

ETF News

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NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION



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



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Trainsong Neighborhood Planting in Bethel

By Erik Burke

In February 2010, ETF received a grant from the Home Depot Foundation and Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) to put together a community-driven planting and stewardship project in Eugene's Trainsong Neighborhood. Earlier this year, all ETF members received a special fund appeal for ETF's Trainsong Project. Thanks to ETF contributors to this fund appeal, a \$500 grant from Oregon Country Fair, and the ACT grant, ETF is now able to offer street and yard trees to all Trainsong residents.

If you are not familiar with Trainsong, this interesting Eugene neighborhood is located north of Roosevelt Boulevard between Highway 99 and the Union Pacific train yard. Trainsong has Eugene's most diverse mix of residential, industrial, and commercial development, and is our community's most diverse and lowest-income neighborhood. The area's unique aspects give it both character and potential, and the unimproved streets of the residential area provide a rural-like feel. Many of the trees in the neighborhood are volunteers, with a significant number of native trees like Oregon ash, Oregon white oak, and valley ponderosa pine.

The old Southern Pacific (now Union Pacific or UP) switching yard is an enormous industrial site that separates Trainsong and River Road neighborhoods, and is 1.75 miles long and 1200 feet wide in the middle. The residential neighborhood of Trainsong—sandwiched as it is between the rail yard and Highway 99—has no



View of section of Bethel Drive to be planted this fall.

Photo by Jeff Lanza

trees to provide a visual barrier or to catch dust and soot from the rail yard.

The Bethel Drive planting is designed to buffer the residential neighborhood from the rail yard by combining plantings in the City of Eugene right-of-way, with a planting on land leased from Union Pacific railroad by ETF.

Since February of 2010, ETF has been working with Union

Pacific and the City of Eugene to find a way to get trees in this barren area. After extensive negotiations, UP and ETF settled on a proposal that worked for all parties. UP will lease to ETF—for the planting of trees—a strip of land approximately 1200 feet long and 10 feet wide on the boundary of their rail yard and will donate the annual \$2,000-plus cost of this lease to ETF. The planting, watering, and care of the trees will be the responsibility of Trainsong Neighbors and ETF. This is an unprecedented project for both UP and ETF. It is critical that this planting be successful. We are very grateful for all the help we have received from City of Eugene staff, Union Pacific railroad, EWEB, and Trainsong Neighbors to make this project possible.

The Bethel Drive planting begins at 9am on November 20th—meet at the American Red Cross at 862 Bethel Drive. Please join ETF, Trainsong Neighbors, and the City of Eugene as we plant trees to beautify this diverse Eugene neighborhood.

President's Column



This has been a great fall for ETF and for me. ETF's partnership with Friends of Trees is moving to a new level with the signing in September of an agreement to form a regional

chapter of Friends of Trees that will serve the south Willamette Valley over two years. Together we are creating a new strategic plan to develop into a professional organization that can meet our region's need for tree planting, stewardship, and community building. Serving the Eugene/Springfield metro area leads to ETF's first planting in Springfield in March of 2011.

Alby Thoumsin kicked off our new work in Springfield with a wonderful tree walk in the Washburne Historic District in September.

In Eugene, a summer and early fall of work parties and tree walks in Trainsong neighborhood lead up to our first fall planting there on November 20th. This will be a special planting and a big public event, planting a living buffer between the Union Pacific rail yard and Trainsong's residential neighborhood.

We are also moving rapidly toward building much greater capacity for volunteer tree care work. Our last work party October 23rd was a good example. Trainsong Neighbors, City of Eugene Tree Stewards, and ETF volunteers pruned most of the young trees in Trainsong Park, as well as picked up garbage and removed poison oak, English ivy, and blackberries.

Our natural area stewardship will continue its commitment to Amazon Creek—between Jefferson and Chambers streets—where a year of monthly work parties is showing results. Check



Photo by Ashley Snow



Photo by Jeff Lanza



Photo by Jeff Lanza

our website calendar for planting dates with the City of Eugene Stream Team. I am especially excited about two upcoming plantings that will complete a corridor of native trees between Polk and Chambers Street that connects to an adjacent group of existing native trees.

