

SUFA E-News Summer 2024



Welcome to the Summer 2024 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.



Family-Friendly Serra Park Tree Walk

Calling all families with kids ages 5-10! It's time to unplug your devices! Put on your walking shoes and hat, bring your enthusiasm, and get ready to learn about trees through SUFA's second annual family-friendly tree walk at Serra Park.

Family Friendly Tree Walk

When: Saturday, September 7

Time: 11am -12pm

Where: Serra Park,
730 The Dalles;

Meet at the Park Building

During the tree walk, we'll focus on 7 beautiful trees, learning fun facts about them and sharing their benefits. Included in the walk will be the coast redwood, the strawberry tree, and the scarlet oak.

There will be child-focused activities all along the way including:

1. Tree rubbings - we'll capture the amazing bark and leaf patterns of the Chinese elm and western sycamore.
2. We'll touch and examine laurel fruits, oak acorns, and sycamore seed pods. Did you ever wonder what happens when the wind blows on seed pods?
3. We will also attempt to create the famous "fairy ring" of the redwood trees! And there's so much more!

We hope this family-friendly tree walk encourages your family to spend more time with nature, as well as appreciate, care for, and protect the magnificent trees we have in our Sunnyvale parks! We hope to see you all very soon!

Please note: adult accompaniment of participating children is required

Tree Walks at Historical Murphy Park



Thursday, August 14th: 7pm - 8:30pm
Saturday, August 16th: 11am-12:30pm
Murphy Park; 260 N. Sunnyvale Ave.
Meet at the park building.

While the Murphy Bayview home no longer exists, seven trees from the homestead remain in Murphy Park, including the two palms that originally graced the house (above).



SUFA will be leading two tree walks this week at Murphy Park - the site of "Bayview", the original Murphy family home and ranch. The Murphy family played a large role in the founding and development of the city of Sunnyvale. Many of our familiar street names including: Arques Ave., Carroll St., Mathilda Ave., Maude Ave., and, of course, Murphy St. are named after Murphy family members. The walk will include many of the trees found in the park including seven trees from the original Murphy homestead. In addition, there will be an opportunity to see and hear about the history of one of the original Hendy stamp mills and the plaque commemorating the De Anza expedition.

Edible Tree Walk 2024

SUFA's ever-popular Edible Tree Walk held last month was wait listed as usual and those able to attend were not disappointed. The walk took us through several blocks around the S.N.A.I.L. neighborhood of Sunnyvale. (the name refers to an acronym for Sunnyvale Neighbors of Arbor Including LaLinda - not the garden pest).



Along the way we met two urban farmers who have filled their front yards with vegetable beds and fruit trees. Among many other things, we learned about Peruvian plants, edible cacti, and how magnolia flowers can be pickled and eaten. We learned that juniper berries are used for making gin and the stalk, leaves, and the bulb of fennel are edible. Also, several plants, including the mimosa and liquidambar, have medicinal properties.

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Edible Tree Walk 2024, continued.

We finished with cookies and tea in a backyard "urban food forest" that has over 30 trees and bushes, including three grafted "fruit salad" or four-in-one trees. In one standard-sized lot, we saw trees of apricot, peach, plum, nectarine, cherry, avocado, orange, mandarin, lemon, several lime varieties, persimmon, fig, banana, and passion fruit.

Some the trees and fruit found in Jenny's backyard "urban food forest"

It was inspiring to see so many well cared for fruit trees and vegetable gardens in a such a small neighborhood and we thank the S.N.A.I.L. neighborhood for hosting our walk for the third year in a row. If your neighborhood has similar growers and the trees are visible from the street, please let us know so we can duplicate this event in other parts of Sunnyvale.

A very special thank you to SUFA volunteer Jenny Purushotma for leading the walk and hosting us with refreshments in her food forest backyard afterwards.

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.



Tree on the Street Interview: The Flax Leaf Paperbark

SUFA: Good afternoon! Thank you for being willing to be interviewed by Sunnyvale Urban Forest Advocates.

First, can I get your full name?

Paperbark Tree: G'day to you and of, course I'll share my name. My formal Latin name is *Melaleuca linariifolia*.

SUFA: Can you elaborate?

Paperbark Tree: Well, the species name has a somewhat boring origin and simply means that my leaves are linear in shape like those trees in the genus *Linaria*. Nod if you're still awake. Okay. Good, onya! More interestingly, my genus name comes from the Greek "melas" meaning "black" and "leukos" meaning "white" – apparently, because some of the first ones of us to be described had black streaks from fire on our white bark. But, I also have heaps of nicknames.

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The beautiful blossoms that create "snow in summer" (left) and the peeling "paper" of the flax paperbark tree (right).



SUFA: Could I bother you to share some of them?

Paperbark Tree: No worries! I'm also known as flax leaf paperbark, narrow leaf tea tree, and honey myrtle, but my personal favorite name is snow-in summer. You can call me Paperbark, though.

SUFA: I'm intrigued by the nicknames paperbark and snow-in-summer. Where did they come from?

Paperbark Tree: Well, the name paperbark comes from the fact that my bark peels away in paper-like sheets and snow-in-summer is because in the spring and early summer I am choc-a-block with white blossoms shaped like bottle brushes. (A shout out to my distant cousin the bottlebrush plant found in many a Sunnyvale garden!).

SUFA: You don't sound like you're from around here. I'm guessing you're not a California native.

Paperbark Tree: Fair dinkum! The *Meleleuca* genus has over 230 species almost all of which are found in Australia. We're in the same family (the Myrtle family) as my cousins from down under, the eucalyptus. I'm here on Sequoia Ave. with about ten other mates. Altogether, there are about 200 of us throughout Sunnyvale.

SUFA: What else can you share with us?

Paperbark Tree: Hmmmm... well, we, along with our cousin, *Meleuca alternifolia*, are the source of tea tree oil which, because of its antifungal and antibacterial properties, is widely used as a natural antiseptic for insect bites, wounds, burns, and acne. Aboriginal Australians use our leaves to fight skin infections. The indigenous peoples also use our bark for kindling and to make bandages, shelters, sleeping mats, and disposable raincoats.

SUFA: Well, thank you! You've been very informative. Lastly, we always ask our tree interviewees what makes them a good tree for the urban forest. What would you say?

Paperbark Tree: Well, our flowers attract heaps of honey bees and other pollinators. We provide a lot of shade, we're of modest height, and, being from Australia, we're very drought tolerant. And, crickey! What's not to like about "snow in the summer" for a couple of months?