



The Trees in California's Cityscapes

Matt Ritter

We Californians need not travel to exotic places to see an eclectic mix of trees from all corners of the Earth; we can just stroll down a local street and look up. California's agreeable climate and rich horticultural history have converged to populate our towns and cities with trees that reward those who notice them with vibrant color, bizarre shapes, unusual textures, and unexpected smells. Besides an abundant array of native trees in their accustomed habitats, California has park, garden, and street trees—our so-called urban forest—that are among the most splendid and varied in the world. These beautiful organisms, all around us, are vital to our wellbeing and worthy of our praise and fascination.

Metropolitan landscapes are not easy places for trees, yet trees are extremely important to the quality of life of the humans around them. It is no wonder that city dwellers place such great value on their trees. Trees are giving and forgiving. They beautify our world while also making urban living healthier and more peaceful. They add oxygen to the air we breathe, offer shade, muffle noise, provide wildlife habitats, mitigate pollution, capture rainwater runoff, and help conserve electricity usage. Many trees persevere in spite of multiple adverse conditions, such as benign neglect in proper watering and trimming, root constriction and compaction, air pollution, interference from neighboring trees or overhead wires, insect invasions, random acts of arboreal violence and vandalism—and in most of California, six or more months without rain.

The physical beauty of many of California's most charming communities—such as Claremont, Chico, Davis, Pasadena, Petaluma, Palo Alto, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Santa Monica, Santa Rosa, Sonoma,

Visalia, to name just a few—in no small part is due to well-tended trees lining the streets, filling parks, gracing architecture, and inhabiting the front and back yards of most homes. Trees also make the state's largest cities—Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, and Fresno—healthier and far more livable.

Most of California is blessed with a diverse and agreeable Mediterranean climate that creates a wide range of growing conditions for trees. The dry, practically frost-free areas of coastal San Diego, the warm and sunny Los Angeles Basin, the opulent and balmy gardens of Santa Barbara, the seasonally distinct, rich, alluvial plains of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, and the foggy, windswept, sandy hills of San Francisco all favor certain tree species. California's populace, with its reverence for the outdoors and desire for greener cit-



The "urban forest" of trees lining San Francisco's streets, in back yards, and in parks softens the overall appearance of the cityscape with its many hard-edged buildings and gives it a more humanly livable look. Photo: Matt Ritter.

ies, has taken advantage of these diverse growing conditions for over 150 years.

Beyond the state's urban and suburban settlements, too, are many larger collections of trees. California has famous oak woodlands and mixed coniferous forests, with the tallest, largest, and most ancient living organisms in the world. There are also commercial orchards, monocultures of thousands of fruit- or nut-bearing trees regimented in neat rows, tended and harvested, year after year, as producers of valuable agricultural crops. Even most of California's desert areas have trees, such as the Joshua tree, mesquite, palo verde, and California fan palm, which over the millennia have somehow managed to push roots downward through dry ground, not just to survive, but also to reproduce, while sustaining other organisms that coexist with them in starkly beautiful but hot and inhospitable terrains.



particularly if they prided themselves on being tree-collecting connoisseurs.

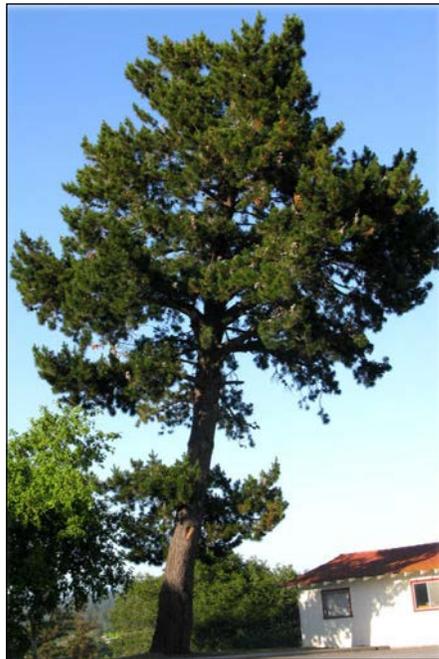
By the late 19th century, many cities and towns were creating parks for public recreation, and in them tree planting was an important activity. Streets were often lined with the same tree species, to convey a uniform and tidy allée effect. Practitioners in the new professions of garden design and landscape architecture included attractive trees in their plans for homes and for beautifying civic and commercial places, often proposing species they personally favored.

Of the approximate 350,000 species of plants in the world, about 60,000 of them are trees. California can have about 300 native tree species, one third of which are found naturally nowhere else in the world. Only in recent years have people been urged to plant native California trees—particularly ones that claim the area as their own natural habitat and are therefore already adapted to soil conditions and seasonal changes in temperature, air moisture, and water availability.

Introducing exotic vegetation of course has always carried the risk of possibly importing problematic pests and weeds. Some rapidly growing trees might be listed in the latter category. For example, acacias, eucalypts, tree of heaven, Brazilian pepper, and carotwood have succeeded all too well, becoming naturalized in parts of California's urban and wildland areas, often crowding out our native vegetation.

Of the many trees wholly new to this region that have been tried, a number of them failed to thrive, but the many that succeeded now lavishly inhabit our streets, parks, and gardens. Rather like informal arboreta and conservatories, most cities and communities display a wide range of trees along their streets, around buildings, and in parks and other public places. In many of California's municipalities, the same 150 or so preferred species are widely planted as ornamental and shade trees. These trees are most commonly grown because they have earned the favor of nurserymen, city planners, or the general public.

Before the first Spanish incursions into California, in 1769, the dominant trees were oaks, pines and other conifers. For millennia, oaks were prized by native Californians for their nutrient-rich acorns, the most dependable food source. Many other trees, though, had special practical uses. Oaks dominated hillsides and meadowlands, while sycamores and willows lined arroyos and rivers. Among other notable California native trees still with us are varieties of alders, ashes, buckeyes, bay laurels, cedars, cypresses, madrones, maples, pines, poplars, walnuts, and willows.



Wherever the 21 Franciscan missions were established, the padres planted trees for food and shade, such as olive, citrus, and pepper trees. Starting in the mid-19th century, when California joined the US, it soon became a home to thousands of newly introduced plants, including trees. The first nurseries were founded in the Bay Area; then others started up in the Southland as it attracted more settlers and became prosperous. Newcomers from the eastern and southern parts of the US tended to grow trees around their homes that had been familiar to them in childhood. Wealthy estate owners hired gardeners to landscape their properties with a wide variety of exotic tree specimens that arrived from other continents. Sometimes their choices were idiosyncratic,



From top to bottom, page 2: Peruvian (aka California) pepper (*Schinus molle*); Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*); blackwood acacia street tree (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

They are considered beautiful, but they are also resilient and often easy to grow.

Unfortunately, city-dwelling trees have some very vocal detractors. Trees can block views of the ocean or mountains, or cast unwanted shade or debris on neighboring yards and send out invasive roots. Trees are called undesirably messy because they periodically shed leaves, needles, twigs, spent blossoms, and seed pods. Some tree pollen can cause allergies and asthma attacks. Their surface roots over time may swell and stretch, to lift up, displace, and crack sidewalks, threatening pedestrian safety. Branches, limbs, and whole trees may fall, damaging property or causing injury or death. Even ardent tree lovers get discouraged and disenchanted when their trees fail to thrive, attract undesirable pests, or contract serious diseases. Still, all these potential costs of living with trees are far outweighed by the benefits they provide for us and our cities.

At their best, trees embody the strength and beauty of the natural world. The rich and subtle connections that link humans and trees have undoubtedly existed since our primitive beginnings in arboreal habitats and the origin of human consciousness. Countless writers and thinkers have tried to interpret the obscure wisdom and ancestral nostalgia that trees seem to offer us. Trees provide a central theme in literature, art, pop culture, mythology, spiritual practices, and religion. In many cultures, trees have come to symbolize community, fertility, life, and the interdependence of the natural world. In cities, trees are often poignantly contrasted with stark buildings, sidewalks, streets, and gutters—silently reminding us of lost connections with nature and our longing for a time prior to our taming and civilization.



This article is adapted from the author's Introduction to *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2011.]

Tree photos from top to bottom, and left to right: camphor street tree Cinnamomum camphora); Lombardy poplars in winter (Populus nigra 'Italica'); grove of blue gums (Eucalyptus globulus); red flowering gum (Corymbia ficifolia); ginkgo with autumnal gold leaves (Ginkgo biloba); jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia) with purple springtime flowers. All photos taken by Matt Ritter.



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The Legacy of Pasadena's Trees

Ann Scheid

In 1907, when architect Arthur Heineman proposed to the Pasadena City Council that the city begin planting street trees, he started a program that made Pasadena one of the California's outstanding tree cities. Since Pasadena by then was an important tourist destination, its civic organizations were anxious to promote civic beautification—in the full spirit of the City Beautiful movement. Heinemann argued that street trees would improve individual property values, make the city more attractive to tourists, and provide much-needed shade from the strong Southern California sun.

