



# ETF News

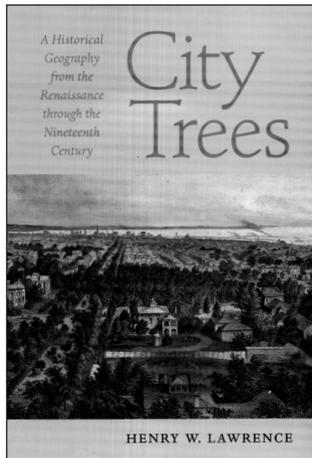
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NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

## An American History of Urban Tree Planting

by Louise C. Wade

A review of Henry W. Lawrence, *City Trees: A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century* (University of Virginia Press, 2006)



Have you ever wondered when towns and cities got serious about their green canopies? If so, Henry Lawrence's splendid new book, *City Trees*, will answer your questions. The author teaches in the University of Pennsylvania system, but he did his graduate work at the University of Oregon in landscape architecture and geography. Perhaps Eugene inspired him to tackle this formidable topic. Using city maps and records, architectural treatises, travel accounts, and national archives, he reconstructs the history of urban trees.

Neither Greeks nor Romans used trees to adorn their temples or public space. Europe's medieval towns were densely built and surrounded by formidable walls. Street trees were few and far between because they blocked the light, made a mess when they dropped their leaves, and were apt to topple over on houses or pedestrians. There probably were fruit trees in the few private gardens, but city street trees in the Middle Ages were a nuisance and a menace.

Appreciation of trees in public space began in the Renaissance. They were planted atop the

defensive town walls to create shaded walkways and carriage roads. The earliest street trees in towns in the Netherlands were planted along the canals. It was believed that their roots stabilized the banks. When towns and cities could safely expand beyond their defensive walls, they experimented with new forms of open space—piazzas and long, straight streets. There were no trees in the piazzas but they were planted along the new roads to distinguish between carriage ways and pedestrian lanes.

Seventeenth century enthusiasm for a ball game (pall mall) similar to croquet prompted some cities to create playing fields outside their walls. Best known was the Champs-Élysées (Elysian fields) outside Paris. Planted with elms, plane trees, and horsechestnuts, it was used by pedestrians, carriage drivers and those playing ball games and probably constituted the first urban public park. Louis XIV's lavish palace in Versailles, built in the 1660s, also set precedents. It was approached by three very wide avenues, each of which had double rows of elms on both sides. Those tree-lined avenues soon became the major arteries of the new French capital and were widely admired by all who viewed them. Trees adorned the major boulevards in Paris by the end of the seventeenth century.



View of the Latin School in Amsterdam from Gasparus Commelin's *Beschryving van Amsterdam*, 1693. (Photo collection of the author)

first of which was Covent Garden (1630). The squares were planted with grass and shrubs but few

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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

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# President's Column



Happy New Year, everyone! My first thought of the year is to give thanks to the wonderful souls I met this past fall.

As you know, we were looking for new Board members, and the turnover was amazing. We have doubled the number of Board members, making the first goal of our three-year plan a success. With the elections coming in January, things will become official and you'll be introduced to our seven new members during our Celebration of Trees on February 16. Thank you, too,

for all the responses and calls I received from those of you who are so supportive of ETF but have other commitments; keep us in mind!

Another great experience was the farewell ceremony for the Lemon tree. The story started with the neighborhood's frustration over seeing the inevitable condemnation of one of their special bigleaf maples—planted by Charlotte Lemon at the northwest corner of 13th and Mill in the early 1900s—due to significant defects and decay. For a while, it looked like the West University Neighborhood was trying to find a solution to the impossible, until they invited ETF and City of Eugene Urban Forester Mark Snyder to attend a Board meeting. The result was a constructive discussion and a

decision that pleased everyone: celebrating the life of the Lemon tree by having a farewell ceremony! Folks from the City's urban forestry division, ETF, and of course local residents gathered in early December to say good-bye, talk to, thank, admire, and hug the old big-leaf maple that had provided shade and shelter for a century. Life goes on, and a new bigleaf maple is scheduled to be planted a few feet away from the location of the old one to keep the Lemon tree story alive.

