

Neighborhood Tree Steward

Stories of Citizen Volunteers in Portland Neighborhoods



Laurelhurst

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Inoculating Laurelhurst Elms to Fight Dutch Elm Disease

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I've been the coordinator of Save Our Laurelhurst Elms for three years. Before that, I founded and ran the Richmond affiliate of Save Our Elms for six years. While I wish to keep in touch with and support similar projects, my time is limited.

I started the Richmond Save Our Elms in 2001 when a large tree branch fell in Richmond Elementary's school yard and damaged two other trees. The school secretary told me about other large branches that had fallen on the playground moments after all the kids had gone inside and I was concerned. Richmond is one of two schools in the PPS district with elms and I thought Dutch elm disease (DED) may be the culprit. Although the large limbs falling were because the trees hadn't been

pruned in 13 years, learning about DED made me realize how susceptible these trees are to DED. Richmond's 18 elms susceptible to DED have been inoculated four times since 2001. We partner with Portland Roasting and sell coffee in the school office to raise the necessary funds to pay for a fungicidal inoculant.

On inoculation day, we work with the City of Portland Urban Foresters and volunteers to treat each tree. The Laurelhurst Save Our Elms program is also an affiliate of the Save Our Elms (SOE) in Ladd's Addition. Laurelhurst has 220 elm trees in three of the neighborhood's four quadrants. This program is much more difficult to run because of the size of the neighborhood, number of trees, and lack of a central communication center. Getting timely information out is cost prohibitive and time consuming relative to the program budget. The newsletter is offered five times a year and the delivery date varies. A neighborhood website isn't visited by

most residents.

With this program, we rely heavily upon donations. Initially, the vast majority of donors didn't have an elm, although the percentage of donors with an elm is growing. Several elm owners expressed reluctance about getting involved because of the overwhelming cost and feeling that they would be soliciting their neighbors for a donation. Although SOE purchases inoculant at a discount, the cost of treating one tree averages \$130 in this neighborhood with several neighbors having four or more trees. Some neighbors believe the cost should be covered by the City. SOE currently has a neighborhood tree liaison and a community outreach coordinator, but we're still only meeting 50% of our fundraising goals. SOE inoculated 44 trees last year and has treated a total of 104 trees since program inception. A biannual raffle offering a night at the Heathman Hotel to the winner has been a good incentive for donors.



Inoculation Day