

SUFA E-News Spring 2023



Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of the Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates (SUFA) newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will keep you informed about how you can participate in SUFA's efforts to increase the tree canopy in Sunnyvale through education, tree plantings, and advocacy.

Only 13 Trees Are Left in the **Branch Out Sunnyvale** Program! Get Yours Today!



Branch Out Sunnyvale has planted 32 trees with five more ready to go in the ground in the near future. Only 13 trees remain in this cost-saving program. For the low cost of \$50 you can have a tree planted on your property!

You will be advised on tree selection and care requirements and the tree will be delivered to your home and planted - all courtesy of Our City Forest. The majority of the cost is being covered by the City of Sunnyvale in an effort to increase our urban forest canopy. Submit your application today to schedule a spring planting!

For details on the program and links to the application, visit <http://www.sunnyvaletrees.org/branch-out-sunnyvale/>

"I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues."
The Lorax

Advocacy Coordinator Needed

Our urban forest in Sunnyvale is in great need of a Lorax - actually, a volunteer Advocacy Coordinator. This position would involve speaking during the public commentary periods at City Council and Planning Commission meetings on behalf of Sunnyvale's urban forest. A long-term goal would be to develop a team of volunteers to take on this task as well as to advocate to businesses for the preservation and addition of trees on their property.

If you would like more information or would like to volunteer please contact us at info@sunnyvaletrees.org.



Sunnyvale Celebrates Earth Day 2023

The City of Sunnyvale celebrated Earth Day with two tree planting events the second week in April. At the first planting, students at Cupertino Middle School planted

crepe myrtle trees in five long-empty planter boxes at the school. Once mature, these trees will provide both beauty and needed shade for the campus.

Later in the week, Braly Elementary School students planted ten flowering cherry trees in Japanese-themed Braly Park. This brings the total number of cherry trees planted over the past three years to thirty. Sunnyvale's sister city, Iizuka, Japan, donated the funds to buy the new trees of the cultivar *Prunus x yedoensis* 'Akebono'. Present at the planting were Leonard Dunn, Urban Landscape Manager for the city, Mark Kato, president of the Sunnyvale Sister City Association, and Joe Gonsalves, recently retired city arborist whose idea many years ago was to plant flowering cherry trees at Braly Park.

A big thank you to the Sunnyvale Parks and Street Trees Division staff, Braly and Cupertino Middle school students, and our sister city, Iizuka, Japan.



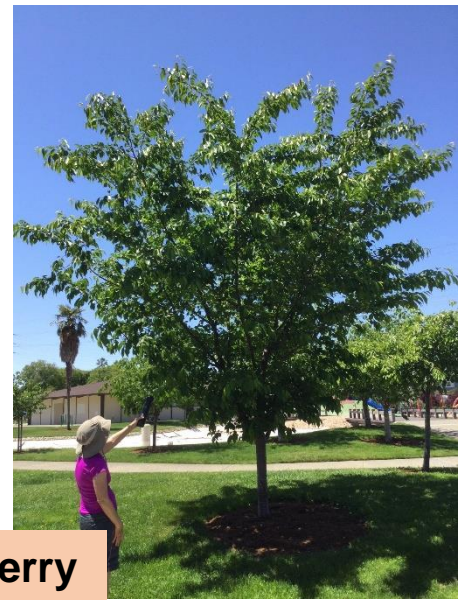
Cupertino Middle School students planting crepe myrtles on their campus (*left*). Braly Elementary students planting flowering cherry trees at Braly Park (*right*).

To learn more about Iizuka, Japan and the Sunnyvale Sister City Association visit: <https://sunnyvalesistercity.org>

We continue our series featuring common Sunnyvale street trees with information about the trees presented in an interview format. These are trees you'll see as you walk or bike through Sunnyvale neighborhoods or parks.

SUFA: Thank you for being willing to be interviewed by Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates. First, can I get your full name?

Cherry: Of course. I am a flowering cherry tree – *Prunus x yedoensis* “Akebono”. The genus *Prunus* meaning cherry or plum.



Tree on the Street Interview: Flowering Cherry

SUFA: I've never interviewed a tree with a middle name before. What does the 'x' stand for? Xenia? Xerxes?

Cherry: No, no, no. The 'x' stands for “cross”. I am a hybrid between two other species, likely the Oshima cherry and the weeping Japanese cherry. Family trees can be very confusing as you know - especially tree family trees. Anyway, it's somewhat murky but it seems we came into being in the early 1700s in Edo (now Tokyo), Japan, hence the “edo” in *yedoensis*.

SUFA: And what about “Akebono”?

Cherry: Ah! Now we're 5,000 miles and two centuries closer! “Akebono” is my cultivar name. Cultivars are bred to show distinct and desired traits – we “Akebonos” are more disease resistant, have a more moderate stature which spreads with age, and pinker blossoms than the original *Prunus x yedoensis*. And get this! We were developed in 1925 by the W.B. Clarke Nursery just down the road in San Jose. Does that qualify me as a California native?

SUFA: No, I think not. Does “Akebono” have a meaning?

Cherry: Yes, indeed. It means “daybreak” in Japanese and here's a fun fact – in Japan we're known as “Amerika”.

SUFA: And do you have cherries?

Cherry: Well, not the type of cherries you humans would buy at a market. We have small blackish fruit known as “drupes”. Humans find them acidic but birds love 'em!

SUFA: And where do you hang out in Sunnyvale?

Cherry: Well, I'm here in Braly Park in the section of older cherry trees but there's a group of thirty youngsters here in the park all of which have been planted just in the past three years and all courtesy of Sunnyvale's sister city, Iizuka, Japan. Iizuka also gave Sunnyvale a group of “Akebonos” which line Olive Ave. in front of the Public Safety department.

Continued on next page

SUFA: I've seen cherry trees at the Library that look very different from you.

Cherry: Ah, yes. Anyone who has parked at the library has walked by these trees. They are cousins of mine (first? third? fifth? Who knows!) that have double blossoms as opposed to my single blossoms. Not that I'm jealous, mind you.

SUFA: Well, lastly, we always ask our street tree interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What would you say?

Cherry: Hmmm... We are powerline friendly, drought tolerant once established, and as we age we spread out so we're great for providing shade. Bees love our blossoms, and, as I mentioned, birds love our drupes. But, if I may be honest, we are just downright beautiful all year long. In the spring we have soft pink blossoms, turning to white. In the summer our leaves are glossy and dark green. We turn beautiful colors in the fall before our leaves drop to show our interesting gray bark. Sigh. It's hard to be humble when you're so lovely...

SUFA: Indeed. Any last words for our readers?

Cherry: Yes! Come to Braly Park next spring and see all of us in bloom. Sunnyvale is getting close to being able to have its own cherry blossom festival!



"Akebono" cherry trees, Braly Park and their single blossoms (*left*). "Kanzan" cherry trees at the Library with double blossoms (*right*).

SUFA Educates and Advocates at Earth Day Celebrations

SUFA participated at the Library Earth Day event on April 15th (*left*). Sunnyvale residents stopped by our booth to learn about our urban forest and what they can do to support the tree canopy. SUFA also led two short tree walks around the Library.

SUFA also joined with other environmental groups at Earth Day celebrations at both Homestead and Fremont High Schools (*below*).

