

OPEN SPACE PLANTINGS: STATUS REPORT

How are our past oak plantings doing? This past summer and fall, we surveyed our four previous oak plantings on city-owned open spaces. All were planted from locally-collected acorns, and have not received any irrigation other than what nature provides. Individual planting sites are protected with special wire cages on grazed parcels.

Hidden Valley open space was planted with valley oak acorns in 1989. We are currently maintaining 224 caged planting sites. There are live seedlings in 72% of the originally planted sites, and many of the failed sites have been replanted. Average seedling height is 30 inches, with 28 seedlings over 4 feet tall and one over 10 feet tall!

The **Brown's Valley School** and **Woodcrest** open space parcels were planted in 1992. A few of the 100 sites were planted with blue oak, the remainder were valley oak. Overall survival is about 80%. Seedling height averages about 8 inches, with 8 seedlings taller than 15 inches. Seedlings at

WORK DAY NOVEMBER 18

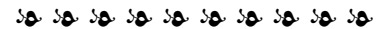
You're cordially invited! We'll meet at 9 am at the Oak grove picnic area, Lagoon Valley Park. We will plant buckeyes and whatever acorns we have rounded up, and repair cattle-damaged cages in the Lagoon Valley 1 planting. What you need: Boots, gloves, pliers, trowel, drinking water.

Brown's Valley are not doing as well as those at nearby Woodcrest and would probably benefit from weeding and mulch.

Lagoon Valley 1 includes 115 sites planted with seeds of three species in 1993. Cages take a real battering here - 4 sites have been destroyed by cattle. Cages need repair before cattle are put back on this fall. Survival is 82% for valley oak, 58% for live oak, and 78% for California buckeye. We tested window screen cylinders in this planting, and find that the screens are virtually requisite for live oak seedling survival. The screens have also helped valley oaks somewhat, but have a negative effect on buckeyes. We didn't measure heights this summer, but one buckeye has reached the top of the wire cage

(4 feet).

Lagoon Valley 2. In December 1994, volunteers planted 225 sites with buckeyes and 525 sites with valley, blue, or live oak acorns on the hillside above Peña Adobe park. The area is not grazed and planting sites are not caged, so special monitoring plots were set up to follow these hard to find seedlings. First year survival is 95% for valley oak and 92% for blue oak. Only 40% of the California buckeye in the monitoring plots were alive, which is low compared to our past plantings. Average heights are 10 inches for valley oak, 4 inches for blue oak, and 7 inches for buckeye.



VTF volunteers help with school Arbor Day planting

Volunteers from VTF pre-dug holes for 3 London plane trees (sycamores) on the south side of Padan Park. Students from Padan Elementary School transplanted the trees last Arbor Day, April 28. The trees were paid for by the Padan School Booster Club and are maintained by city parks personnel. All 3 trees are growing well.

Special thanks to Project Greener Vacaville and the prison shop at California State Prison Solano. They made us a T-post driver and a post puller, which will help us keep our cages repaired.

Where have all the acorns gone?

Although last year was a bumper crop year for acorns, Vacaville's acorn crop this year is very poor. What happened? Oaks, like some commercially grown nuts, may exhibit alternate bearing - heavy crops tend to be followed by light ones. But the more critical factor is probably last spring's heavy and frequent rains. Oaks produce separate male and female flowers, and pollen is carried from the catkins (male flowers) to the female flowers by wind. If it rains while pollen is being shed, the pollen is washed out of the catkins and the air and fails to reach the female flowers, so no acorns develop. The few trees with acorns may have bloomed earlier or later most other trees, or were in areas that didn't get as much rain during pollen shedding.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

VTF is looking for people and groups that would like to help with any of the activities listed on our calendar. To volunteer or for more information, call Ted Swiecki at 448-0230 or Jerry Hill at 446-1239.