The initiative to institute a street tree plan in Pasadena was in line with progressive city governments of that era throughout the United States. Trees along streets were already being viewed as standard urban amenities, along with water and sewer systems, street lighting, and paved streets with curbs and gutters, as well as public parks, public schools, and public libraries.

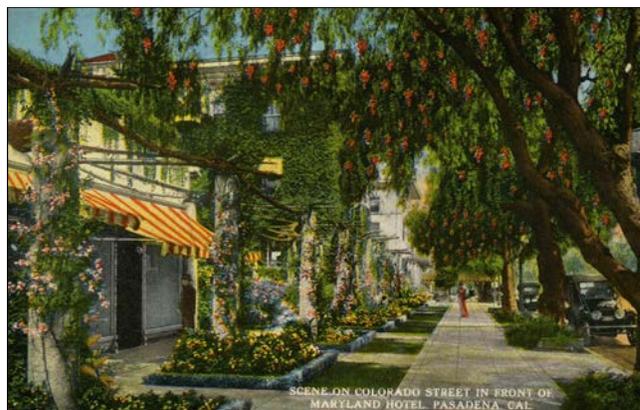
What was new then was the commitment of city governments to plant and maintain the trees in the public right-of-way between the street and the sidewalk and adjacent to the private property of a residence or commercial building. While trees had been long been planted along roads and streets, this had usually been at the initiative of the property owners, and not the responsibility of the municipality. In the process of subscribing to the modern ideas of the new professions of city planning and landscape architecture, Pasadena was in the forefront of American cities, instituting zoning regulations as early as 1914 and developing a plan for a Civic Center in the 1920s, now recognized as a landmark achievement. Pasadena's street tree program was part of this effort.

The Tradition of Planting Trees in Cities

The ancient Greeks planted trees in their cities, in the *agora* for shade and in outlying athletic fields, which had a park-like character. They usually planted plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) as ornamentals—a custom taken up later by the Romans, who also adopted many Greek agricultural practices. Trees of the same species were customarily planted in rows to mark property boundaries, thereby creating a tradition of tree-lined roads and paths. Rows of trees were also planted around vineyard edges, and of course vines and orchard trees were regimented in multiple rows.

Roman garden design used these agricultural forms ornamentally, as the powerful visual effect on the landscape of tree-lined roads, tree-lined vineyard paths, and tree rows in orchards was carried over into garden design. Both literary and physical evidence substantiates the use of rows of trees of a single species as design elements in ancient gardens and parks. The development of axial relationships in villa architecture in Roman times also influenced garden design; as the largest plants in the garden, trees in rows strengthened the architectural expression to the overall design.

Medieval gardens continued this custom of planting trees



Many collectors' postcards picturing Pasadena scenes before color photography became available are hand-colored. This photo shows the famous pergola fronting the shops of the Maryland Hotel, as well as the pepper trees that lined Colorado Boulevard from the 1890s through the 1920s.

in rows. In the largest gardens, hunting parks for royalty, "trees [were] arranged in rows radiating away from the palace, so that members of the court could watch the wildlife flitting back and forth among the allées." In addition, in "walks or bowers made entirely of leafy trees," the "king and queen may sojourn under cover without rain." (Calkins, 165-166, 173) Medieval cities did not usually have trees in public spaces; instead, trees were relegated to gardens at the rear of the house.

In his definitive history of tree planting in cities, *City Trees: A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century*, Henry W. Lawrence writes that the double row of trees, or *allée*, was borrowed for aesthetic reasons from garden design and used in cities for social purposes, such as promenades, later appearing as carriage-ways, and finally as modern urban streets. In Baroque cities, tree-lined avenues were developed as military parade routes—settings for the display of power. Individual nations developed cultural traditions, such as the Dutch practice in the 1600s of planting trees along canals, the British preference for enclosed park-like residential squares, and the tree-lined boulevards that characterized Paris, beginning in the 18th century. Early regulations in Amsterdam required each property owner to plant one tree along the frontage of his lot facing the canal. Berlin was unusual among German cities for its promenade Unter den Linden (Under the Lindens), dating from the late 1600s and created by the monarch. These various ways of introducing trees into the city were emulated by many European cities, and eventually also in American cities.

In the United States, early colonial cities were utilitarian commercial centers, where beautification took second place to practical concerns. Tree planting was up to the individual property owners, but was not required. New England towns,

usually surrounded by forests, were generally treeless. One would have expected that Nieuw Amsterdam (New York) would follow the Dutch tradition, but it had few street trees before the 1700s, when the city council allowed property owners along Broadway to plant trees in front of their houses. Scattered records show that other Manhattan streets also had trees. The South had few urban centers, with Charleston and Savannah the exceptions. The trees in Charleston's private walled gardens sometimes branched over into the streetscape but were not planted as a public amenity. And though Savannah had urban squares, they usually remained treeless until after Independence.

The development of American cities accelerated after Independence. The responsibility for initiating street-tree planting programs in cities gradually moved from homeowners and neighborhood groups to the municipality as a whole. A primary model was Washington DC, where L'Enfant's plan based on French prototypes called for broad avenues planted with trees. After New Orleans became part of the US, its fortifications were replaced with streets lined by double rows of trees, in the French manner.

Increasingly, American garden designers, landscape architects, and horticulturists traveled abroad and brought back ideas from the cities they visited. In mid-19th century Britain, the public parks movement expanded, and with the growth of London, new streets in wealthier areas often included street trees. London residential suburbs consisted of single family houses or duplexes set in gardens, whereas in Paris the new suburbs consisted predominantly of apartment blocks—a pattern common to most cities on the Continent. In the 1850s and 1860s Haussmann transformed central Paris, creating public tree-lined squares and tree-lined boulevards extending to new planned residential developments on the outskirts. In Berlin, the practice of planting street trees in the new residential neighborhoods of the expanding city was adopted by many other German cities.

Meanwhile, plant explorers were traveling the globe, bringing back exotic tree species to contribute to botanical gardens and nurseries. Many of the newly discovered species were adopted as both ornamental garden trees and street trees. The London plane tree, a cross between the

Eurasian plane tree and the American sycamore, became the standard street tree in many European cities.

Both European and American cities were developing what would become the standard features of city streetscapes: house numbers, mail delivery, lighting, water, gas, and sewer systems, and paved streets with a special space for trees between curb and sidewalk. In the US, the growth of suburbs in the late 19th century extended the presence of city street trees to these newly evolving landscapes. Planting them became a necessary part of any new development in town, city, or suburb, and by the early 20th century doing this no longer depended on private citizen initiative, but had become an accepted role of city governments, as promoted by the nationwide City Beautiful movement—initially inspired by the combination of innovative, and often monumental, civic-style architecture and correlative landscaping (notably with trees) at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.



The native oak preserved at the intersection of Orange Grove and California had a seat built around it for passersby to enjoy.

Pasadena's Native Trees and Initial Tree Plantings

Pasadena's earliest settlers recognized the beauty of the landscape, a mesa dotted with native live oaks at the foot of the forested San Gabriel Mountains, and bordered by verdant canyons where willows and California sycamores grew. Daniel Berry, who in 1873 selected the site for the new settlement, next to the canyon of the Arroyo Seco, described it: "The wood is plenty, the water delicious and cool, leaping out of the rocks on the sides in little cascades." Unfortunately, the spring-fed Arroyo land was divided among the settlers into "wood lots," and was soon denuded of most of its trees.

Pasadena residents were anxious to make their town attractive, so its original 1873 plan preserved along the new streets the existing rows of vineyards and orchards. When roadways were created, they were diverted around the native coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*). These venerable trees, standing in the middle of streets or at prominent intersections, survived into the early years of the automobile, with the last one being removed in 1916.

The earliest and most notable collection of diverse tree species was at Carmelita, located at the settlement's most prominent intersection, Orange Grove and Colorado. There



This sepia photograph depicts Marengo Avenue suitably set up with a triumphal arch to welcome the arrival of President Benjamin Harrison and the procession accompanying him down the tree-lined boulevard.

in the 1870s Jeanne Carr, a noted horticulturalist, planted a veritable forest of trees on her 42-acre estate. A native of Vermont, she was the wife of Ezra Carr, a former professor at the University of Wisconsin, where the Carrs had befriended John Muir while he was a student there. They had come to California in the 1860s when Ezra became the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction, and later moved to Pasadena. In California, their friendship with Muir resumed; he considered Mrs. Carr his "spiritual mother."

Carmelita boasted over 90 kinds of trees from all of the planet's regions, some planted from seeds brought by Muir from his wanderings in the California wilderness. White-trunked, lacy *Eucalyptus angustifolia* trees from Australia, *Araucaria imbricata* (monkey puzzle tree) from Chile, deodar cedars from the Himalayas, Atlas cedars from North Africa, Canary Island pines, Chinese elms, and *Cryptomeria* and *Photinia glabra* from Japan grew alongside native redwoods, sequoias, oaks, willows, and sycamores.

