

# ETF News

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NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

## Oakway Road Tulip-trees Come Down

by Whitey Lueck

Sometime in the mid-1960s, some forward-thinking person (or group of people) planted 19 or more tulip-trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) in the publicly owned park strip along the east side of Oakway Road. Like other trees on the deep, fertile, well drained river loam common to much of the so-called Ferry Street Bridge area, the tulip-trees prospered, becoming in just four decades a magnificent neighborhood presence and a real attribute to the developing commercial area now called Oakway Center.

But the trees' phenomenal vigor—usually a laudable trait—was what eventually led to them being cut down. For many years, the adjacent property owners had repeatedly replaced the sidewalks that were lifted by the trees' growing roots. And City of Eugene Public Works staff adjusted and re-adjusted the thickness of the adjacent curbs and pavement, and the gravel base beneath them, to accommodate the growing roots.

In 2004, five of the trees were removed after being identified as potentially hazardous. That is, the city's urban forestry staff inspected the 19 trees and found sufficient reason (i.e., decay) in the trunk or at the base of the tree to warrant the removal of five of them. After that, the remaining 14 trees just continued doing what comes naturally: leafing out each spring; flowering in May; providing a lush green canopy all summer long; then turning golden in October and dropping their leaves.

However, as the streetside roots of the remain-

ing trees began to raise more extensive areas of pavement, stormwater drainage from the street was disrupted, creating pools of water that were potentially hazardous to both cyclists and motorists.

Public Works staff determined that the only

way for stormwater to properly drain would be if the trees' large streetside roots were removed.

Although the 14 trees were not yet "hazardous" trees, they would become hazardous if any large roots were cut on the upwind side of the huge trees.

The trees were thus declared "nuisance" trees because of

the irremediable problems their roots were causing to the pavement, and signs were posted in early fall of 2005 to inform passersby of the trees' proposed removal.

Few Eugeneans are aware of the long-term effort—by both City staff and the adjacent property owners—to save these wonderful trees. The City of Eugene does not cut down trees growing in the public right-of-way without good reason. There are many examples around our community where curbs have been moved, sidewalks detoured, and other steps taken to preserve existing trees if the trees are in good health and do not interfere with the use of the street.

If the adjacent street pavement had been parking space instead of a travel lane, the outcome might have been different. But Oakway Road is a "minor arterial" with four lanes (and a central turn pocket) for motorized vehicles and two for bicycles. It was not possible to eliminate the easternmost travel lane(s) in that busy commercial area.

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Mark Snyder



Street-level view of the tulip-trees that once graced this section of Oakway Road and provided much welcomed shade for motorists and shoppers at Oakway Center.

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# President's Column

Happy Spring, everyone!

The last few weeks have brought ETF into the public eye in a variety of ways. During the month of March alone, two groups of citizens contacted us, concerned about the removal of a number of trees in their neighborhoods.

Toward the south end of Friendly Street, we were able to help one group by appealing a faulty tree removal permit for the building of a house. The second group asked us to intervene in a development that was affecting mature trees in the River Road area.



More and more, the citizens of Eugene consider our organization the best place to call when they are concerned about trees. The advocacy part of ETF is not easy; it requires both a familiarity with Eugene's tree ordinances and plenty of common sense, along with a healthy dose of patience and wisdom.

Indeed, patience and wisdom were what we needed the most during the removal of all the tulip-trees along Oakway Road earlier this spring! That was a situation where we found ourselves unable to really act and change the outcome.

If life is supposed to be fairly balanced, I wish I could tilt things a little more toward benefiting trees. The fact that we are sometimes able to act in favor of trees—as with the trees on Friendly Street and others in the River Road area—gives me some hope for the future.

Alby Thoumsin, President

## Sign Up for e-Newsletter

To save trees (paper) and mailing and printing expenses, ETF encourages you to sign up to receive this newsletter in electronic format.

If you would like to receive the e-Newsletter, please contact us via our website.

Thank you!

