

enterprise

YOLO COUNTY NEWS



This Formosan flame tree stops traffic at Eighth and L streets in East Davis. Neil Rubenking/Courtesy photo, circa 2005

Features

Great Davis Tree Search: Welcome surprises

By Special to The Enterprise

One of the most stunning trees in Davis when in flower and fruit is the Formosan flame tree. With such a distraction at the northeast corner of Eighth and L St. every fall, it's amazing that there aren't more accidents.

The attractive yellow flowers appear in late summer and are followed by lipstick-pink capsules that adorn the crown. The spectacular display lasts until December, when the lush foliage falls. This specimen was nominated by Neil Rubenking because of its colossal size. It is at least 30 years old, and is 65 feet tall and wide, with a girth of nearly 11 feet.

It's larger than the largest flame tree in the California Big Tree Registry. Rubenking has a smaller tree that came from seedlings that Don Shor collected from this tree and grew at Redwood Barn Nursery. Warren Roberts, superintendent of the UC Davis Arboretum, has long been a proponent of the Formosan flame. Many have been planted on campus, but in the fall this one will take your breath away.

Tipa

Another unusual tree that found a home on Saratoga Place in West Davis is the tipa tree.

About to landscape their new home, Robin Whitmore's twin brothers from Southern California suggested this species. After doing some research, she and Carl Winter planted their tree next to a greenbelt 25 years ago. They love its filtered shade and bright orange-yellow blossoms in early summer.

It has grown rapidly to 90-foot tall and 70-ft wide (10.4-foot girth). Although this species is native to tropical Brazil, it seems well-adapted to our clay soils and hot dry summers. The tipa is semi-deciduous in our climate — it will lose leaves slowly over the winter, more so if we get



The Tipa tree can grow rapidly and presents a beautiful display of blossoms in early summer.

really low temperatures. The shallow roots can heave sidewalks, so it should be planted in parks and other large open spaces. Because of its fast growth, young tipa trees require frequent formative pruning.

Robin Whitmore/Courtesy photo

Strawberry tree

The strawberry tree is a small evergreen native to the Mediterranean region. Given their origin, it is no surprise that these trees can thrive in Davis, but few are found.

The tree that Mrs. Denvir planted in 1980 in front of her home at 1614 Orange Lane is now nearly 40 feet tall and 30 feet wide, with a girth of 4.3 ft. She enjoys the dark green glossy foliage, white bell-shaped flowers and round red berries that appear in fall when the tree is flowering.

This elegant ornamental is easy to grow and has other attributes. The fruit is edible and used to make jams and yogurt, the wood is hard and used to make bowls, pipes and canes, and it is a fire resistant plant for reforestation. The strawberry tree (el madroño) makes up part of the coat of arms of Madrid, Spain. We can use more trees like this to diversify our urban forest in Davis.



Attractive flowers, fruit, foliage and bark make the strawberry tree an elegant ornamental. Courtesy photo

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