Jeanne Carr also initiated the street tree pattern in Pasadena with her planting of Monterey cypresses and California pepper trees (*Schinus molle*, actually native to Peru) the streets that bordered Carmelita, Colorado Street and Orange Grove Avenue. The cypresses formed a low hedge where, as Jeanne Carr wrote, Cherokee roses and grapes were allowed to clamber at will, "to gain a touch of wildness, as well as to secure plenteous bloom in spring and color for autumn thoughts."

Long after the Carrs' departure Carmelita survived as a public park. Reduced to a dozen acres, it served as an unofficial arboretum at one of the growing city's busiest intersections. Then the park, planned since the 1920s as the site for an art museum, was redeveloped in the 1960s when the museum (now the Norton Simon Museum) was built. Most of the landmark trees were felled to make way for the museum's parking lot.



A tunnel of camphor trees (Cinnamomum camphora) planted along around 1910 on Prospect Boulevard, alternating with Mexican fan palms (Washingtonia robusta). Photo: Ann Scheid.



California coast live oaks (Quercus agrifolia) form living tunnels along many streets in the Bungalow Heaven Historic District. Michigan Avenue is pictured here. Photo: Ann Scheid.

Pasadena's Street Tree Population

Unlike Eastern and Midwestern cities, where the American elm was the tree of choice to line streets, Pasadena took advantage of its benign climate, where almost anything would grow if given sufficient water. In the early years, California peppers, following Jeanne Carr's plan, were planted along Orange Grove, the city's major boulevard at the time. Monterey cypresses, again initiated by Jeanne Carr, lined part of Colorado Street—the principal cross-street, and later the city's main commercial street. Photographs from the 1880s show trees along other major streets, including Fair Oaks Avenue, with pepper trees lining Colorado east of the city center.

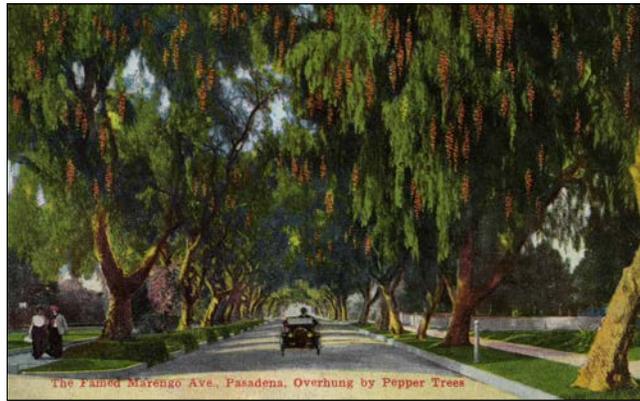
Acting on Arthur Heineman's proposal in 1907 for a municipal program that would plant street trees, the City of Pasadena established a tree nursery in 1909 and began to designate tree species for each street. Native trees as well as exotic species from around the globe were chosen to populate the streets, creating a diverse urban forest. The City's policy of planting a specific tree species on each street creates a distinctive urban space, sometimes a corridor, sometimes a tunnel of green, imparting a strong identity to each street and unifying the vista, even though the architecture along the street may be quite varied.

Affection for the native oaks was so great that it led to their becoming the principal street tree in the city. Parks Superintendent Gilbert Skutt declared that he wanted Pasadena to become an "oak city." After seven years of working in Pasadena in the 1920s, he was credited with planting 5,000 trees annually along city streets and in its parks (PSN Oct 2, 1930). Skutt's legacy is documented in the Street Tree Plan of 1940: of Pasadena's 392 streets, 136 of them were planted in California coast live oaks. Although most of the native oaks in the Pasadena area are this species, other oaks such as the Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*) and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) are also native to the area. A few trees that appear to be a result of interbreeding of these species were identified by Fred Boutin, formerly of

the Huntington Botanical Gardens in the 1970s; they can be found in Pasadena on neighborhood streets near the Huntington. Oaks still form impressive tree allées along many streets, including on South Arroyo Boulevard, and on Mar Vista, Michigan, Chester, and Holliston Avenues in the Bungalow Heaven Historic District.

At the beginning of the street tree program, residents were allowed to select the species to be planted on their street. As the city grew, however, and new tracts were developed, this became impractical, and the Parks Department began to select trees designated for specific streets. Following the early selection of the California pepper tree for Pasadena's main commercial street, this species was planted along other streets as well—the most famous being Marengo Avenue.

Another favorite street tree was the palm. Impressive stands of *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican fan palm, native to Baja California), planted a century ago, still line North Mentor Avenue and also Earlham Street. Orange Grove Boulevard, where the Rose Parade begins, has California's native palm, the *Washingtonia filifera*, alternating with mature magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*), native to the southeastern US. Mature camphor trees (*Cinnamomum camphorum*), native to China and Japan, form street tunnels on Prospect Boulevard and on San Pasqual Street. A small street, Rutan Way, is still lined with an impressive stand of incense cedars (*Libocedrus decurrens*), native to Oregon and Northern California. Purple-blossomed jacaranda trees (originally from Brazil) form a flowering tunnel in the spring on South El Molino Avenue and



Hand-colored postcards of Marengo Ave. with its tunnel of pepper trees became a tourist favorite, showing the overhanging feathery branches of the trees and large touches of red (artistic license!) to indicate the red berries.



*The oldest and most outstanding tree-lined street in the area is still Christmas Tree Lane in nearby Altadena. The deodars (*Cedrus deodara*) planted in the 1880s lining the approach to the Woodbury ranch are still illuminated during the holidays, although the once mile-long stretch has been reduced to a few blocks.*



*Incense cedars (*Cedrus decurrens*) line Rutan Way, alternating with Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*). Photo: Ann Scheid.*

along East Del Mar Boulevard. Arden Road displays fine specimens of native California sycamores (*Plantanus racemosa*), which can lean and spread easily on this street of open lawns and no sidewalks.

Although oaks made up the preponderance of street trees in Pasadena in 1940, there were 93 designated species planted on its streets, including nine species of acacia, 10 species of eucalyptus, seven kinds of palms, and six species of oaks. Today there are over 200 species found along Pasadena's streets, but not all of those conform to the Master Street Tree Plan.

Eucalyptus trees, native to Australia, have played a major role in the history of street tree and ornamental plantings in Pasadena and throughout Southern California. They are mostly out of favor now and seldom planted widely. But their image—particularly that of the blue gum, or *Eucalyptus globulus*—remains in paintings, photographs, and advertisements from the first half of the 20th century, when their tall and graceful silhouettes symbolized the California landscape to tourists and California residents alike.

Erika Esau, in her book *Images of the Pacific Rim: Australia and California, 1850-1935*, describes in her definitive chapter on the history of the eucalyptus in California how the seeds arrived with the gold miners in the 1850s and were spread by the nursery trade. Dr. F. Franceschi of Santa Barbara was an important early promoter of Australian plants for California use. Even native plant enthusiast Theodore Payne advocated planting the eucalyptus as a regionally appropriate tree. A speculative boom in the early 20th century led to the planting of large tracts of the fast-growing eucalyptus, referred to as "California's Mahogany," as they were intended to be used for railroad ties and commercial timber. The boom

became a bust when the wood failed to live up to the requirements of either the railroads or other timber users.

As a quick-growing ornamental tree in the landscape, however, the eucalyptus had an enormous influence. Wind-breaks still line roads in the fast-disappearing agricultural lands of Southern California, and whole residential developments are still characterized by their impressive eucalyptus trees.

In Pasadena, eucalyptus and gum trees remain as street trees on a few streets, and there is a notable stand of lemon-scented gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) outside the entrance to the Athenaeum faculty club at Caltech. An entire generation of California landscape painters, now admired as “California Plein-Air” artists, were known derisively as the “Eucalyptus School,” because their paintings so often depicted the trees in the landscape.

Preservation of Trees in Parklands and Other Areas

The Arroyo Seco ravine, once a beautifully wooded, spring-fed ravine, had been clear-cut by its the early settlers for firewood, then tilled as agricultural land, and finally used as both an industrial site for a rock-crushing enterprise and a city dump where incinerators burned garbage. In the late 19th century Jeanne Carr was the first person to plead for preserving the Arroyo Seco by making it a public park; later, concerned citizens began calling for this, too. President Theodore Roosevelt, viewing it in 1903, even suggested creating a national park there. Within a few years, however, a consortium of wealthy residents banded together to purchase options on the many lots, holding them until the City could assemble the land for a public park, the Arroyo Seco Park that we know today.

While residents have planted on their own properties many notable and exotic trees that later became significant landmarks, the overwhelming number of Pasadena’s trees are city trees, on streets and in parks. Pasadena’s older parks still contain fine specimens of early tree planting. In the center of town, Central Park and Memorial Park, both established in 1906, still contain some trees from that early period. Historic photos of Memorial Park show a row of palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) bordering the west side of the park along Raymond Avenue. Now mature, the palms are still there, functioning as street trees and bearing witness to the history of the park and the street.