Our plantings and stewardship work couldn't take place without the good work of our wonderful volunteers. Thanks to all of you and to all donors to ETF. We're also grateful to our collaborators, the many neighbors who volunteer with ETF, and the excellent staff at City of Eugene Parks and Open Space with whom we work and from whom we receive much assistance. Come join us at 9am on November 20th at the American Red Cross on Bethel Drive to kick off another great ETF planting season!

Erik Beurke

Top, ETF Education Chair, Alby Thoumsin, leads a Tree Walk in Springfield (summer, 2010). Left, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy lends a hand at the Arbor Day 2010 planting in front of the Eugene Weekly building on Lincoln Street. Below, a sizable group of volunteers came out for this Arbor Day Trees-for-Concrete project in April.

Two Serious Problems

By Alby Thoumsin

In early October, the largest American elm I have ever seen disappeared from a backyard here in Eugene. It was not a case of vandalism, nor was it just the removal of an unwanted tree. Rather, the elm was taken down because it was infected with Dutch Elm Disease or DED. The disease has been present in the Eugene area since the 1980s, but because Eugene has relatively few elms—and the particular strain of the fungus found here is of relatively low virulence—its spread has been sporadic. What prompted me to write this article was the fact that the elm was so large and prominent in the College Hill neighborhood (19th and Olive) that its absence now is very noticeable.

The owner of the property where the elm grew called me in early September to see if the tree was alright. “It looks sparser than usual,” she told me as we walked through the house to the backyard. I had already noticed the relative lack of foliage from the street, and remembered the tree being much healthier in the past. Sure enough, leaves were wilted and discolored, and a large portion of the tree had already lost most of its foliage (see photo).

DED (*Ceratocystis ulmi*) arrived in the U.S. sometime before 1930 in elm logs imported from Holland—hence, the disease’s common name. The disease spread quickly through North America with the help of both the European bark beetle—which carries the spores of the fungus from tree to tree—and people transporting infected elm wood. The fungus kills the tree by plugging the cells that conduct water and nutrients to the canopy, which causes the wilting that is an early symptom of DED. Also, by scraping the bark of a wilted branch, one can sometimes see narrow, brown streaks that follow the wood’s grain—another sign of an infection.

Eventually, the fungus travels throughout the entire tree and death



Photo by Alby Thoumsin

can come in a matter of months. The disease also spreads by natural root grafts—between adjacent elms that have intertwined root systems—which is one of the reasons that entire neighborhoods lost all their elms at once, because the elm trees had been planted close together in long rows.

DED poses such a threat that the City of Eugene has an ordinance giving it the authority to remove any infected tree within the city limits—even on private property—in order to slow the spread of the disease. The entire tree, once removed, needs to be buried or—if the wood is being saved for milling into lumber, which is the case with this giant elm—the bark needs to be removed and either burned or buried as well.

Since DED’s arrival in Eugene over two decades ago, it has bounced around the central part of the community, killing some trees and sparing others. Several of the more outstanding elms remaining include a street-side tree at 1349 Patterson Street; one at 2335 Alder Street; a lovely pair at the southwest corner of East 21st Avenue and Agate Street; and one at the northwest corner of West 5th Avenue and Lawrence Street. These individuals could persist for many decades yet—or they could become infected during the next growing season in 2011 and die.

It is possible to treat healthy elms

preventively by injecting them with a fungicide in early spring. The fungicide is carried into the tree’s conducting vessels and distributed systemically throughout the entire tree. The treatment, however, is expensive and involves drilling small holes around the entire perimeter of the tree’s base—and it needs to be repeated every two to three years.

There is no easy answer, but should we let Eugene’s remaining elms succumb to DED? One of the best ways to ensure survival of the remaining trees is frequent monitoring of their health and thus very early detection of the disease, which is not always easy.

