

ETF News

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• NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION •

Big-leaf Maple Flowers: Eugene's Harbinger of Spring

By Whitey Lueck

One of the loveliest signs that spring has returned once again here in the southern Willamette Valley is the appearance of long, pendent clusters of yellow-green flowers on the big-leaf maples in local riparian and upland forests, as well as along Eugene's streets. But with so many other "showier" trees with "prettier" flowers coming into bloom at about the same time—saucer magnolias, Japanese flowering cherries, dogwoods, and others—our exuberant maple friends are sometimes forgotten, or even (gasp!) ignored.

Some of us, however, find it hard to ignore a tree that merits so many superlatives. The big-leaf maple is the largest-growing maple species



Photo by Whitey Lueck

in the world. It has the biggest leaves of any of the maples. It is one of the most drought-tolerant maples known. And no other maple bears such long, voluptuous clusters of flowers. What is there to ignore?

Although most of us these days use the adjective big-leaf to specify this maple, it also is sometimes called broad-leaf maple. But my favorite name of all—which it truly deserves—is Oregon maple. Western Oregon is about the middle of this species' natural range, which extends from coastal British Columbia to southern California. And Oregon is also home to the "champion"

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ETF Joins Forces with Portland's Friends of Trees

After more than two years of discussions, Friends of Trees (FOT) is very excited to combine forces with Eugene Tree Foundation to help expand and care for the urban forest in Eugene, Springfield and Lane County, and to help restore the natural environment in our riparian areas and watersheds. This partnership will establish an FOT office in the southern Willamette Valley that will help conduct programming, train volunteers, raise necessary resources, and work with the City of Eugene and others to implement the community's urban forest management plan.

Founded in 1989, FOT brings a wealth of knowledge from over 20 years of conducting volunteer tree planting and restoration efforts in the Portland-Vancouver region. Through our award-winning neighborhood trees program, FOT has engaged tens of thousands of volunteers who have

given hundreds of thousands of hours planting over 400,000 trees! Our model of recruiting, training, and retaining key volunteers provides educational opportunities for residents and helps establish a cadre of forestry stewards that care for and promote healthy trees and watersheds.

Over the next year, we will be working closely with ETF to determine how the partnership might best move forward. This work will include scheduling planting events, engaging homeowners, planning ivy pulls and pruning workshops, and finding community businesses to help sponsor the organization's growth. Please feel free to contact us if you have any suggestions, want to volunteer, know of potential sponsors, or if you have any questions about the partnership. We are eager to help increase the region's tree-canopy cover, and hope to see you out planting in the coming season.

Scott Fogarty
Executive Director
Friends of Trees



Spring, 2011; Vol. 14, No. 2
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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*



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President's Column



Happy Spring!

It's another beautiful spring. I'm enjoying the occasional warmth of the sun, the fragrance of flowers, watching honey bees and other pollinators at

Oregon-grape flowers in my yard, and seeing trilliums bloom in our local woodlands. And I'm grateful for the rain after another dry winter.

I grew up in Eugene and assumed that the eastern U.S. was just a maze of cities. Only in my thirties did I discover the beauty of the eastern forests and get a chance to see the amazing fall color of New York and Pennsylvania. Later, after traveling through those states in April and May, I came to think that the spring in the eastern deciduous forest was even more beauti-

ful than fall with the hillsides gradually turning the freshest green and shimmering in sunlight. So it is here in the Willamette Valley in a smaller way. As I walked along the McKenzie River by the new Riverbend Hospital recently, I was stunned by the bright green and yellow colors of the new leaves on willows on gravel bars and cottonwoods along the banks of the McKenzie.

This spring ETF and Friends of Trees will have work parties along the Willamette River to help free trees and native wildflowers from ivy, to remove blackberries along Amazon Creek in preparation for planting trees in the fall, and to care for our plantings along Bethel Drive and the Union Pacific rail line. We hope you will join ETF volunteers, enjoy the wildflowers of the Whilamut Natural Area, and feel the satisfaction of doing physical work to improve their habitat. Please find an event on our website that works for you, and make your urban forest healthier and more attractive. Let us know if you would prefer to hear about these events by email or get an event list by paper mail.