Stately rows of Eucalyptus citriodora provide a formal entrance along the driveway of Caltech’s Athenaeum. They were planted in 1930 to a design by landscape architect Florence Yoch. Photo: Ann Scheid.



During the 1920s, Colorado Boulevard’s pepper trees were replaced by Queen Palms. Colorado Blvd. ca. 1939.

In Central Park, re-landscaped by Theodore Payne and Ralph Cornell in the 1920s, several large deodars date at least from that period, if not before. Singer Park, given to the city by the Singer family in the early 20th century, boasts a large deodar, a massive eucalyptus specimen, and a rare example of *Chamaerops humilis*, a clumping palm that is the only palm native to Europe. Washington Park, created from a natural wash in 1921 and recently restored, has four memorial oaks planted in honor of John Muir, John Burroughs, Theodore Parker Lukens, and Dr. Garrett Newkirk—all important figures in the conservation movement.

The Ambassador College campus, developed in the 1960s and later by combining several large Pasadena estates along Orange Grove Boulevard (“Millionaire’s Row”), contains many fine examples of mature trees. But the most striking tree, a massive Engelmann oak, is actually a city tree along Green Street, just outside the boundaries of the campus. Another ancient oak, reputed to be over 400 years old, grows on the Caltech campus, where it has been carefully protected since the beginnings of construction on the campus in 1912. Unfortunately it is now in serious decline.

Commotions over Street Trees

The fate of trees has never been taken lightly in Pasadena, and early newspaper articles document emotional pleas to protect and preserve trees. In the early 1900s, mutilation of trees in the way of electric wires was decried. In 1906, when Colonel Marshall Wentworth proposed building his massive Hotel Wentworth (later the Huntington Hotel) among the ancient live oaks of the Oak Knoll area, he had to promise to save as many trees as possible. When the city developed Tournament Park as the site of the annual Rose Parade festivities, again the loss of native oaks was protested.

Complaints and controversies about street trees have continued over the years. Pasadena’s main street, Colorado Boulevard, has been through several of tree designations. The early pepper trees were replaced in the 1920s by queen palms (*Cocos plumosa*), probably to provide an appropriately tropical setting for the annual Rose Parade—Pasadena’s perennial advertisement of its climate, now watched on television by snowbound Easterners.

That tree designation, though, was changed in the 1970s to the Indian laurel (*Ficus nutida*). It provided lovely shade,

but was the bane of shopkeepers, who complained that it heaved sidewalks, invaded their sewer lines, and—most importantly—obscured their signs. By the 1980s, when the Old Pasadena Historic District began to experience commercial success, the business community demanded a change, resulting in the current planting of *Ginkgo biloba* alternating with the *Cocos plumosa* (again!) along the length of Colorado traversed by the Rose Parade. (East of the Rose Parade route the street is luxuriantly landscaped with street trees along both sidewalks and in the median.) This plan, however, did not meet with total acceptance, leading a few years ago to the infamous “Midnight Massacre,” when City workers cut down a half-dozen stately ficus trees in the middle of the night—two days before a scheduled demonstration to save the trees.

Reverberations traveled to the City Council, which then decreed that no healthy public trees are to be removed in Pasadena. Later, some of the ginkgos turned out to be females, causing the business owners to complain once again to the City—this time about the noxious stench of the fruit. In compliance with the “no healthy tree removal” policy, City staff is now experimenting with various washes and injections to reduce female fertility. With new females revealing themselves every season, this may be a fruitless effort. Time will tell.

Mindful of Pasadena’s historic legacy, the City has charged a subcommittee of the Design Commission with reviewing all changes to the Master Street Tree Plan and all



Early photos of Library Park (now Memorial Park) show palm trees along Raymond Avenue.



*At today’s Memorial Park the palms still line the park’s west boundary. A towering bunya-bunya tree (*Araucaria bidwilli*), native to Australia, stands to the right of the palms. Photo: Ann*

requests for removal of public trees. This committee, the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC), contends with everyone from discontented property owners who just don’t like the tree in front of their house, to neighborhoods who want their street tree changed, to developers who want to remove trees in the way of their projects—and numerous other complaints. The Committee also has the difficult task of determining new tree species to be planted when a large project, such as the new sound walls along the 210 freeway, require the removal and replanting of trees.

Still, we can be thankful that there is enough attention paid to trees in Pasadena to warrant a committee to watch over them. Street tree planting is no longer proceeding at the pace of 5,000 plantings a year, as in the 1920s. Now the number is closer to 1,000 a year, despite serious tree losses and neglect over the years. Many streets now have gaps where trees should be replanted; many more have non-conforming trees added by property owners who have no knowledge of the Master Street Tree Plan and its intent to create uniform street corridors. Members of UFAC are now working on a public education program that will explain the role of street trees in the design of our city and their value

to property owners, in hopes of making Pasadena’s admirable tree legacy better known.

Note: All old postcards depicted in this article are copied from the author’s own collection.

Ann Scheid holds degrees from Vassar College, the University of Chicago, and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. Specializing first in Germanic languages and literature, she gravitated into historic preservation after arriving in California in the 1970s. She worked for the City of Pasadena as a preservation planner and for the State of California as an architectural historian. She has written on Pasadena history, with a special interest in landscape design and City Beautiful plans in Pasadena and Southern California. She has served on the boards of the Pasadena Historical Society and the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. Practicing semi-retirement, she is curator of the Greene and Greene Archives at the Huntington Library. She currently serves on the CGLH board of directors as its membership secretary.

Bibliography ... or For Further Reading (?)

Bidwell Park and the Venerable Bidwell/Hooker Oak

Chris Pattillo, FASLA

Until it fell in a storm in 1977, the Bidwell, or Hooker, Oak was justifiably famous. Said to be the largest oak tree in the world, it was thought to be a thousand years old. It was over 100 feet high and its branches covered a quarter of an acre, with its limbs measuring 150 feet across and the largest one having a circumference of 15½ feet. It stood in the middle section of Bidwell Park in Chico, in what is now the “Hooker Oak Picnic Area.”

Bidwell Park, with its 3,670 acres, is the third largest urban park in the United States. Beginning in 1905, the land was an incremental gift from Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell (1839–1918) and her husband. Besides being one of the first pioneers to cross the Sierra Nevada, John Bidwell (1819-1900) soon upon arrival served as the business manager for John Sutter. Bidwell himself discovered gold in 1848. He used his newfound wealth to purchase the



The Bidwell/Hooker Oak: photo on an old postcard.

26,000-acre Rancho del Arroyo Chico. In 1860 he laid out the town of Chico. In 1887 he gave 80 acres to the forerunner of Chico State University. Annie, the daughter of the Superintendent of the US Census, was an advocate for Prohibition and the suffragette movement.



The park is a long, narrow tract that starts downtown, not far from the Bidwell Mansion, and extends over five miles into wilderness. The area has a rustic, informal quality. There is little lawn as such. Instead, the park brings the wilderness into downtown. The middle portion, where the great oak stood (east of Manzanita Avenue), consists of trails and a one-way drive, all of which run beneath a continuous canopy of trees. Summer temperatures in Chico are typically in the low 100s, so the trees and the dammed “Sycamore pool” are essential amenities. Tree species are predominantly the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and native sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). The understory is mostly grasses, willow, and spice bush (*Calycanthus occidentalis*).



Bidwell Park in Chico. Photos: Chris Pattillo.

The legacy of the Bidwells—Bidwell Mansion, Bidwell Park, and Chico State University—dominates the town. Incredibly, the property around the house retains features that were depicted in a c. 1877 sketch by Smith and Elliott. Moreover, although the ancient Hooker Oak is gone, other venerable trees dating back to the Bidwell occupancy surround the Victorian mansion. Fronting the port-cochère is a southern magnolia 25–35’ taller than the three-story tower of the house. Likewise gracing the property are a spectacular tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), a South American monkey puzzle (*Auracaria imbricata*), and a Lawson cypress (*Cupressus lawsoniana*). Since 1964 the mansion has been a State Historic Park. To a unique degree, the Bidwells and Chico are one.

The Hooker Oak at Chico

John Bidwell led one of the first successful overland parties into California from Ohio in 1841. No one perished en route—a truly amazing feat, due entirely to Bidwell’s firm leadership and strict control of the emigrants. He was a schoolmaster back in Ohio, but in California became a leading member of society and amassed considerable wealth. The great ranch he established at Chico supplied wheat and orchard crops. It was also almost the first commercial olive oil business, as Bidwell, who was very astute in his judgment, had seen the possibility of making olive oil on a commercial scale. Empty bottles with the Bidwell label now fetch a lot of money in certain circles.