## The Benefit of Hedges

Everyone likes a little privacy, but when it entails the building of a six-foot-tall redcedar fence—as it so often does around here—it sure seems like a waste of good wood. So here's an alternative you may not have considered: a hedge!

Some of you are probably rolling your eyes, thinking that arborvitae hedges aren't anything new. You've had yours for 25 years and it's doing a fine job separating you from the other side. But I'd like to propose a different kind of hedge—something that changes its appearance from one season to the next and that provides a lot more wildlife habitat than the sentinel-like conifers we so often use.

The trick is to use a combination of different species of deciduous trees and shrubs. Their different foliage patterns will catch the eye and their uneven pace of growth will give them a natural look. As the hedge grows and you prune it correctly, it will thicken and work perfectly as a wind filterer, letting the strongest wind pass through but slowing it down by at least 75%.

The part of Belgium where I am from is really cold and bitter in winter, and for centuries, farmers have used this system to protect their farms from the winter winds. It is not unusual to see 25-foot-tall hedges called "avrûles" (in the Walloon dialect) bordering old farms, sometimes with an arch at the entry of the property. Certain species work really well for this purpose, and nothing prevents

you from adding a few conifers if you want to.

The more rustic, the better! If you wish to recreate the Belgian Ardennes atmosphere, I recommend European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) or European hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). The difference with that sort of hedge is that you plant only one species. For a more modest back yard, I encourage you to use any of these native species: black hawthorne (*Crataegus douglasii*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*), Indian plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), or cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*). Make sure you consider your soil type before planting, but by planting a variety of species, some will surely thrive even if others don't.

I am running out space and would love to add more species but if you stick with medium-size shrubs (native or not) and medium-size trees, you can't go wrong. You'll create a paradise for birds and have the satisfaction of encouraging more life around you—instead of looking at just a bunch of dead, wooden planks.

My tip this time? If you decide to tear down your fence, don't forget to recycle the wood.

Until next time!

Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.

# Community Magic: 2006 Planting Season Summary

by Jeff Lanza

ETF has been planting trees every year in Eugene since 1999, but much more occurs than just tree planting.

Each winter planting season, on several chosen Saturday mornings, motivated volunteers offer time and energy in planting new trees that have dramatically transformed and enhanced various neighborhoods and park spaces throughout Eugene. It is difficult to describe, but in just a few hours time with the help of many hands, these civic-minded folks create a sense of community magic by working together to turn bleak, treeless areas of our city into neighborhood environments with a greener future. This community magic comes from the many smiles on volunteer faces, an appreciation from passersby, inviting conversations with neighbors, and a great sense of accomplishment and pride that follows a job well done.

Where the shovel meets the soil in the public right-of-way alongside our city streets or within the landscape of our community parks and open spaces, tree planting efforts are one of the most enjoyable, tangible, and visible activities that ETF volunteers perform each year. This year, we planted 133 new trees in five projects. We also assisted the City of Eugene in planting more than 100 much-needed replacement trees to take the

bang, literally, as we experienced a dramatic sky of lighting, thunder, and hail for the second phase of a multi-year effort along Harlow Road, with 20 new street trees. On the near west side of the city, a park strip just east of the Albertson's Grocery store at 18th Avenue & Chambers Street now has a complement of 56 native trees—Oregon ash, Oregon white oak, and valley Ponderosa pine. These were planted with the help of the Far West Neighborhood Association in cooperation with the owner of the Westmoreland Medical Clinic to help mitigate for the loss of a mature stand of Oregon white oaks that were removed as part of an expansion project. Other open space plantings of native trees occurred this year along Amazon Parkway between 19th and 24th Avenues, with relaxed groupings of 34 Oregon ash trees between the Parkway and Amazon canal. Many thanks go to Kevin Foerstler at the City of Eugene's Urban Forestry Department for his work with ETF to coordinate this approach to a more natural grouping of the trees.

An ETF member initiated the idea of regular tree plantings near the University of Oregon to improve the current tree canopy there and to provide educational and public service opportunities for the university's Greek system residents. With assistance from the women of Delta Gamma sorority, the project this year at East 12th Avenue and Kincaid Street was the informal kick-off for this "Campus Re-leaf" proposal.