On April 2nd, along with nearly 70 other volunteers with Friends of Trees

in Portland, I helped plant 113 native trees between the I-205 freeway, a light rail line, and a major road. It was impressive to see how fast the trees got mulched by a human chain passing five-gallon buckets. In less than three hours, a young forest existed where before there was a barren field.

This spring and summer ETF will be benefitting from training and support from Friends of Trees to put on more events like this in the Eugene-Springfield area. With their help, we will build the capacity of our organization, not only to plant more trees, but to make our events more fun, and our work more effective. As ETF becomes the chapter of Friends of Trees for the southern Willamette Valley, it will be great to begin working outside of Eugene, in both Springfield and Veneta. Together we can address the need for greater canopy cover in our cities and healthier local roadsides and natural areas. Thanks for all your support.

Erik Burke
ETF President

New Volunteer Opportunities

Learn a new volunteer skill this summer!

We will be training Tree Inspectors, Tree Pruners, Neighborhood Coordinators, and Crew Leaders as part of the ETF/Friends of Trees Tree Team.

Become a Crew Leader!

Take a leadership role at tree plantings and work parties. This summer ETF/FOT will focus on recruiting and training crew leaders for leadership roles at tree plantings and work parties. Crew leaders give planting or ivy removal demonstrations, ensure quality and safety, and help volunteers stay engaged and have a fun time. Each crew leader commits to helping at four plantings or work parties, and attends a day

of training on a Saturday. Trainings usually include half a day in the field and half a day inside. Tools, training, pastries, warm drinks, lunch and gifts such as a free t-shirt are provided.



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big-leaf maple in the entire world, an absolutely huge tree located near Jewell, in the Coast Range west of Portland.

If you happen to miss peak maple bloom here in the Eugene area—because, for example, you had to spend the entire month of April inside a dark closet—it is still possible to catch “the big show” at higher elevations in the West Cascades well into the month of May.

So, no excuses! Get out there and gaze upward into the gorgeous canopy of the biggest maple tree you can find, and just drool over its beauty. It will thank you for the attention by creating wonderful shade all summer, producing oxygen, providing homes for wildlife, and all the other wonderful things that really big trees do for us so much better than small trees.

Trees and Power Lines

By Alby Thoumsin

As a consulting arborist, I have noticed over the years that a fair amount of my visits with tree owners have to do with the conflict between their trees and the power lines that are often placed along property lines, alleys, and streets in older neighborhoods.

It usually starts with a notice sent in the mail by the power company—EWEB in Eugene and SUB in Springfield—mentioning that one or more of your trees are getting close to electrical lines, or “primaries.” These lines are located near the top of the pole, and often at each side of a cross bar that forms a “T” at the top of the pole (if there is more than one line). Unlike the smaller line that leads to your house, the primaries are not insulated by a plastic coating—which is why trees need to be pruned away from them. Any contact between a tree and the primaries could create a short circuit, burn the tree, or blow up an entire neighborhood in the case of a large branch or tree falling onto two lines at once.

Most of the discussions initiated by *The Notice* concern the fate of the poor tree, the result of the pruning to be done by the power company, and “can you do the pruning so that they don’t butcher my tree?” Well, I wish I could help but very, very few tree services are certified to work within ten feet of primaries—or an even greater distance if the lines are higher voltage. OSHA regulates that part of the industry and any violation of the law results in expensive fines.

In short, if any part of the tree is within ten feet of a line, I am not allowed to prune the tree and have to call EWEB or SUB so that they can do the clearance first, and then I’ll be legal. The frustrations associated with *The Notice* are often the result of poor planning—sorry to say—when we forget to do our “homework” as we design a new planting. We often forget to “look up” as we get excited about planting a new tree and we fail to notice the primaries right above our

favored spot for the new tree.

