

**VACAVILLE TREES 2000**

Working on your list of things to do before the next millennium? How about adding tree planting to that list? VTF in partnership with the city of Vacaville is kicking off a campaign to plant a tree for every resident of Vacaville (that's 80,000) by the year 2000.

Trees on the hillsides, in our neighborhoods and commercial areas all provide real, measurable benefits to every resident. But the benefits of Vacaville Trees 2000 go beyond the value of the trees themselves. Imagine how much better off our community would be if every resident of Vacaville could learn just a little bit more about the importance of trees and how to properly plant and care for trees.

To kick off Vacaville Trees 2000, an educational meeting will be held on Thursday, March 27 from 7 to 9 pm at the Ulatis Community Center. Speakers from the City of Vacaville, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, PG&E, and VTF will provide information on tree selection, planting, and maintenance, and will be available to answer your tree questions.

**Padan Panther Planters**

In fall of 1995, students from the Eugene Padan Elementary student council planted valley oak acorns in the bare areas on the edges of Dos Calles Padan Park. Because of the poor 1995 acorn crop, only a few acorns were available for planting, and some of those were of questionable quality. Although some seedlings came up, many sites were empty.

Fortunately, we get another chance to collect and plant acorns every year. In fall of 1996, Ms. Neslon's 1st/2nd grade class replanted many of the blank planting sites. They will be watching, counting, and measuring the oaks that emerge this spring.

**REGREENING VACAVILLE'S HILLS**

Before the cattle ranches, the fruit growers, the 49ers, the Vacas and Penas - a mere 150 years ago or so - Vacaville was a woodland. Now, little of the oak woodlands that covered the hills and valleys remains within city limits. The loss of tree canopy has increased hillside runoff and erosion and reduced wildlife populations. By restocking these woodlands we can help improve local air quality and offset global warming and provide a natural legacy to our children and their children.

The first volunteer plantings of oak acorns in Vacaville took place in the fall of 1989, as part of a demonstration planting funded in part by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The fall open space plantings have since become an annual tradition. All of the plantings to date have been **direct-seeded**

(seeds are planted directly into the ground at the site) with locally-collected seed and are not irrigated. Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) is the most common tree in the plantings, but blue oak (*Q. douglasii*), interior live oak (*Q. wislizenii*) and California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) are also represented in the plantings.

Direct-seeding is not only cheap and easy (seeds are free for the taking), but also the best way to replant oaks. Seed from local trees is likely to be well-adapted to our climate and soils. Also, oaks and buckeyes produce long taproots during the first few months of growth that allow them to use moisture from deep in the soil. The taproot is destroyed or distorted in container-grown plants, so it is difficult to get transplanted seedlings established without irrigation. The only major disadvantage to direct seeding is that you need seeds. In a poor acorn year like 1995, not much planting is possible.

Grazing cattle eat young seedlings, so planting sites and young seedlings need to be protected from cattle until they are tall enough and sturdy enough to withstand 1000 pounds of beef on the hoof. At grazed locations, we use individual cages (called Vaca cages) to

protect seedlings. A few trees from the 1989 planting are now just about large enough that they are safe from cattle browsing and their cages may come off this year.

We expect and plan for attrition in these plantings. It would be great if every planting site produced a tree, but in the real world this is seldom the case. Seedlings must compete with weeds for water, are nibbled by insects and rodents, smashed by vandals and even mudslides. We play a sort of numbers game, by planting enough sites to make sure that some will grow to maturity. This is why it is important to monitor

Major open space plantings			
Location	Year planted	Sites planted	Vaca cages
Hidden Valley	1989	240	Yes
Brown's Valley	1992	100	Yes
Lagoon Valley	1993	115	Yes
Lagoon Valley	1994	750*	No
Lagoon Valley	1996	600*	No
*Estimated			

past plantings - to make sure that survival is adequate, and determine whether additional measures are needed to protect and nurture seedlings.

VTF volunteers are needed to maintain Vaca cages and to monitor plant growth and survival in all plantings. It can take a long time to get from seed to tree, so the best time to plant is thirty years ago; the next best time is NOW.



### **Volunteers make fall planting successful**

Thanks to all of the volunteers that helped collect acorns and plant this past fall. The volunteers, in no particular order, included: Anthony Williams, Jim Clark, John & Laurel Salerno-White, Martin Markee, Roy Owens, Teresa, Bradley & Thomas Starkvey-Owens, Tom, T.J. Jeremy & Cheryl Friedman, Cheryl Sheldon, José López-López, Kristine, Shane, Andrew & Kristal Reeves, Rhett Richardson, Jack Duesbury, Betty Livingston, John Holbrook, Ernest Kimme, Art & Mary Ann Nortier, Michelle & Amanda Read, Sarah & Pamela Moore, Shelly, Heather, Nicole & Brian Clark, Jessica Harala, Lindsey Lyon, Miatilde Hescocock, Jerry Hill, Liz Bernhardt, Frances Swiecki-Bernhardt, Ted Swiecki, Ken Poerner, John Holbrook, Lenny, Matthew, Desirée & Tucker Esler, Andrew, Jennifer & Carlos Aragon, Ed George, B.P. Goble, Ronnie G. (Jr. & III) & Rawlynn Evans, Cayla Cena, Kayla Kelburn, Alexis Hughes, Lorin Bohn, Bill, Rebecca, & Heather Whitehurst,

Heather Brown, Mel & Darlene Armstrong, Robert Ramierez, Kalie & Gillie Miller.

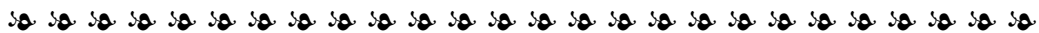
**Special thanks** to Rhett Richardson and Ken Poerner, who helped our fall planting enormously by using their vehicles to haul mulch around the planting site. Rhett also donated his time and the use of his tractor to help spread the mulch for the 1995 Padan planting.

**Thanks also** to those who helped repair Vaca cages and weeded planting sites last spring: Ken Poerner, Marylou Garcia, Virginia & Christopher Roth, Gary, Kathy, & Andrew Harmor, Liz Bernhardt, Ted Swiecki, Chris Williams, Art Nortier, Jerry Hill.

Sorry if we missed anyone or misspelled your name (write neatly the next time you sign in!)

**WANT TO GET INVOLVED?**  
VTF is always looking for people and groups that are interested in Vacaville's trees. To volunteer or for more information, call Ted Swiecki at 448-0230 or Jerry Hill at 446-1239.

### **Vacaville Tree Foundation -- 1997 Calendar**



**March 27. Vacaville Trees 2000 meeting, 7-9 pm, Ulatis Community Center (Call City of Vacaville 449-6279 or VTF 448-0230 for more information)**

*March - April. Arbor Day activities.*

*May - June. Census previous VTF open space plantings.*

*September. Acorn collection, fall planting planning meeting.*

*November. Open space plantings.*

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Dates for other activities will be announced later.