The culmination of the planting season took place with an Arbor Day project that marked Eugene's 27th consecutive year as a recipient of the Tree City USA award from the

National Arbor Day Foundation. Mayor Kitty Piercy assisted in the planting of five London planetrees along Orchard



Helen Liu



From top: newly planted native Oregon ash along Amazon Parkway near 24th Avenue; shovels ready for volunteers during a surprise hail storm at the Jan. 28th planting on Harlow Road; "Campus Re-Leaf" on Kincaid Street; a father-daughter team; at far left: volunteers work in a steady drizzle on Amazon Parkway.



Photos on this page by Rick Olkonoski unless otherwise indicated.



place of dead, damaged, or destroyed trees planted in earlier years.

The planting season opened with a



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Rick Olkowski



Members of Delta Gamma sorority from the University of Oregon assisted with the planting near 12th Avenue and Kincaid Street.

Street near Franklin Boulevard. This was a continuation of last year's ETF Trees for Concrete Arbor Day project and included approximately 350 native undercanopy plants provided from the city's native plant nursery and with the help of Lorna Baldwin, Eugene Stream Team Coordinator.

Many hours of behind-the-scenes work goes into the planning, prepara-

tion, and coordination of our projects before planting day occurs. ETF would like to thank Mark Snyder, City of Eugene Urban Forester, for organizing and coordinating this year's Arbor Day project. Further thanks goes to Rick Olkowski, NeighborWoods & Tree Stewards Coordinator, for his passion for trees, his enthusiasm in working with ETF and community volunteers, and his tremendous logistical help, resulting in a great record of successful projects. Without the help and partnership with the City of Eugene's Urban Forestry Department and the strength of the NeighborWoods program in the community, ETF's planting projects would not be possible.

You can become a part of the magic and help with ETF's planting projects in a variety of ways. Check out our website at [www.eugenetreefoundation.org](http://www.eugenetreefoundation.org) for more information.

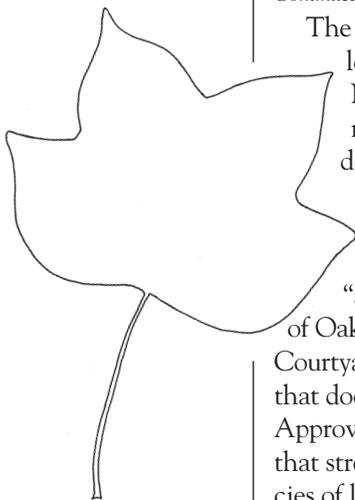
Jeff Lanza is a landscape designer and Planting Chair of ETF.

Continued from page 1 **Oakway Road Tulip-trees Come Down**

The park strip that was once graced by the lovely tulip-trees will not be vacant for long. New large-canopy trees will be planted next fall or winter. Their roots will reach down into that wonderful river loam and their canopies will soon rise skyward. It would be appropriate if at least some of the trees were Oregon white oaks—the “signature” tree of that neighborhood and of Oakway Center's award-winning Heritage Courtyard. Bigleaf maple, another Oregon native that does best on river loam and is on the City's Approved Street Tree List, would also be ideal for that stretch. Ideally, two or three different species of long-lived, large-canopy trees would make that stretch of Oakway Road once again a pleasant

place to be instead of the current “hole in the sky” where once the tulip-trees raised their lofty crowns.

Because the park strip will be treeless throughout the coming summer and into fall, the City and the adjacent property owners might consider placing little signs (atop attractive, sturdy, painted posts) where each of the new trees will be planted. A typical sign could say: “Coming in fall 2006: A bigleaf maple.” And the next time a group of large, healthy trees needs to be removed elsewhere in Eugene, a large sign explaining in detail (and including illustrations) why the removals are necessary would help passersby understand how the decision was made, and go a long way toward educating Eugeneans about the trials and tribulations of being an urban tree.



Tulip-tree leaf illustration by Whitey Lueck