

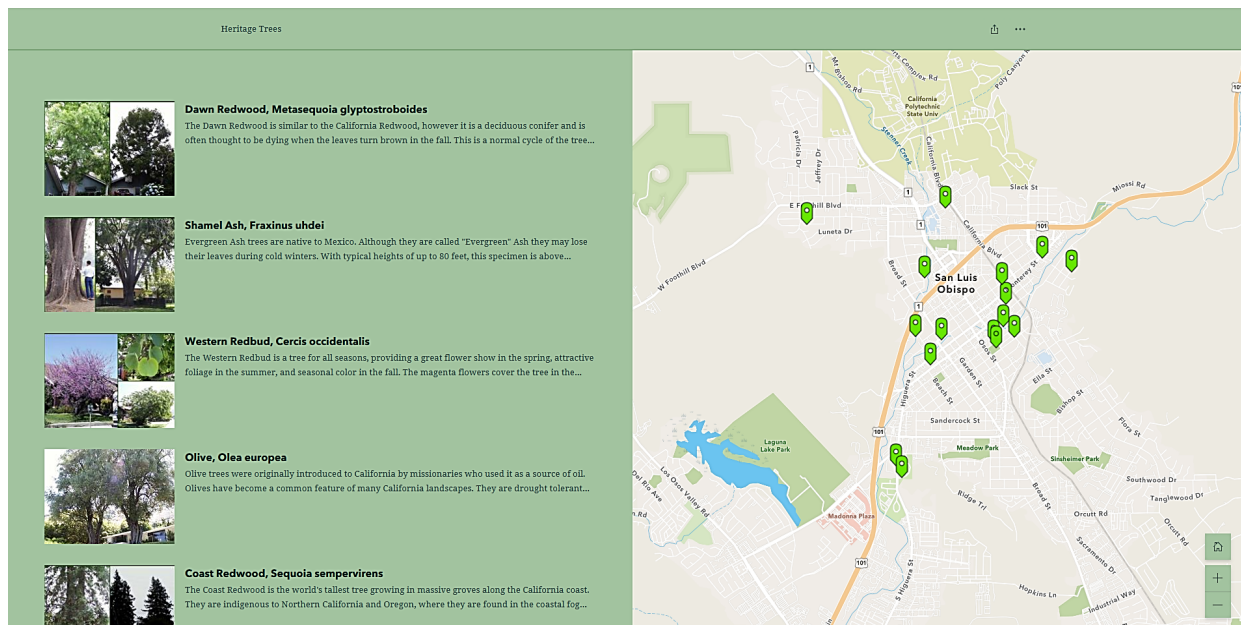
Heritage Trees Update

Last June, Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter Outings leader Joe Morris and former SLO City Councilmember John Ashbaugh asked the SLO City Tree Committee whatever happened to the city’s moribund Heritage Tree Program, (See [“Return of the Heritage Trees,” Sept. 2023 Santa Lucian](#)).

As designed, the program was “to call attention to the wide variety of trees growing in the temperate climate of our area” and allowed Heritage Trees to be designated due to their historical or arboricultural interest, size, age, or rarity. The Heritage Trees of San Luis Obispo were to be mapped with addresses, photos, facts and descriptions of each tree listed and became part of a self-guided tour that interested parties can visit at their own pace.

As Morris told the Tree Committee, “the city website pretty much hides the program and gives limited and incorrect information. Of the 15 Heritage Trees listed, for instance, several don’t give addresses, and several more are dead.” The barely visible and out-of-date status of the program is a sad state of affairs for “Tree City, USA.” San Luis Obispo’s urban forest cover has declined to 13%, compared to the national average of 27%.

Since that meeting, progress has occurred. The City executed a departmental reorganization, retitling the position of City Arborist to Urban Forest Coordinator and moving the position from the Public Works Department to the Community Development Department. The City posted the new Urban Forest Coordinator/City Arborist position in December, and as you read this, should now be renovating the Heritage Trees Program, and hopefully reissuing the out-of-print Heritage Trees guide.



Do not follow The City website’s Heritage Trees page is in need of updating.