Bidwell entered California state politics, and his advice was sought on many occasions. One of them was during the anti-Chinese rioting in the 1880s, when he counseled restraint. Bidwell and his wife, Annie, were very pious; it was a source of terrible regret that they never had any children.

Because Bidwell had a fine reputation, prominent visitors to the state were taken to Chico. One was Sir Joseph Hooker, son of Sir William Hooker, the first director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Sir Joseph was very accomplished, traveling to the Himalayas to collect rhododendrons and to the Southern Hemisphere, where he prepared the first flora of New Zealand and the Antarctic. He lived to be 94 years old and never slowed down at all until the very end.

The huge historic oak tree was given Hooker’s name because he sat under it when he visited Chico. Who is to say he did not sit under it?

—Judith M. Taylor, MD



Preservation Matters

The Santa Barbara Main Public Library, Faulkner Gallery, and Five Controversial Trees Receive Landmark Status

Susan Chamberlin

There was never any question that when the City of Santa Barbara's Historic Landmarks Commission recommended to the City Council that they grant landmark status to the main Public Library and its attached Faulkner Gallery that they would do it. Not clear was the status of the robust, 80-year old lemon-scented gum trees around the Library (*Corymbia*—formerly *Eucalyptus citriodora*). They are significant elements in the downtown skyline, and some could be documented as part of the original landscape for the Faulkner. The HLC had included the trees in their recommendation, but this was opposed by the Library Director, the Parks and Recreation Director who oversees the property, officials with the adjacent Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and the head of the County Arts Commission because granting landmark protection to the trees would interfere with a proposal to remodel the Library entry plaza by flattening it and removing three of the most magnificent trees.

Controversial subtexts emerged during the debate including the way homeless people use the existing space as an impetus for the remodel, possible City liability if eucalyptus branches fell, and the evolution of the proposed plaza design through a process where City stakeholders participated in public workshops. One City Council member noted that the turnout in support of an issue by landscape architects, artists, arborists, artists, architectural historians, and preservationists was almost unprecedented. Also almost unprecedented was a showdown between opposing City Commissions.

I was part of a team organized by landscape architect Bob Cunningham, ASLA, to convince the City Council to landmark the trees along with the buildings. Architect Fred Sweeney persuasively argued the aesthetic value of the trees, illustrated by his own paintings. The evidence was presented: The trees are healthy and not a threat. Eucalyptus trees can be seen on a 1928 conceptual rendering of the Faulkner Gallery (then called the “Art Wing” of the Library) by architects Myron Hunt and H.C. Chambers, and trees were shown newly planted in photographs dated 1931 shortly after the Gallery was completed.

The landscape for the Library was attributed to landscape architect and longtime City Parks Commissioner Ralph T. Stevens in his 1958 obituary, but a drawing could not be found. (There is no archive of Stevens’ papers.) I did turn up exciting things, but the complete history of the Library and Faulkner Gallery must wait for another time. At the conclusion of the hearing, the City Council voted unanimously to landmark the Library and Faulkner and voted five to two to landmark five of the 13 trees, including the three proposed for removal if the new plaza is built.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob Cunningham, who initiated and persevered in the landmark designation for the trees, and correct an error that will forevermore exist in cyberspace: In the August 29, 2012 *HLC Landmark Designation Staff Report* for the property and the trees, it is stated that “... the Hunt and Chambers landscape plan did not specify the *Corymbia* (*Eucalyptus*) *citriodora* trees.” However, there is no landscape plan by Hunt and Chambers; a “Plot Plan” they produced shows only the reflecting pools (no longer extant) and their underground drain lines; there is not a stitch of planting on it.

Susan Chamberlin, a founding member (in 1995) of the California Garden & Landscape History Society, is a landscape historian with an MA in architectural history and a landscape architect’s license. She has lectured, written, and consulted on landscape history. She lives in Santa Barbara.



Three Corymbia citriodora trees (lemon-scented gums) recently received landmark status, along with Santa Barbara's Main Public Library and Faulkner Gallery in October 2012, making it more difficult to remove the trees should a plan to remodel the entry plaza ever go forward. Photo: Susan Chamberlin, 2012.

The Afterlife of Trees

Kelly Comras

Do trees have an afterlife?
Trees linger in memory, of course:
Whispering leaves, dappled shade, gnarled trunk
picturesque, and perfect.

And if they were among the beloved trees that came crashing down
in the late 2011 windstorm at the Los Angeles County Arboretum,
they linger as treasured objects.

We can sit in the embrace
of Charles Dickson's huge carved earpod tree stump,
and marvel at the lifelines in its grain.

We can run our fingers over the smooth surfaces
of Alice Martinson's turned persimmon and walnut bowls,
admiring the map of former growth spurts,
and the drought and disease revealing its singular history.

We can gaze at the intricate joinery
of Jim Butler's swamp mahogany music stand,
still upright as the tree it once was.



*Photo credits—
Bowls and music stand:
LA County Arboretum
and Botanic Garden.
Tree stump seat:
Kelly Comras.*

*Downed tree at Arboretum:
www.arboretum.org*

LA County's Windstorm of 2011 and Its Tree Casualties

For three days toward the end of 2011, from November 30 to December 2, unprecedented hurricane-force winds ripped through LA County, with their furious blasts especially targeting San Gabriel Valley. Trees along streets and in parks and people's yards were hurled to the ground or scashed through roofs, or their broken branches snagged and snapped power lines, leaving many of the area's residents powerless and in the dark for as long as a week.

The LA County Arboretum & Botanic Garden in Arcadia was hit hard: at least a thousand trees in its great collection, spanning 127 acres, were damaged, with 235 either totally downed or so badly injured that they had to be removed. The property was closed to the public for three weeks while repair work went on.

During that time the staff began receiving calls from dozens of people—artists and artisans—who hoped to obtain some of the doomed wood and then turn it into beautiful and useful objects, such as pieces of furniture, sculptures, and decorative handcrafts. So the Arboretum agreed to donate its dead trees, and secured permission for doing this from the Board of Supervisors since the trees, after all, were County property. Meanwhile, each tree—there were 46 different species altogether, with some trees very large and old or quite rare—had to be identified, along with its suitability of its wood for particular future uses. Eventually 130 artists and craftspeople received gifts of wood. All of them participated in a fundraising auction held at the Arboretum exactly a year later, and a portion of the proceeds was given to the Tree Fund for purchasing replacement trees.

Arboreta, botanic gardens, arborists, and tree services (including municipal ones) are increasingly approached by woodworking groups, craftspeople, and sculptors, who ask them to save tree trunks and large limbs from landfills, then let them haul away chunks, thus enabling the often valuable wood to be given a satisfying and perhaps immortal "new life."

John Fowles' *The Tree*

Paula Panich

John Fowles, the great English novelist, published, in 1979, a complicated essay called "The Tree." It was reissued in 2010, in this country anyway, with an introduction by Barry Lopez. I will refer to it as *The Tree*, as it is a pretty little book.

If you don't recall the novels of John Fowles, you will surely recall the movie made from one of them—*The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons.

The essay that forms this book is the kind that few readers tackle anymore: It is discursive, multilayered, redolent with subtext, and the language exquisite.

The pretext of the Fowles essay is a contrasting of the kinds of trees favored by the author's father, and those of the author himself. The father cosseted, debranched, pruned, forced, crammed in, espaliered and otherwise controlled his fruit trees, and produced wonderful fruit. The grown son favored an "... unkempt, unmanaged, and unmanageable garden." And it follows naturally that the son contrasts his own life with that of the father. "What he abhorred, I adored," writes the grown man.

That's the nut of it, and one might stop here.

But that would be a mistake.

There's the subtext, the kernel, of this astonishing work, and the reader swims in its salty translucence according to her (or his) awareness of life. I think we are like fish. How would a fish begin to describe the sea? You can begin to see the challenge.

Before we know it, halfway through this essay we are paddling in a vast sea ourselves of science, art, and the natural world. The ending of the essay is a virtuoso set piece about visiting a storied, ancient wood. Fowles makes the point, early on:

Telling people why, how and when they ought to feel this or that—whether it be with regard to the enjoyment of nature, of food, of sex, or anything else—may, undoubtedly sometimes does, have a useful function in dispelling various kinds of socially harmful ignorance. But what this instruction cannot give is this deepest benefit of any art, be it of making, or of knowing, or of experiencing: which is self expression and self discovery.

I realize I am guilty of this just by framing my own thoughts about this book.

But I can tell you I've spent good bits of time in the woods in the last seven years and thought I'd write a book about it. I took a huge sheet of paper and wrote the chapter headings. Notes and research piled up. I gave the book a title: *First There Was a Mountain*. The title, written on a three-by-five card, was pinned to the window wall above my desk, in a tiny cabin on a mountain surrounded by woods bounded by a musical creek. Dust gathered on that card. Meanwhile, I walked in those woods, drank in those woods, inhaled those woods.