It felt good to finish 2006 with such positive events and I'm looking to 2007 with the same anticipation.

Again, Happy 2007!



Alby Thoumsin, President

## Continued from page 1 **An American History of Urban Tree Planting**

trees before the 1780s. Londoners make extensive use of the Moorfields, a series of fields leased by the City of London where they could graze cattle and walk along tree-lined paths. It was the model for Boston's Common which was laid out in 1634. The London public, if well-behaved, could also walk in two of the royal parks, St. James's and Hyde Park.

Even before the Americans won their independence from Britain, they charted their own course in town design. Privately-owned residential squares were out, and tree-lined streets were definitely in. Town councils

the new capital, Washington D.C., called for tree-lined boulevards like those in Paris. When the Americans acquired New Orleans, they tore down the ramparts and built three wide avenues—Canal, North Rampart, and Esplanade—each of which had double rows of trees. Travelers were especially impressed with the leafy New England towns. One of them, John Duncan, continued on to Montreal and was disappointed to find “no wide avenue-like streets, skirted with forest trees, and parceled out here and there into grass plots or gardens—all this has been left on the republican side of the St. Lawrence.”

The author sees a convergence of ideas about city trees and open space in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus Paris developed the first cemetery park, but Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other American cities had similar spaces within a few decades. Britain experimented with parks/playgrounds outside its northern industrial cities. An American landscaper, Andrew Jackson Downing, was impressed by the one near Liverpool and led the campaign for a similar park on Manhattan Island while space was still available. New York City's crown



Early twentieth-century postcard view of tree-lined residential street in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

jewel—Central Park—inspired other American cities and the movement rolled west all the way to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

The desire for urban street trees and parks was so firmly planted by the mid-19th century that it would influence Baron Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris, development of the Ringstrasse in Vienna, and construction of the tree-lined Thames Embankment in London.

Well-organized, clearly written, and generously illustrated with maps and photographs, this book is a pleasure to read. It will be available in the University of Oregon's Knight Library and the Eugene Public Library.

*Louise C. Wade, professor emerita at the University of Oregon, is a historian specializing in American urban and labor history. She is a long-time ETF supporter.*



Typical street intersection in the Eixample, Barcelona, 1994. Cutting back the corners allows the tree-lined streets to create a small green plaza.

encouraged residents to plant street trees, and they responded with alacrity—poplars, locusts, planes, maples, oaks, elms, lindens, and chestnuts.

Moreover, Pierre L'Enfant's plans for

# Trees, Solar Access, and Changing Weather Patterns

by Alby Thoumsin

Wait a minute....

Yes, that's exactly what I said as I was writing a report asking me to select street trees for a new development. It looked like it was going to be a fun project. I could already imagine the trees 10 years from now, being three times the size they were the day they were planted—cool!

However, a closer look at the site plan added a new twist. Three of the houses adjacent to the row of trees were slated to be equipped with solar panels!

In the race to help our planet, conflicts like this one are bound to arise. How do we provide shade to cool our houses AND allow plenty of sunlight in to warrant the investment in solar panels?

Two of the goals of the City of Eugene are: increasing density within the urban growth boundary, and pro-

viding street trees in every available spot. If, on top of that, we also want to encourage the placement of solar panels atop houses...could we be wishing for the impossible?

I have another concern. The past seven or eight summers have been very hot. In my job, where I'm constantly looking at trees, I have seen changes in the form of drought-related stress. Eugene's symbolic and quintessential shade tree is the bigleaf maple. This tree is sensitive to lack of water and has been showing evidence of drought-related stress as early as mid-July. It is possible that in a matter of a few decades, we'll see the native range of bigleaf maples slowly move north, leaving only a few lucky ones growing adjacent to rivers. Other trees will benefit from the change, of course, filling the niche of *Acer macrophyllum*.

My job as an arborist and as a volunteer for ETF allows me to work with

and for some of the most amazing creatures on Earth: the trees. They cannot escape their enemies, but instead develop wonderful ways of adapting to new situations.

We need to take a cue from the trees, and thoughtfully consider how our community might adapt to these changes. Perhaps we need to alter the design of our houses, or orient them differently on the building lots.

