Friends of Trees

EUGENE CHAPTER

www.FriendsofTrees.org

Eugene Tree Foundation Becomes a Chapter of Friends of Trees

After two years of consideration, the ETF board of directors voted unanimously in July to become a chapter of Friends of Trees. Thank you, everyone, for all your suggestions and support as we took this momentous step.

This fall we've had three landmark events. The Friends of Trees Eugene Chapter was officially announced at our annual meeting at the WOW Hall in September. On October 20th, FOT held its first Eugene crew leader training and gained 21 great new FOT crew leaders. Then, two days later, 16 crew leaders led eight teams with 90 volunteers to plant 100 trees in honor of EWEB's centennial, and planted another 70 trees nearby along the A3 channel. These successful events were a wonderful way to launch the FOT chapter in Eugene.

So far in 2011, ETF/FOT has had 51 events, including eight tree plantings of 320 trees and 28 work parties: 11 on Amazon Creek, seven in Trainsong Neighborhood, and ten in the Whilamut Natural Area of Alton Baker Park. FOT has also participated in five volunteer pruning events, and nine outreach and education events, and led one training. In September, FOT completed the first year of a pilot project of a cost-effective watering program in collaboration with the City of Eugene and Trainsong Neighbors. The City of Eugene contributed its water truck and approved volunteers to use it. Each week during the summer, one FOT volunteer and one Trainsong Neighbor took the water truck

Lorna Baldwin

out to water 119 trees that were planted along Bethel Drive in Trainsong Neighborhood in fall 2010. The FOT/Trainsong Neighbor team achieved over 99% survival on Bethel Drive and, along with watering, team members weeded, mulched, and inspected every tree—and picked up trash.

What is FOT?

Friends of Trees is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in Portland in 1989 by Richard Seidman. FOT has planted more than 415,000 trees and shrubs over the past 22 years. It has also won many awards for its work organizing volunteers in the Portland-Vancouver area—including a

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Lorna Baldwin

FRIENDS of TREES

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2011 Governor's Volunteer Award—and was recently voted one of the 100 best nonprofits to work for in Oregon.

FOT brings people in the Portland-Vancouver and Eugene-Springfield metro areas together to plant and care for city trees and green spaces. Its Neighborhood Trees program offers homeowners low-cost, high-quality street and yard trees and organizes weekend planting events where neighbors plant trees together to improve their community. Its Green Space Initiative program brings people together to restore green spaces in parks, natural areas, and along public bike paths and roads. By training volunteer leaders to guide weekend volunteers, the nonprofit inspires citizens to be stewards of their own community.


Jessyca Burke

The Eugene chapter of Friends of Trees serves the southern Willamette Valley. It has a local steering committee and one member of our local steering committee serves on the Friends of Trees board of directors. The Eugene office is located downtown on the corner of 11th and Lincoln. The Portland office has great staff and they have been extraordinarily generous and supportive in helping the Eugene chapter in many areas. It's really exciting to learn so much so fast and to lay the groundwork for greatly expanding our programs. These challenging economic times were the perfect moment for ETF to shift to the Friends of Trees approach, where volunteers and homeowners are supported to take over many aspects of planting and stewardship. I feel lucky that we get to join a group that is nationally recognized for its work and excellent volunteer programs.

What's Next?

Please join Friends of Trees at 2011-2012 season events. In November, there are several work parties to care for trees along Amazon Creek and in Trainsong neighborhood, and FOT staff will be attending the Portland Tree Inventory Summit. On December 10th, FOT will have our first-ever tree planting in Springfield at Rob Adams Park, in collaboration with Willamalane Park and Recreation District. Also in December, FOT will launch a new volunteer tree pruner program with two trainings in Springfield. Stay tuned for details, and join us to learn to prune trees.

Lorna Baldwin


Lorna Baldwin


Lorna Baldwin

In late winter, we will host our second crew leader training. We would like to build a core of about 50 crew leaders. Each crew leader will help out at four or five events a year, allowing us to have larger and better organized plantings and stewardship events. FOT has produced preliminary canopy cover data for Eugene and Springfield. Over the

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A Deciduous "Evergreen"

By Whitey Lueck

When referring to needle-leafed, cone-bearing trees, many people—if they are uncertain whether the trees are pines, spruces, hemlocks, etc.—refer to the trees as *evergreens* (noun). The majority of cone-bearing trees or conifers are indeed evergreen (adjective), but some conifers are *deciduous*, losing all of their leaves every autumn just like broad-leafed trees such as maples and lindens.

The deciduous conifer we see planted most often in the Willamette Valley is the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboïdes*), a species that was once known only from fossils—including fossils found in central Oregon—and thought to have been long extinct until a small population of living dawn redwoods was discovered in a remote valley in southern China in the 1940s.

A second deciduous conifer is the larch or tamarack, one species of which is native to Oregon. The western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) is found mostly east of the Cascades, but grows perfectly well on the west side, if planted. Curiously, however, we see very few cultivated western larches or any other larch species, for that matter, here in the Willamette Valley.