Not everything can be expressed. It's a big mistake, Fowles tells us, to think it can. Amen.

About Trees ... From our Bookshelves

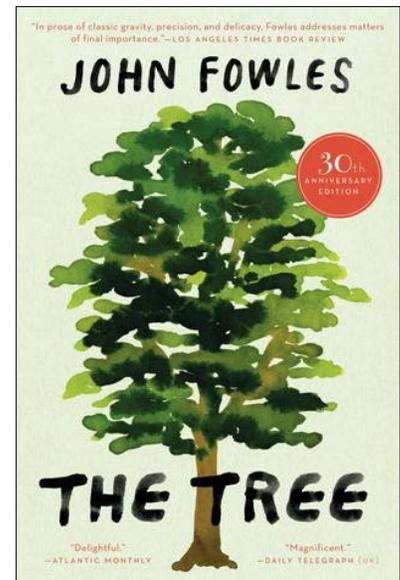
When we—your editor, editorial board, and president—thought about trees, we also, given our combined interests, thought about books. Here are a selected few from our bookshelves: some rare (and found only in specialized libraries), some readily available online (try www.abebooks.com) or in fast-disappearing bookshops.

Recent Titles:

- Robert Pogue Harrison. *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992).
William Bryant Logan. *Oak: The Frame of Civilization* (2005).
Henry W. Lawrence. *City Trees: A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century* (2006).
Thomas Pakenham. *Meetings With Remarkable Trees* (1998); *Remarkable Trees of the World* (2003).
Bruce M. Pavlick, Pamela Muick, and Sharon Johnson. *Oaks of California* (1993).
Donald Culross Peattie, illus. by Paul Landacre. *A Natural History of Western Trees* (1991; paperback reprint of 1953 edition).
Richard Preston. *Wild Trees* (2008).
Françoise Renaud. *The Tree in Photographs* (2010).
Matt Ritter. *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us* (2011).
Eric Rutkow. *American Canopy: Trees, Forests, and the Making of a Nation* (2012).
Colin Tudge. *The Tree: The Natural History of What Trees Are, How They Live, and Why They Matter* (2005).

Antiquarian Titles:

- Charles Gibbs Adams. *The Treasure Trees of California* (1931).
Ralph D. Cornell, illus. by author. *Conspicuous California Plants, with Notes on Their Garden Uses* (1938; other editions available, including a 2012 hardcover illus. by Elizabeth Lewis).



Book Review

American Canopy: Trees, Forests, and the Making of a Nation.
Eric Rutkow. (New York: Scribner, 2012). 406 pp. Hardcover, \$29.95.

In this ambitious book, the author (a PhD candidate in American history at Yale as well as an environmental lawyer) undertook writing a comprehensive history of forests in the great span of coast-to-coast land that eventually became the United States. When inhabited only by native Americans, probably almost one billion acres—close to half of the total acreage within the contiguous 48 states—were covered with densely growing trees of many species. Then the tree-cutting rampage began.

Since forests and wood were scarce in England after centuries of overuse, colonists settling along the Atlantic Coast in the early 17th century were astounded by huge stands of trees around their initially tenuous settlements. The limitless timber took on innumerable uses, providing wood for building houses, barns, churches, wagons, fences, and other structures; for making furniture and cabinetry; for crucial uses in heating, cooking, ceramics, and metallurgy. The ready availability of special types of wood (such as very tall, straight, and strong trunks for masts) started New England's first notable industry, the making of sailing ships, leading then to many other commercial ventures.

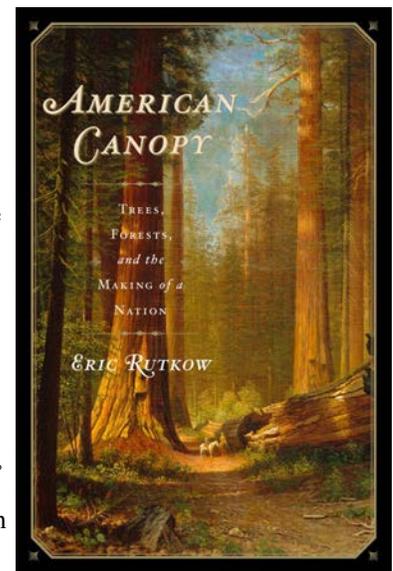
After the Industrial Revolution's arrival, great quantities of firewood were consumed in propelling steam-driven machinery in the different kinds of mills, and in the new transportation means—steamboats and locomotives. Wood was converted into charcoal to furnish the high heat needed in iron foundries, whereas initially coal was mostly ignored. Wood supplied early railways with passenger and cargo cars, rail ties, bridges, depots. Tall and sturdy trunks became telegraph poles holding up wires that quickly transmitted messages across vast distances. By the mid-19th century, the cellulose in wood, converted into pulp, allowed the manufacture of paper far cheaper than that made from cloth rags—thereby greatly expanding the printing and distribution of newspapers and books that informed and educated the democracy's public.

As settlers moved ever westward, and southward toward the Gulf of Mexico, seemingly limitless forests were profligately depleted of pines, hemlocks, spruce, firs, and other useful trees, with unwanted remnants left to rot. The heavy consumption ignored any need for replacement. After New England's forests were exhausted, shrewd and ambitious timber "barons"—most notably Frederick Weyerhaeuser—acquired gigantic tracts of land in the Great Lakes region, then expanded beyond. Jumping over the almost treeless Great Plains, they grabbed great holdings in the Pacific Northwest, the final and richest source of forest trees. In the early decades of the 20th century, timber harvesters and sawmill workers in the Northwest and the South began protests against long hours, low wages, and dangerous and unhealthy working conditions, bringing on unionizing efforts and savage conflicts. By then, too, forest conservation programs were making some headway.

The book gives considerable attention to significant efforts, begun in the mid-19th century, to awaken nationwide awareness of the need to preserve, protect, and replant forested areas. George Perkins Marsh's influential *Man and Nature* (1862) first sounded the call for tree conservation. Inevitably, conflicts arose between the new phalanx of tree protectors and the tree-consuming industries whose activities continuously damaged watersheds through land erosion and water runoff while making landscapes—and communities located within or near them—highly vulnerable to wildfires. At its lowest point, the total of the forest areas declined to about 600 million acres. (It has now grown back to an estimated 750,000.)

Rutkow tells of the admirable forest-saving and –renewing efforts of both Presidents Roosevelt. During his years in office Theodore protected forests by founding many national parks, forests, and monuments. Franklin created the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps. During the CCC's nine years of existence it gave forest-based jobs to 2.5 million previously unemployed young men, who then planted some 3 billion trees, built campsites, and cleared or created 100,000 trails. FDR also launched the windbreak-planting program in farm and ranch lands, and the long, wide stands of trees helped prevent further erosion and dust storms during the disastrous drought years of the '30s.

Acknowledged here are many individuals and organizations, along with federal and state agencies, that made great efforts to protect and replant trees and to regulate the lumber industry's incursions in publicly owned forestlands. Technological advances, initiated by the federally funded Forest Products Laboratory, were encouraged, so that eventually all parts of harvested trees could be used, to eliminate waste. Numerous notable tree-connected men are profiled (but no women!). Most had an early interest in trees, usually resulting in diverse careers. Among them: early horticulturist John Bartram (in 18th-century Pennsylvania), "Johnny Appleseed" Chapman, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Law Olmsted, John Muir, plant explorer David Fairchild, forester Gifford Pinchot (who learned early from new European practices), the Levitt brothers (who created from forest products post-WWII Levittowns), and ecologist Aldo Leopold. Rutkow also details the tree-loving passion in two "founding fathers"—Washington and Jefferson. Intriguing tales are told, as of the origin in 1872 of Arbor Day in Wisconsin, which eventually went nationwide. J. Sterling Morton's organizing spirit evolved into the now even more widely celebrated Earth Day, which gives attention to environmental and ecological concerns—local, national, and planetary—and encourages people everywhere to plant trees to bolster the "urban forests" in their own communities.



The narrative is mostly chronological in its coverage, in 10 chapters, of four full centuries of forest-consuming time. It becomes more topical when dealing with different facets of organizing themes chosen for particular chapters, such as “Trees as Good Soldiers and Citizens”—when forests provided wood (some very special kinds) needed for combat on land, sea, and in the air, and required military-style recruiting and training of workers. In “Postwar Prosperity,” the subhead section “A Nation of Vagabonds” describes Henry Ford’s successful in-person promotion of recreational “autocamping,” which by the early 1920s annually lured some 6 million drivers into forested areas with campsites. “Under Attack” introduces the specter of deadly, rapidly communicable diseases that afflict trees and can wipe out entire forests, orchards, and ornamental trees. The Plant Quarantine Act of 1912 began imposing stringent inspections of imported plants and plant products to prevent entry of infectious microbes and larger organisms, such as insects, that carry them. All trees in Japan’s first shipment of flowering cherry trees to Washington DC had to be destroyed. Rutkow tells the tragic tales, in both economic and aesthetic terms, of the American chestnut blight that during the early 20th century rapidly eliminated this much-loved majestic, multipurpose tree; then came of the widespread demise of the stately American elm (the historically symbolic “Liberty Tree”), in a beetle-transmitted fungus. Lethal tree plagues have often occurred since then, usually originating from foreign sources. (Threatened now is California’s citrus industry, which began in the 1870s with the navel orange’s arrival—told in Chapter 6’s “New Frontiers.”)