The pruning crew hired by the power company then becomes the lightning rod of our rage as we see the tree we adore—and that was doing so well—suddenly lose a third of its height, ruining its form forever! I often put myself in the pruning crew’s shoes as I notice that they almost always inherit situations they didn’t create.

In order to try to reduce the inevitable friction, I’m going to give you a few recommendations that should help in the future:

1. As I said above, do your homework! Get the right information about the tree you really want to plant; it is just as important to choose the right tree for the right space as it is to choose the right tree for the right soil type. Check the list below.

2. Some trees, however tall, have a fairly narrow crown, often allowing you to plant them closer to primaries than, say, a bigleaf maple.

3. Even if you plant a big-leaf maple right under power lines, the situation is not hopeless. Pruning early in the life of the tree that is called *directional pruning* can influence the growth of a potentially large tree by forcing the tree branches to “avoid” the power lines, and hopefully rejoin again above the lines and thus reduce maintenance.

4. Act locally and try to change the code by proposing new ideas on power line placement. Whitey Lueck wrote an interesting article years ago that reflected ideas from other communities where power lines were insulated as they passed through tree canopies, or even attached directly to the trunk, allowing the canopy to freely grow above! Why not?

The following trees are good candidates to grow under power lines:

- ‘Golden Desert’ ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
- most species of hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*)
- most species of crabapple (*Malus spp.*)

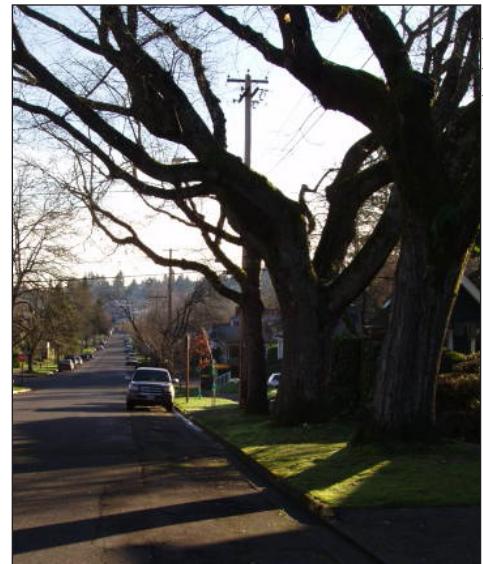


Photo by Helen Liu

- most species of flowering cherry (*Prunus spp.*)
- Japanese snowbell (*Styrax japonicus*)
- Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*)
- eastern flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)
- red horsechestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*)
- eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

With this list in hand and the ideas I mentioned above, I hope you’ll be able to avoid receiving *The Notice*!

My tip this time? Thank the power company when they restore power after a storm. They have a difficult and very dangerous job!

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

Letters to the Editor

www.eugenetreefoundation.org, or at P. O. Box 12265, Eugene, Oregon 97440.



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Photo by Mary Kay Nitchie



2011 ETF/Friends of Trees April-June Event Schedule

- Sat 4/30** Veneta Arbor/Earth Day, 10-4pm
- Sun 5/1** Trainsong Work Party Bethel Drive, 1-4pm, Sun
- Sat 5/7** ReWild Festival, Wayne Morse Ranch, 10am-4pm
- Sun 5/15** Mt. Pisgah Wildflower Show, 10am-4pm
- Sat 5/21** 1. Tree Stewards Pruning 9am-12pm.
2. Eastgate Woodlands, WNA ivy pull 1-4pm
- Sat 5/28** Amazon Creek Work Party, 10am-1pm
- Sun 6/5** Trainsong Work Party Bethel Drive, 1-4pm, Sun
- Sat 6/11** Alton Baker Park Work Party, 9am-1pm
- Sat 6/18** 1. Tree Stewards Pruning 9am-12pm.
2. Eastgate Woodlands, WNA ivy pull 1-4pm
- Sat 6/25** Amazon Creek Work Party, 10am-1pm
- Sun 6/26** KLCC Garden Tour, 9am-5pm

If you have questions, or need information about specific locations, please go to ETF's website calendar, or call 541-525-9395.