

NeighborWoods program adds green to Eugene

In the past 12 years, the tree-planting program has added 6,500 trees to Eugene's landscape

By Nika Carlson
News Reporter

Come spring, the South University Neighborhood will be a little greener thanks to the City of Eugene's NeighborWoods tree-planting program.

The program, in conjunction with the Eugene Tree Foundation, planted 18 young trees Saturday at the 1900 block of Harris Street, which is city-owned property.

Jeff Lanza of the Eugene Tree Foundation said that the saplings are the last of about 40 trees the program and the foundation planted in the South

University Neighborhood between 18th Avenue and 30th Avenue during the past six years.

The NeighborWoods project was founded in 1992 to help maintain and expand Eugene's urban forest — the collection of trees in a city — with the help of neighborhood volunteers.

The program gives homeowners a free sapling to plant in the public right-of-way in front of their houses in exchange for their promise to maintain the tree over the next three years. The right-of-way is the grassy area between a sidewalk and the curb.

After that period, the city takes over maintenance of the tree.

NeighborWoods Coordinator Rick Olkowski estimates that program volunteers have planted about 6,500 trees in the past 12 years.

"We try to get it so there is a tree for every house," he said.

Homeowners can choose from about five different species, which are picked out by Olkowski based on the conditions of the area where the tree will be planted. Trees range from flowering species, such as dogwoods, to shade-providing trees, such as maples.

The city keeps about 20 different species of trees. Last Saturday, the program planted everything from a little leaf linden to a red horse chestnut to an Oregon big leaf maple.

NeighborWoods plants trees during the winter planting season, which runs from Oct. 15 to April 15.

Olkowski said the program was founded to get community members involved in making the city greener.

"It's better for the air, better for the environment and just better for the beautification process of the city," Olkowski said.

Lanza added that urban forests also help intercept storm water, cool the air, provide habitats for animals and increase the value of neighborhoods.

The Eugene Tree Foundation, which organized the South University Neighborhood planting project, has been working with the NeighborWoods program for the past six years, Lanza said. He anticipates that NeighborWoods and the Eugene Tree Foundation will plant more than 300 trees in the South University area during the next five to ten years.

The foundation was created in 1997 in response to 40 mature trees being cut to make room for development in downtown Eugene.

Now, its mission is not only to advocate for trees, but also to plant new ones.

"We don't look at trees so much as a luxury item," Lanza said. "We consider them another critical infrastructure element that helps our city work."

The foundation planted one of those critical trees in front of homeowner Betty Jean Bartholomew's house on Saturday.

She said the maintenance of the tree was a minor burden compared with the benefits that the tree brings.




Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

NeighborWoods, a City of Eugene tree-planting program, and the Eugene Tree Foundation planted 18 trees in the South University area on Saturday.

"It's beautiful," she said. "You need the trees for that, but I'm also thinking about oxygen and things like that. Not enough people think about the environment."

To make a request for a free tree, contact Rick Olkowski and the NeighborWoods program at 868-6290.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at nikacarlson@dailyemerald.com.



The Child Care and Development Centers (CCDC)

would like to thank **Paul's Bicycle Way of Life** and **Raleigh** for their generous donation of a bike for our Valentine's Raffle.

We would also like to thank **Burly and Jill Atkin** for their donations to the raffle.

A special thanks goes to **Rennie's Landing** and the **Fairway Lending Group** for their contribution to and continued support of CCDC.

Through the support of our parents, staff and community businesses we had another successful raffle this year.

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CAMPUS BUZZ

Wednesday
Design Review Subcommittee Meeting (subcommittee of the Campus Planning Committee), 225 Streisinger Hall, 10–11:30 a.m.
Caregiver support group meeting, EMU Board Room, noon–1 p.m.
Portland cycling and travel expert Joe Kurmaskie will read from his book, "Riding Outside the Lines," 100 Willamette Hall, 7 p.m.
Faculty Artist Series concert, Beall Concert Hall, 8 p.m.

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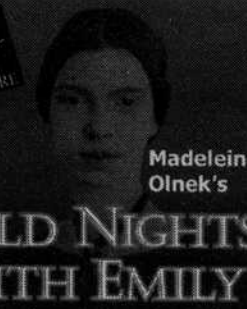
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