Rutkow’s book considers two of California’s three record-holding tree species. Methusaleh, the bristlecone pine in the White Mountains, is close to 5,000 years old—though not as old as Nevada’s Prometheus had been, and the Introduction tells how it was stupidly cut down in 1964 after a tree-ring extracting device got stuck in its gnarled trunk. The *Sequoia gigantea* stands in the Sierra Nevada are famed as the world’s biggest single trees. Oddly, though, this book barely mentions the planet’s tallest living trees (with one said to be 380 feet high): the *Sequoia sempervirens*. The wholesale felling of entire coastal redwood forests during the last half of the 19th century and well into the 20th is a grim story that surely belongs here. But it’s included in the larger coverage of the rape of fir, spruce, and pine forests in the Pacific Northwest, which over time have become better managed. Rutkow also acknowledges the conservationists’ handy new weapon used to preserve old-growth forests: the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as when agitating to protect the native habitat of the elusive spotted owl, thereby enraging lumbermen.

The author often stresses the importance of good forest management: conserving trees in forests and of continuously planting the right ones in suitable places, including our cities’ “urban forests.” Trees should matter to everyone, not just to ardent environmental activists. Human respiration needs the balanced exchange occurring as plants all around us—trees especially—use photosynthesis to supply their growth needs for carbon, thereby converting into oxygen all that gaseous carbon dioxide that we and animals generate, but is also constantly produced in many other ways, such as the burning of wood (which is mostly carbon). We are urged to retain and reestablish large masses of tree canopies in forests and jungles throughout the planet, to help mitigate, albeit belatedly, the disastrously inevitable climate change due to the “greenhouse effect” in global warming. The continuously mounting presence of CO₂ is primarily caused, of course, by several centuries of gross use of fossil fuels, especially in using oil and gasoline to power many kinds of machinery—often done wastefully to more rapidly deplete finite supplies. Ironically, all coal and much of petroleum actually are derived from the decayed remains of ancient trees and other plants confined for millennia while buried deeply underground and under great pressure.

American Canopy provides a fact-filled coverage of an important subject not often considered in a wide historical angle, along with detailed biographical and sociological information. It’s apparently intended for the general reader, not for tree experts and scholars, though some may find in it interesting facts and stories for possible future use. Still, the book scarcely makes for light reading. Its dense text of over 150,000 words is documented with many unobtrusive endnotes and has an impressive bibliography. The chapter openings are decorated with attractive botanical artwork depicting tree leaves, flowers, fruits, and seed pods. Regrettably, despite the many intriguing subjects undertaken here, only a few narrowly selected photographs and other illustrations are presented, on eight pages. There could have been more.

People who already have *American Canopy*, or will borrow or acquire it (available too as an e-book), if delaying the reading, could at least go to page 345, where Rutkow in an Epilogue summarizes the intent and scope of his book. His near final words have an emotional tone mostly absent in the great collection of factual material and statistics in the main text. Toward the end of a literary sermon the author offers this encouragement to commune directly with our arboreal neighbors:

As we rush headlong into the twenty-first century, the physicality of trees seems more vital than ever. The modern workplace and home are becoming increasingly antiseptic. Americans now spend their days staring into computer screens that receive information as if by magic. Daily life seems alarmingly virtual. Trees provide the antidote. The smell of pine needles, the crunch of autumn leaves, the roughness of bark are all reminders that we are a part of nature. Tree hugging, in its most literal sense, offers a reconnection with the physical world, the world of our forefathers. The forests and their trees are a sanctuary for the spirit. To enter them is to seek renewal.

—Barbara Marinacci



Slashings left after logging operations at a Minnesota camp—typical of forestry wastage before efforts were made to use all parts of harvested trees. Photo: Library of Congress.



Postings

Virginia Hayes, Curator of the Living Collection at Ganna Walska Lotusland, and Susan Chamberlin, landscape historian and CGLHS founding member, will give a presentation entitled *Santa Barbara's Extraordinary Cultural Landscape: People, Plants, Parks and Gardens*, on May 9 at 7 p.m. in the Faulkner Gallery, to kick off National Public Gardens Day in Santa Barbara. Garden tours and other activities are scheduled throughout May. See <http://sbpublicgardens.org>.

Changes to Membership Dues—Effective July 1, 2013

The Board voted at our January 26, 2013 meeting to raise the dues to bring revenues closer to the cost of producing *Eden*. To simplify the process the Board decided to put all memberships on a calendar year basis, with membership renewals due on July 1. This will relieve our treasurer from the task of billing renewals quarterly. In addition, the Board decided to create a new membership category for students.

The revised membership categories are:

Individual: \$40

Family: \$60 (formerly "Household" (one issue of *Eden* mailed; two people attend events at the member rate)

Non-profit: \$50 (an organizations that supports the mission of CGLHS)

Sustaining: \$100 and above

Student: \$20

All members will be billed in July for the year July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014. During this transition, dues will be prorated for members currently scheduled to renew in the fall, winter, or spring quarters.

Meet Virginia Kean, *Eden's* New Editor

Virginia Kean knows **California**. She acted as managing editor of *California's Rose Heritage: Journal of the Heritage Rose Foundation 2005 Conference of the Heritage Rose Foundation 2005 Conference*.

Virginia Kean knows **gardens**. When we spoke in early February, she was heading out, clippers in hand, to prune a friend's roses.

Virginia Kean knows **landscape**. Since 2009, she has specialized in work as a senior editor of multidisciplinary environmental impact reports and proposals for a broad range of environmentally sensitive projects, including the California High-Speed Train and Louisiana Coastal Restoration.

Kean lives in Redwood City, California, but her lifelong love affair with plants and landscape began in rural Virginia, where she walked to school through a forest. It flourished in a Southern California childhood marked by the scent of orange groves and summer treks to the ocean through the rolling hills of the Irvine Ranch.

Kean studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and received a BA in Design (Phi Beta Kappa). After earning an MA in Asian Studies from Berkeley, she became a studio potter in Palo Alto. When the studio closed, she moved on to professional writing, and now has 23 years of expertise in developing journals, magazines, business publications, and annual reports for corporations and nonprofits.

In 2005, *Eden's* new editor co-founded *Rosa Mundi*, the journal of the Heritage Rose Foundation (HRF), which is dedicated to preserving the world's roses. For six years she served as editor-in-chief, working with an editorial team of rose experts. She recruited and worked closely with authors, ranging from garden designers and nurserymen to breeders and scholars in Asia, Australia, Europe, New Zealand, and the United States. Among her articles for *Rosa Mundi* are "On a Rose Trek in China" and "A Thorn for Beauty: J. Horace McFarland."

Virginia was also the editor of *Mystery Roses Around the World*, published by the HRF in 2011. For the Charleston Horticultural Society, she edited and produced *Noisette Roses: Nineteenth-Century Charleston's Gift to the World*.

In her own garden Kean grows many old tea and species roses, Japanese maples, camellias, and cymbidiums. When she's not out gardening and deadheading, with two Scottish terriers and several cats as company, she leads tours at Tor House, the stone house and tower built by the 20th-century poet Robinson Jeffers in Carmel, California.

Her current reading: *Rosemary Verey: The Life and Lessons of a Legendary Gardener*, by Barbara Paul Robinson.

She recommends: *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* by Linda Lear; *On an Irish Island*, by Robert Kanigel.

She's working on: An article on botanical gardens and public parks in China.

Her organization memberships: Western Horticultural Society (board member), San Francisco Peninsula Camellia Society, Historic Roses Group, Filoli, Royal Oak Foundation.



Photo credit TK.

—Thea Gurns / Chair, *Eden* Editor Search Committee

President's Message

The CGLHS board meets twice a year, but we make the most of these meetings by spending the weekends not only on CGLHS business, but also pleurably—in exploring the environment around us. Nancy Carter made the arrangements for January 26–27; we spent Saturday on the beautiful campus of the University of San Diego, where Nancy is a professor in the law school. On Saturday evening spouses, along with former board members Thea Gurns and John Blocker, joined us for a home-cooked meal in Nancy's charming bungalow-style home. On Sunday morning local area members accompanied us on a tour of Torrey Pines State Reserve.

The board unanimously approved the appointment of Virginia Kean as our next *Eden* editor. Former CGLHS president and editor search committee chair Thea Gurns introduces her in the brief profile on the opposite page.

