

City program helps preserve heritage trees

By **TRAVIS SEMMES**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Here's something Santa Cruz isn't lacking: trees. Big ones, old ones, exotics and natives. They seem to be boiling out of every neighborhood — a sort of amalgamation of wild and tame, an interface between the woods and the city.

Few of us probably know it, but the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department has a program that honors these woody creatures.

It's called Our Heritage Trees, and you may have one of these trees in your front yard.

Nearly 50 trees have been dedicated to the list, everything from the Bunya Bunya at Chestnut and Walnut streets, to the Dawn Redwoods at Harvey West Park.

The city urges people with a significant, rare, large, old or beautiful tree on their property to call Leslie Keedy, the city arborist, and inquire about getting their tree added to the list.

But wait, it gets better.

"We have a heritage tree grant program where we assist people with the maintenance cost of protecting their tree," Keedy said.

All trees need some routine maintenance, removal of deadwood, pruning, etc., but those maintenance costs can be high. If your tree is added to the heritage tree list, you're eligible for the grant money.

"A lot of people want to maintain their heritage trees, but they don't have the funds. When they're approved, we pay up to 50 percent of their costs."

Hopefully this program will ensure a long, happy life for the heritage trees of Santa Cruz, Keedy said.

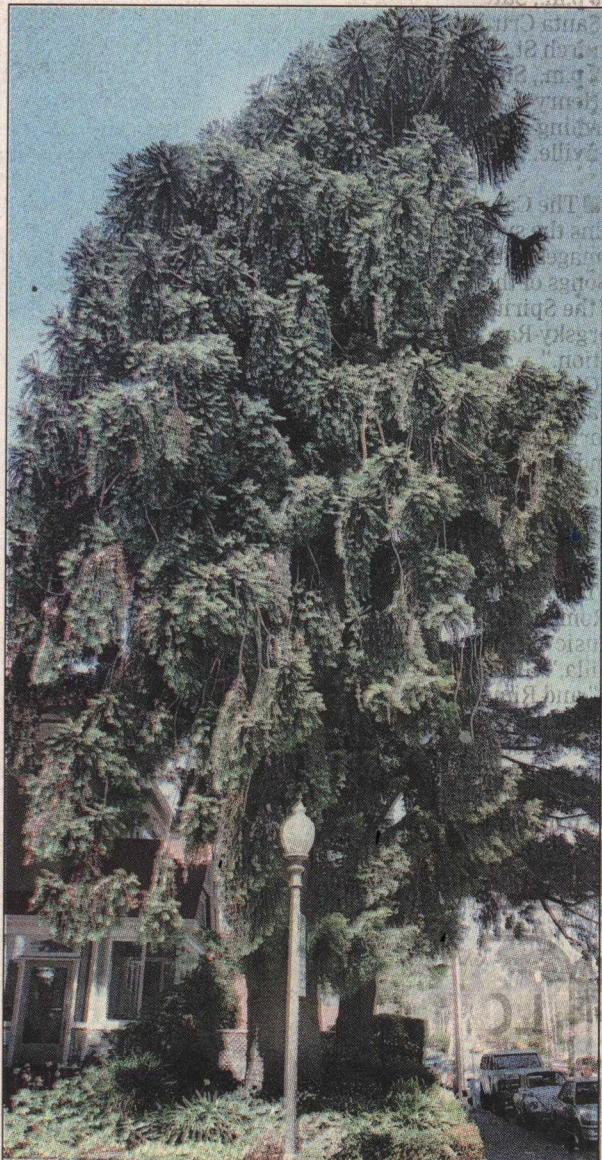
On a side note: the City of Santa Cruz is not celebrating Arbor Day in September this year, as has been the tradition. It will be celebrated in unison with the national arbor day during Earth Week, in late April.

Contact City Arborist Leslie Keedy at 420-6120.

Contact Travis Semmes at tsemmes@santa-cruz.com.

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LESLIE KEEDY,
CITY ARBORIST



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

This Bunya Bunya at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Chestnut Street in Santa Cruz was the first tree to be put on the city's Our Heritage Trees list.