The third and last major group of deciduous conifers is the bald-cypresses. One species, *Taxodium distichum*, is occasionally planted in our area. A swamp-land native from southern Delaware to the Gulf Coast, west to Texas, and then up the Mississippi Valley as far as southern Illinois, the bald-cypress actually grows just as well on upland and well-drained sites as it does on water-logged soils.

Close-up of bald-cypress seed cone (produced in 2011) and clusters of yet-unopened pollen cones for early 2012.

Like all deciduous conifers, the needles of bald-cypress are relatively thin in cross-section and bright green in color. The needles, after all, need to last only one growing season, so they never acquire the toughness associated with the needles of evergreen conifers which must remain on the tree through at least one winter and sometimes several or more.

One very accessible place to see bald-cypresses in our area is near the Chambers Street overpass, on the slope just southeast of the traffic light where Chambers becomes River Road, and where the access road to Railroad Boulevard curves downslope from the light. This cluster of about a dozen trees has an interesting history. In the early 1990s, I received the trees as ten-inch-tall seedlings as a membership gift from the National Arbor Day Foundation. Although I had no room for them in my own garden, I didn't want to just throw them in the compost pile, so I planted them temporarily at my place and let them develop for a couple of years.

Photos this story by Whitey Lueck

Grove of young bald-cypresses—with autumn foliage—near Chambers Overpass.

In the meantime, I noticed that the over-irrigated and then-treeless bank at the Chambers site was filled with water-loving horsetail and was very soggy year-round. "Nothing" would grow there—other than the somewhat unwanted horsetails. So I asked permission from the City of Eugene to plant the bald-cypresses on the site, and the trees have thrived.

Several years after I planted the trees, someone planted a dawn redwood out in the middle of the adjacent grassy area. So it's a good place to see both species of deciduous conifer right next to each other, and compare and contrast the two.

A unique attribute of bald-cypresses is their habit of forming "knees" when growing in or near water. These woody growths arise from the trees' roots and sometimes reach a foot or more above water level. Properly called *pneumatophores*, their function is unclear. When planted on upland sites, however, the trees seldom develop knees unless the soil is waterlogged. The best place to see bald-cypress knees in our area is along the south edge of the University of Oregon "Duck Pond" across Franklin Boulevard

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A Deciduous "Evergreen?"

from Lawrence Hall, where a half-dozen trees are planted pond-side (see photo).

The largest and oldest bald-cypress I am aware of in our area can be seen along the west edge of Tugman Park, on the far side of the little stream that runs by just beyond the hexagonal picnic shelters. Although the site is very wet, the tree has interestingly never developed any knees. And, like the Chambers site, there are two dawn redwoods of about the same height just behind the bald-cypress, but they are very poorly developed due apparently to the confined space of the site. Also at Tugman, in a small bed on the south side of the park, is a lovely *young* bald-cypress that was planted about 15 years ago.

There are at least two sites in Springfield, as well, where one can easily see this tree. One is at the intersection of Pioneer Parkway and Centennial Boulevard. A total of eight bald-cypresses can be seen at three of the four corners of the intersection with the most stunning individual at the northwest corner. Then, way out in an industrial area in east Springfield—in a seasonally wet swale just northwest of the intersection of Olympic Street and 40th Street—is a sweet little grove of a half-dozen young bald-cypresses. How did they get there? I have no idea.

Like other deciduous conifers, bald-cypresses occasionally suffer "untimely deaths" when property owners notice that their cone-bearing "evergreens" suddenly lose all their needles in late fall, and they ask to have the trees cut down! Let's hope that doesn't happen to any of the trees mentioned above. In the wild, bald-cypresses are known to live sometimes for well over a thousand years, so the relatively young bald-cypresses of our area have very long lives ahead of them, if we can just keep the chainsaws away.

"Down by the bayou" right here in Eugene—note the numerous "knees" on this individual growing at the edge of the Millrace on the UO campus.

Whitey Lueck is a horticulturist and landscape designer and an adjunct instructor with the University of Oregon's Department of Landscape Architecture.

FOT's Neighborhood Tree Program

Friends of Trees has two principal programs, the Neighborhood Tree Program and the Green Space Initiative, which plant and care for trees and green spaces. The Neighborhood Trees Program plants both street and yard trees in neighborhoods around Portland, Vancouver, and now Eugene! We offer over 100 different species from local nurseries. All street trees are on the respective city's Approved Street Tree List. Appropriate locations for street trees are marked by the city, and homeowners are given a list of appropriate trees to choose from. During our last season, we planted 4,545 street and yard trees in Portland, Beaverton, Vancouver, and Eugene. We expect to plant about 6,000 trees this fall and winter!

Mark Mintz

Our Neighborhood Trees Program relies on three different types of volunteers. Neighborhood Coordinators are the link between Friends of Trees and their neighborhoods. They encourage neighbors to get trees and help them through the process. Our Crew Leaders are trained volunteers who train and lead groups on planting day to get the trees planted. Finally, Summer Inspectors follow up on the trees the summer after they have been planted. These volunteers help remind homeowners to water, and they also provide general tree care advice. Being a part of the Neighborhood Trees Program is a fun and inexpensive way to bring your neighbors together to make your neighborhood a more pleasant place.