We discussed future events. Sarah Raube is planning a fall event in and around San Francisco, and we hope to hold our 2014 conference in Santa Barbara. Thea Gurns is now at work on a 2015 conference in San Diego's Balboa Park, to celebrate the centennial of the 1915 Panama–California Exposition.

For a number of years the CGLHS basic membership of \$30 hasn't covered the rising costs of producing *Eden*. We make up the difference with donations and fundraising through events. Starting with the next issue of *Eden* we will, for the first time, contract out its production. We will be raising dues to help balance the budget. We have added a new category for students. (See the opposite page.)

An Invitation to All CGLHS Members

Please join our new board member, Carolyn Bennett, for a private tour of the exhibit she originated, "When They Were Wild: Recapturing California's Wildflower Heritage," at the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens on May 31st.

What began as a simple idea seven years ago to showcase the fascinating collections of original art documenting our native plants beginning in the late 19th century has blossomed into this major exhibit at the Huntington and related exhibits elsewhere. Through the generous support of the Huntington, the Theodore Payne Foundation, and the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Carolyn's idea has become a fantastic exhibition. It contains over 300 items, which include drawings, paintings, herbarium specimens, photographs, and other ephemera dating from the 1800s and onward. This will be the first time some of these paintings and other objects have been shown in public; now, thanks to the exhibition, all have been digitally preserved for future research and preservation. The exhibit tells the story of our rich and diverse flora and the allure it held for scientists and artists alike. It's fascinating to think of how this documentation led from flower fields to our own gardens.

The exhibition will be open early to us at 10:30am. Admission will be free. Space will be limited, so please RSVP to membership@cglhs.org by May 6.

Finally, I am as reluctant to say goodbye to Barbara Marinacci, editor of *Eden* since 2010, as I am eager to welcome Virginia Kean as our new editor. In recognition of Barbara's outstanding work, the board has named her as an Honorary Life Member. I asked Kelly Comras to summarize Barbara's contribution to CGLHS and to *Eden*. Below is her reply.

—Judy M. Horton / president@cglhs.org

More than three years ago I was charged with the urgent task of finding a replacement for *Eden*'s longstanding editor, Marlea Graham. Since Marlea had been not only an excellent editor and a full-time production staff of one for *Eden*, I felt dubious about the success of my quest. Lo and behold, I soon crossed paths with Barbara Marinacci, a talented, experienced book author and professional editor. Though she has written about many diverse subjects, she hadn't a background in historic landscapes. But she at least was a lifelong gardener. And with boundless enthusiasm, good cheer, optimism, and her professional research skills, she was willing to give *Eden* a try.

Our journey turned out to be a fruitful one for *Eden* and for the rest of the members of the editorial board (Ann Scheid, Paula Panich, Phoebe Cutler), who banded together to help make Barbara's efforts a success. With Marlea's patient and generous assistance, Barbara learned the ropes quickly and added her own skills and viewpoint to further polish *Eden*. During Barbara's tenure she found and cultivated a new cadre of writers, expanded on *Eden*'s breadth of topics, and wrote some fine articles of her own. Her love of the work, and the diligence she brought to it, were evident in issues that were brimming over with excellence and quality, and sometimes up to 32 pages in length! Barbara also learned how to produce *Eden* and then how to prepare the issue for sending out in an online version—a daunting task for this digital-publication neophyte, but she took on with her usual can-do approach to life.

Most important to me and the rest of the editorial board are the friendships and respect that have come out of this journey. There was a (short) time when we were not at all sure we would be able to continue publishing *Eden*. This was something none of us was prepared to live with, so we rolled up our sleeves, went to work, and found that, as is often the case, we got as much or more out of it than we put in. Speaking for our entire editorial board, I can safely say that we have grown to love Barbara and consider her a friend to keep for life. Our journey with her is a journey we will want to remember.

—Kelly Comras / Chair, Editorial Board of *Eden*



Clara Mason Fox (1873–1959).
Bush Poppy (*Dendromecon rigidai*).
Silverado Canyon, 1899. Pencil and
tempera on paper. Collection of
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

EDEN

Eden (ISSN 1524-8062) is published four times yearly (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) by the California Garden & Landscape History Society, a nonprofit organization as described under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

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Eden: Call for Content

Eden solicits your submissions of scholarly papers, short articles, book reviews, information about coming events, news about members' activities and honors, and interesting archives or websites you have discovered. In short, send us anything pertaining to California's landscape history that may be of interest to CGLHS members. Also, more regional correspondents

reporting on local landscape preservation concerns, efforts, and accomplishments will be welcomed, along with other relevant issues.

For book reviews, notices of interesting magazine articles, and museum exhibits, please write to Associate Editor Margaretta J. Darnall, 1154 Sunnyhills Road, Oakland, CA 94610.

All other submissions should be sent to *Eden* editor Barbara Marinacci (see above contact information). Deadlines for submissions are the first days of January, April, July, and October.

EDEN Staff

Editor	Barbara Marinacci
Editorial Board:	Kelly Comras, Phoebe Cutler, Paula Panich, Ann Scheid
Book Review Editor	Margaretta J. Darnall
Consultant (<i>Eden</i> Editrix Emerita)	Marlea Graham
Regional Correspondents.....	Phoebe Cutler (S.F. Bay Area), Kathryn Lyon (Central Coast), Vonn Marie May (San Diego Area)

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Return this form along with your check made payable to CGLHS to:

Christy O'Hara / CGLHS Treasurer / 11730 San Marcos Road / Atascadero, CA 93422

Please send address and other changes or questions to treasurer@cglhs.org.

As a matter of policy, CGLHS does not share its membership lists with other organizations, and that policy extends to e-mail addresses as well.

California Garden and Landscape History Society (CGLHS) is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization devoted to: celebrating the beauty and diversity of California's historic gardens and landscapes; promoting wider knowledge, preservation, and restoration of California's historic gardens and landscapes; organizing study visits to historic gardens and landscapes as well as to relevant archives and libraries; and offering opportunities for a lively interchange among members at meetings, garden visits, and other events.

CGLHS was founded in 1995.

The Society organizes annual conferences and publishes *Eden*, a quarterly journal.

Locations & Years of CGLHS's Conferences:

- 1995 – Santa Cruz (founding)
- 1996 – Santa Barbara (Spring)
San Diego (Fall)
- 1997 – UC Berkeley (Spring)
Huntington Gardens, San Marino (Fall)
- 1998 – Sacramento
- 1999 – Long Beach (Rancho Los Alamitos)
- 2000 – Monterey
- 2001 – Sonoma County (city of Sonoma)
- 2002 – San Juan Capistrano
- 2003 – San Francisco Peninsula (Stanford University)
- 2004 – Riverside
- 2005 – Napa Valley (10th anniversary)
- 2006 – Westside of Silicon Valley (Saratoga)
- 2007 – Los Angeles (for Japanese-style gardens)
- 2008 – Lone Pine and Owens Valley
- 2009 – UC Berkeley (SF Bay Area)
- 2010 – Santa Cruz County (15th anniversary)
- 2011 – San Luis Obispo County

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Address Correction and Forwarding Requested

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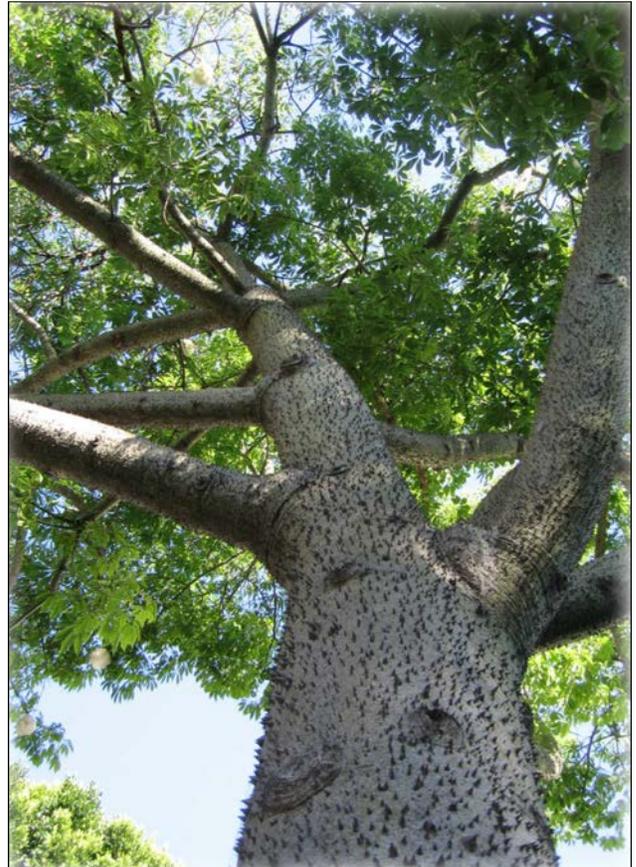
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A floss silk tree (Ceiba speciosa). Photo: Matt Ritter.