Another newcomer—thousand cankers disease or TCD—is almost as nefarious as DED and kills black walnut trees. The canker-producing fungus (aptly named *Geosmithia morbida*) is carried by the walnut twig beetle which infects a tree when a female beetle lays her eggs under the bark of a small branch. The mycelium of the fungus then colonizes the tissue immediately surrounding the beetle’s egg “gallery.” Eventually, a coalescence of the damaged areas from multiple galleries creates a girdling effect on the branches and they die.

So far, TCD has been seen primarily in the western states. Only this October was it confirmed for the first time here in Eugene.

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the good news is that the best prevention for diseases like these is often early detection—which results from community education. More detailed information can easily be found on Google by typing in the scientific name of either disease.

My tip this time? Well...don’t take this bad news too hard—life is still worth living, even if there are a few things we simply cannot control.

Until next time!

Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.

Fall is Pollination Time for Atlas Cedars

By Whitey Lueck

Although most tree species in Eugene bloom in spring and early summer, one can count on finding at least one or two species blooming somewhere in the area during every season of the year. Many conifers, in particular, bloom during late fall and winter.

(Because conifers or needle-leaved trees are not true flowering plants, it is technically incorrect to refer to their reproductive structures—pollen or “male” cones and seed or “female” cones—as “flowers” or to say that they “bloom,” but I’m going to do it anyway.)

In general, conifers have showier pollen cones than seed cones—at least at the time pollination is occurring and before the seed cones begin to develop. Atlas cedars (*Cedrus atlantica*) have exceptionally large and showy pollen cones, sometimes two to three inches in length and up to half an inch in diameter. The cones first become

Photo by Whitey Lueck



visible in late summer, and by October they ripen and disseminate their pollen.

The spent pollen cones are most noticeable after they have fallen, when they carpet the ground beneath the tree with what look like big, fuzzy, yellow caterpillars. But by then, their work is done and, if all goes well, the tree’s then barely-visible seed cones will have been fertilized and, the following growing season, will grow into the large, barrel-shaped, upright cones that we typically associate with all of

the true cedars (Atlas, Himalayan or deodar, and cedar-of-Lebanon).

To my knowledge, the Atlas cedar is the only tree of African origin that we cultivate in the Eugene area. It occurs naturally only in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and Algeria where, like Colorado spruce, most trees have green needles, but variants with bluish foliage can also be found. And, again like Colorado spruce, we seldom see the green form in cultivation—instead, the blue form or cultivar (**cultivated variety**) is grafted onto a green-needled seedling so the entire tree will have bluish foliage as it develops.

The vast majority of the cedars grown in the maritime Pacific Northwest are green-needled Himalayan cedars (*Cedrus deodara*)—with much longer needles and an overall droopier appearance to the tree. But keep your eyes open for blue Atlas cedars, especially in mid-fall, when the pollination season for this species reaches its peak.

Continued from page 6

Book Review by Louise Wade

The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest
by John Nisbet

ping from time to time to explore the woods and collect plant specimens. He could have headed back to England with the fall supply ship, but he decided instead to stay at Fort Vancouver through the winter and explore the Willamette River Valley in 1826. That journey was disappointing because of relentless rain and the absence of any tall trees until he reached present-day Roseburg. The Kalapuya Indian practice of burning the valley floor accounted for the absence of any tall trees.

Back in London in 1827, he was besieged with requests to speak and offers to publish his journals. The Horticultural Society provided living quarters for him at Chiswick Garden and he paid visits to family and Professor Hooker in Scotland.

Two years later, the British Colonial Office persuaded him to make one more trip to the Columbia River Valley to survey boundaries. Douglas’s journals from this journey were lost; his letters are the only historical record. An epidemic of “fever and ague” in the area of Fort Vancouver prevented his ship from landing there. So he spent some time in Monterey Bay, and then sailed to Honolulu where he was warmly received by the British consul, an amateur geologist.

Douglas eventually fulfilled his surveying obligations in the Columbia River Valley, before returning to Hawaii again to study the volcanoes. He had climbed all of them before deciding in July, 1834, to take a walk from the northern tip of the island of Hawaii over the shoulder of Mauna Kea and on to the town of Hilo, a distance of about 90 miles. It was “cattle country” and he expected to stay with ranchers. He was warned about cattle traps on the trail—steep-sided pits with branches and brush covering the opening, into which unlucky

cattle might fall. Local ranchers then killed the trapped animals and sold their hides.

