

# enterprise

YOLO COUNTY NEWS

## Features

# Great Tree Search: Outstanding oaks

By Special to The Enterprise

## **Vintage valley oak**

Well before Davis was a settlement, the roots of this immense Valley oak plunged deep into the moist soil of old Putah Creek in south Davis.

According to an anonymous nominator, this tree is estimated to be 380 years old. It stands 95 feet tall with a 20-foot girth. In 1860, a new Pony Express route passed under the boughs of this tree, with riders changing horses at nearby Solano Station. Since then it has shaded hundreds of weddings and wine tastings for the old Putah Creek Vineyard.

Today this massive tree shelters and feeds an eclectic assemblage of hawks, owls, vultures and other creatures. Its twisted trunk and ponderous, gnarled branches attest to a long, hard life marked by flood, subsidence, drought and cold. With our help, this iconic Valley oak will continue to awe us for another 380 years.



This iconic valley oak in south Davis is estimated to be 380 years old and has a 20-foot girth. Courtesy photo



This epic cork oak in downtown Davis has quietly grown into a beacon that affirms life's magic. Courtesy photo

## **Colossal cork oak**

Davis has more than its share of enormous cork oaks but few if any can compare to the prodigious size of the tree on Second St., across from the Black Bear Diner.

This titan is wider (85 feet) than tall (75 feet) with a 12.5-foot girth. Its pendulous branches reach across the street, while its thick trunk is splayed across much of the sidewalk. As nominator Craig Reynolds notes, “the corky bark is right there to touch.” He admires its well-balanced crown and ability to thrive in an entirely urban environment.

Cork oaks are native to the Mediterranean region, and are pyrophytes — meaning their insulating cork bark allows them to survive fires. Harvesting the cork remains one of the few activities that depends solely on human labor because of the skill required. Stop by this tree and admire its stature, resilience, and spongy bark.

— Submitted by Dr. Greg McPherson, vice president, Tree Davis Board of Directors and retired U.S. Forest Service urban

*forest researcher.*

*Be part of the Tree Davis Great Tree Search when it begins again in the fall by nominating a tree you love and appreciate because of its species, size, form, history, or whatever. Readers will be able to nominate trees on-line by clicking on the Great Tree Search banner, downloading a paper form on the website at <http://www.treedavis.org/city-of-davis/gts-final-v2-2/>, or requesting a form at 530-757-7337.*



The valley oak in winter. In its centuries, it's seen many changing seasons. Courtesy photo