Above all, we need to "wait a minute," metaphorically speaking, and take the time to consider what the best course of action is, for the trees' sake as well as our own.

My tip this time? Slow down and enjoy the moment. I'm sure you deserve it!

Until next time.



Alby is a certified arborist.

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## Coast Redwoods Busy in Mid-Winter

by Whitey Lueck

Although most trees in our area are dormant during the winter, a number of evergreen conifers are now engaged in "reproductive activities." The action peaks for the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) in January.

Like almost all other conifers, redwoods are monoecious (pronounced moh-NEE-shuss and derived from the Greek words for "one house" because the sexes are separate, but both live in the same house or tree). Since late fall, the pollen-bearing (male) cones have become increasingly visible at the tips of branchlets in the redwood's lower canopy. The future seed-bearing (female) cones—which will receive the ripe pollen—are much more difficult to discern right now, but by early spring they will become more conspicuous.

During occasional dry and mild periods, local redwoods can be seen

releasing clouds of their yellowish pollen into the air. After pollination is completed, the pollen cones will dry up and be shed, while the seed cones will increase in girth as the seeds develop within them, and eventually reach the size of marbles. Then in late fall, the cones will open, dispersing their tiny seeds to the wind.

You can see large redwoods at the northeast and northwest corners of 12th and Washington, as well as nearby at the southwest corner of 10th and Lawrence. And, of course, there's a lovely, two-trunked one with very low hanging branches by the sidewalk in front of my house. Like most redwoods, it just adores having visitors!

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Whitey is a horticulturist and teaches Tree Across Oregon for the U of O Department of Landscape Architecture.





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**Mark Your  
Calendars!**

## **Celebration of Trees**

**February 16, 2007**

7 to 8:30pm,  
at the EWEB  
Training Room.

- Meet the winner of this year's Big Leaf Award for outstanding urban forest stewardship.
  - Enjoy a talk by the evening's speaker, Neil Björklund, senior planner for the City of Eugene, and former president of the local chapter of the North American Butterfly Association.

**Food!  
Door Prizes!  
Fun!**

## **'Tis the Tree Planting Season**

### **2007 ETF Tree Planting Schedule**

All projects begin at 9:00am on the designated Saturday mornings, rain or shine. Projects are in partnership with the City of Eugene's NeighborWoods program. Look for the ETF/NeighborWoods canopy shelter at project locations.

#### **January 6** (completed) **Replacement Tree Planting**

Meet at City of Eugene Public Works, 1820 Roosevelt Blvd.

Transportation provided for a limited number of volunteers. Will depart at 9:00am. (15-25 replacement street trees, locations to be determined)

#### **January 20** (completed) **Harlow Road—Phase III**

Meet near Vincent St. and Harlow Rd. (28 new street trees)

#### **January 27** **A3 Channel & Roosevelt Blvd.**

Meet alongside A3 Channel at Roosevelt Blvd. and Terry St., located in westernmost Eugene. Partnered project with City of Eugene StreamTeam. (70-100 new streamside and street trees)

#### **February 3** **Replacement Tree Planting**

Meet at City of Eugene Public Works, 1820 Roosevelt Blvd. Transportation provided for a limited number of volunteers. Will depart

at 9:00am. (15-25 replacement street trees, locations to be determined)

#### **February 10** **Hilyard Street**

Meet near East 17th and Hilyard. (15-20 new street trees)

#### **February 24** **Campus Re-Leaf**

Meet near East 19th and Emerald. (24 new street trees)

#### **March 10** **Replacement Tree Planting**

Meet at City of Eugene Public Works, 1820 Roosevelt Blvd.

Transportation provided for a limited number of volunteers. Will depart at 9:00am (15-25 replacement street trees, locations to be determined)

#### **April 7 (Arbor Day)** **Midtown**

*Trees-for-Concrete* Project

Meet near East 16th Ave. and Willamette St. (15-20 new street trees)

For details, contact: Rick Olkowski, City of Eugene NeighborWoods Coordinator at 682-4831, or Jeff Lanza, ETF Planting Coordinator at 484-7367.