For just $25 to $65, a participant receives an 8- to 12-foot-tall tree with a trunk diameter of one and a half inches. The price includes delivery, hole digging, planting assistance, mulch, stakes, and follow-up maintenance checks—worth a total of $200, much less than a homeowner would have to pay a private contractor. We also offer financial assistance to people who can't afford the fee.

Once a planting has been scheduled in your neighborhood, you can order a tree for your home by phone or through the Friends of Trees online ordering system. Sign up early for the greatest selection. Signing up doesn't obligate you to buy; it simply ensures that a city forester will inspect your planting strip for a suitable tree-planting location. After the inspection, we'll send you a list of recommended trees.

The launch of the Eugene-Springfield Neighborhood Tree Program is coming soon!

Whitney Dorer
FOT Neighborhood Trees Manager

The Wonderful World of Bark

By Alby Thoumsin

After so many years of writing articles about our amazing tree-friends—species differences, medicinal attributes, functions of leaves, the way they grow, etc.—I realize that I have neglected to discuss the bark! Often called the tree's "skin," the bark provides many benefits for the tree.

But first of all, how is bark formed? The outer, most visible part of bark—properly called *cork*—is a product of lateral cell division in the *cork cambium* layer, which often consists of just a single layer of cells. New cork cells are formed each year just to the outside of the cork cambium.

Alby Thoumsin

Oregon white oak (Quercus garryana)

Year after year, cell division pushes out a new layer of bark, so the oldest layer of cork or "bark" is that which is outermost on the tree. Due to pressure from the tree's ever-expanding trunk, as layer after layer of wood is added, the bark stretches to form cracks and furrows that are especially prominent on thicker-barked trees such as Douglas-fir and black locust.

The bark provides many benefits for the tree: It protects if from temperature fluctuations and from physical damage, especially on trees with very thick bark. It also allows the tree to "breathe" by permitting gas exchange via the *lenticels*—little "windows" or small openings in the bark, which are sometimes very obvious on trees like cherries and birches.

Whitey Lueck

The lacebark elm (Ulmus parvifolia) lives up to its name.

For someone like myself, the bark of a tree is as important as its leaves for identifying it. In winter, if I am looking at a deciduous tree and the twigs are out of reach, I rely greatly on other means of identification. The bark is often the easiest, along with the tree's silhouette or form, and its growth habit.

As you sharpen your skills, it becomes easier to see the small differences between the rough bark of an oak and, say, the bark of an ash. Some trees like the giant sequoia have very stringy and spongy bark that helps protect the tree from forest fires, since the bark smolders rather than catching on fire.

The bark of an old Douglas-fir can be so thick that it becomes a small ecosystem itself for a host of creatures. It is common to see large holes in the bark of older Douglas-firs that were created by pileated woodpeckers in search of carpenter ants—that themselves find such thick bark the perfect place to live. The holes made by the woodpeckers then sometimes attract newts or other small creatures looking for places to hibernate, hide, or just get out of the rain.

Some trees, despite old age, will always have thin bark. The beech tree comes to mind, but many cherries, mountain-ashes, and tropical trees also have very thin bark.

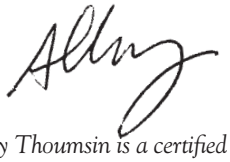
As an arborist, I always examine the bark carefully to see if any parts are showing stress marks in the form of zigzags, or if the bark is peeling. And I look for swelling of the bark that might indicate a defect of some sort, or dead areas just beneath the bark, or hidden cavities.

So you see, the bark is just as interesting as the rest of the tree. With some imagination, you can even see patterns that will remind you of faces, signs, or symbols. Some trees just have too much personality!

As winter settles in, take the time to look at trees from a different perspective. You never know what you might find.

My tip this time? I know that it's tempting to peel the bark off of birch trees—it makes a great fire starter as well as out-of-the-ordinary writing paper—but it is detrimental to the tree if one peels off too many layers, so please refrain.

Until next time!



Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.

Let us know what you think!

We like hearing from you! Write to us about what we're doing right, or what we might do differently. Contact us at

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Lorna Baldwin

Fourteen years after it was established by a few local tree advocates, the Eugene Tree Foundation officially became Friends of Trees Eugene Chapter in July of 2011.

next year, we will improve the data and produce an initial report on the state of Eugene's urban forest. Watch for the launch of a tree inspector and tree inventory program in the spring.

I want to thank EWEB and the City of Eugene for collaborating on the the October 22nd plantings. We are grateful to EWEB for leaving this legacy for the community and glad to have the opportunity to partner with EWEB on this project. I also want to thank Track Town Pizza and Oakshire Brewery for generously donating food and beverages for the event.

Now that we have concluded the process of becoming a chapter, an even more exciting time awaits us as we begin together the work of developing the Eugene chapter and bringing together more volunteers than ever before to build the healthiest urban forest possible in our region.

Cheers!

Erik Burke

Erik Burke
Friends of Trees, Eugene Director

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