owen
Gary Pape
Jerry Patterson
Susan Payne
John Pegg
Bob & Nan Phifer
Lindsay Pierce
Gene Pierson
Bill & Margaret Prentice
Hugh Prichard
Virginia Prouty
Alice Pueschner
Stephen Ramey
Kenneth Raymen
Janet & Richard Reed
Ginny Reich
Sally Reidy
James & Sara Reilly
Steve & Colette Richardson
Becky Riley



EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 12265
Eugene, Oregon 97440

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
EUGENE, OR
PERMIT NO. 335

ETF Supporters (*continued from page 3*)

Cheryl Roffe
Richard I. Rofsky
Richard Romm
Meg Rowles
Trudy Rumple
Vic Sabin
John Saemann
Carol Schirmer
Barbara Schumaker
Harold Schyberg
Robert & Pat Dark
Marcia Sigler
Ellen Singer
Dorothy Sistrom
Jane and Jerry Smith
Randy Smith
Tim Smith
Mike Sobol
Allan R. Sorenson
Sperry Tree Care
Harner Star
Bruce & Janice Stark
Lotte Streisinger
Richard Sundt
Milton Takei
Becky Taylor
Robert Theiss
Lisa Theobald
Paulette Thompson
Thompson Landscape Co.
Alby Thoumsin
George Towe
Bill and Marjorie Tracy
Merle Traudt
Nathan Tublitz
Clare Tucker
Anne & John Turner
Olga Turner
Douglas Turvey
Alvin Urquhart
Pat Vallerand
Don & Carol Van Houten
Louise Wade
Vineet Wahi
Tom & Dale Wall
Marion Walter
Mili White
Margaret Wiese
Birgitte Benneke Williams
Shirley Wilson
Doris R. Wimber
Sue Wolling
Pam Woodell
Charles & Leslie Wright
Kei Yasuda
Eva Zack
Janice Zagorin

Support Parks Bond Measure 20-110

by Phil Carroll

This year's ballot measure 20-110, the parks and open space bond, offers the citizens of Eugene a chance to contribute to a long-term investment of immeasurable value. Eugene has a 100-year history of generous giving for the natural areas of our community, beginning with T.G. Hendricks's donation of the land that is now the beautiful and renowned Hendricks Park. This year's ballot measure includes funds for additional acquisition of Ridgeline open space, Willamette riverfront property, and important neighborhood parks. These three components of our urban forest are major contributors to the high quality of life we enjoy. Imagine increasing our inventory of high-value public land for the benefit of Eugeneans a century from now!

The \$27.5 million general obligation bond will cost the average homeowner just \$30 per year. Other projects that better preserve our landscape and cul-

tural fabric are to be funded as well. For example, improvements to public access to Gillespie Butte Park, a local treasure where Eugene's past is brought into relief through remnant oak savanna as it existed before Euro-American settlement and a pioneer cemetery that contains many of Eugene's important founding families. Gillespie Butte is home to the first stand of ETF Legacy Trees that were honored in 2004. Also, land in front of the Shelton-McMurphy-Johnson house (which is now privately held) would be acquired, providing for the continued enhancement of the former home and hobby ranch of Dr. T. Shelton. The house and Skinner Butte Park itself are gems in the heart of our city that offer valuable views into our unique local history.

ETF supports bond measure 20-110, and we encourage you to vote YES on November 7.

Ballot Measure 20-110 Project List

Acquire Land for Neighborhood and Community Parks : \$10,500,000

- Neighborhood park sites (52 acres)
- Santa Clara Community Park sites (40 acres)
- Expand Skinner Butte Park to preserve views and access to the Shelton-McMurphy-Johnson House (0.3 acres)
- Expand Amazon Park north of Hilyard Community Center (0.8 acres)

Acquire Land for Natural Area Parks:

\$7,750,000

- Willamette River frontage (30-45 acres)

• Ridgeline Trail corridor (60-100 acres)

• Improve access to Gillespie Butte (1.7 acres)

Expand and Develop Golden Gardens Park:

\$2,000,000

- Acquire additional land at Golden Gardens Park and develop park features such as bike paths and walking trails, playground, and natural areas (approximately 100 acres).

West Eugene Wetland Education Center:

\$1,750,000

- Develop a West Eugene Wetland Education Center in partnership with other federal and local agencies.