When Douglas came across one of these traps, he approached to have a closer look, fell in, and was killed by an angry bull. His body was taken to Hilo, packed in salt, and shipped to Honolulu. Douglas was buried there in a small churchyard and his personal effects were shipped to the Horticultural Society in London.

Professor Hooker prepared a biographical article and selections from Douglas’s journals and letters for publication in *Botanical Magazine* in 1836.

Louise C. Wade, professor emerita at the University of Oregon, is a historian specializing in American urban and labor history. Her review of Henry W. Lawrence’s City Trees: A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteen Century appeared in the winter 2007 issue of ETF News. It is available at our website. Louise is a long-time ETF supporter.

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Letters to the Editor

We like hearing from you. Write to us at www.eugenetreefoundation.org, or at P. O. Box 12265, Eugene, Oregon 97440.

Letter to the Editor:

June 3, 2010

Dear Sirs,

We just received and read the spring ETF News. I enjoyed all three of the articles and especially the in-depth and thorough volume of information.

Thank you for the background history information. You must have done quite a bit of digging for some of the history. Again, thanks to each of you three men.

Enclosed is a small check to help with the mailing to us.

Sincerely,

Gene Pierson and wife



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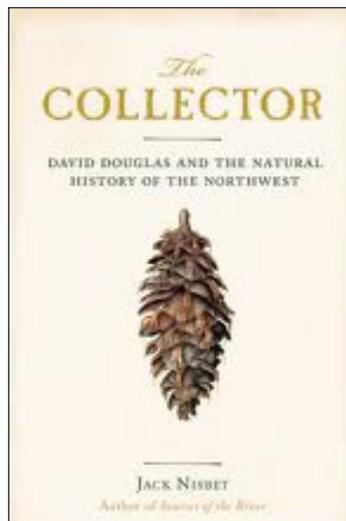
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Book Review **by Louise Wade**

The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest
(Sasquatch Books, 2009)
by John Nisbet

This is a “must read” book for all members of the Eugene Tree Foundation. Douglas’s own life is as interesting and surprising as his journal depictions of the Columbia River basin before settlers arrived to “clear the forests.”

Born in 1799 in a village outside Perth, Scotland, Douglas secured a job at Glasgow University’s botanical garden in 1820. Botany professor William Hooker allowed him to attend his classes and join his botanizing expeditions. Then he introduced Douglas to the Horticultural Society of London which was starting an experimental garden in suburban Chiswick. The Society had set aside one section for exotic plants from around the world. It



asked Douglas to go to the United States in search of fruit trees and hardwoods, especially oak trees.

Douglas arrived in Philadelphia in 1823, saw William Bartram’s garden on the Schuylkill River and met Thomas Nuttall, author of *Genera of American Plants*. He explored gardens in New York City, traveled the Erie Canal to Buffalo and then took a steamboat through the Great Lakes to Detroit in order to explore its surroundings. Back

in London in 1824, Douglas was still classifying his specimens and planting seeds in Chiswick, when the Hudson’s Bay Company contacted him. It wanted a botanist to assess the timber in the Columbia River basin. Douglas jumped at the opportunity. He packed his gear, bought a copy of Lewis and Clark’s journals, and set off on the long voyage around South America and up to the Columbia River.

He arrived at the fur traders’ headquarters, Fort Vancouver, in the spring of 1825. He admired the sky-blue camas lilies in the lowlands, but he lamented the absence of deciduous hardwoods and found the pine, cedar, hemlock, and fir trees “dense and gloomy.” But he soon changed his mind about the tree which he identified as *Pinus taxifolia*. It was “one of the most striking and truly graceful objects of Nature,” he noted in his journal. This is the tree that was later identified as a fir and named in his honor—our Douglas-fir.

Douglas traveled with the fur traders by canoe up the Columbia River, stop-
Continued on page 4