

## Trees of Particular Interest

Many of the cemetery's Douglas-firs have a curious bulge or a forked leader part way up their trunks. These two conditions developed after the trees had their tops cut off more than 60 years ago. Over time, each tree developed a new top from a lateral branch, just below the cut. In the early years, the trees had



*Trees heal by growing new wood over their injury.*

a very noticeable crook at that point. Over time the crook has been covered by the growing trunk, so all we see now is a bulge.

One Douglas-fir east of the Public Square has a long scar that spirals down its trunk from high in the canopy. This tree was struck by lightning in September of 2001. The lightning coursed down the outside of the tree, stripping bark and casting it in all directions, some as far as 60 feet from the base of the tree. The next morning a woodpecker and an owl were found dead, directly below where they had been roosting when the lightning struck the tree. For months, visitors came from both near and far to pay their respects.

During February of 2002, two firs lost their tops during a severe windstorm. One tree was home to a wild honey bee colony which lived in a cavi-

ty nearly 25 feet from the ground. When the tree snapped, the honey comb scattered. The sweet bounty was retrieved and enjoyed by neighbors. Both of these "snags" have been retained to provide cavity habitat for birds, insects, and other creatures that rely on the dead trees for feeding, roosting, or nesting.



*One of three snags providing habitat.*

*Special thanks to the EMCA's Landscape Advisory Committee and Whitney Lueck for their work on this brochure. – Revised 2014.*

## Tree Trivia and Fun Facts

1. Understory trees and shrubs grow beneath the high forest canopy. While these plants thrive in the shade provided by the canopy, they also need light to photosynthesize. In early spring, plants such as the Indian Plum and Red Currant are the first to "leaf out" and/or bloom since they take advantage of the short window of extra light before the deciduous canopy trees overshadow them. Other understory plants found in the cemetery are Vine Maple, Thimbleberry, Elderberry, Snowberry and Oregon Grape.
2. During the spring of 1997 third grade students from nearby Edison Elementary School participated in planting 100 dogwood trees. The trees were small and planted densely, with the hope that a quarter or more would survive. We estimate close to thirty remain, with the majority of these having grown to a height of at least five feet. It takes approxi-

mately ten years for a dogwood to bloom, so we shouldn't have to wait much longer!

3. The cemetery's one artificial stump is located on the northwest slope of the cemetery. This is a six foot tall Woodmen of the World (WOW) monument, carved from sandstone and erected in 1909 to commemorate the life of WOW member Robert Kirkpatrick. The tree stump with broken limbs represents a life cut short.



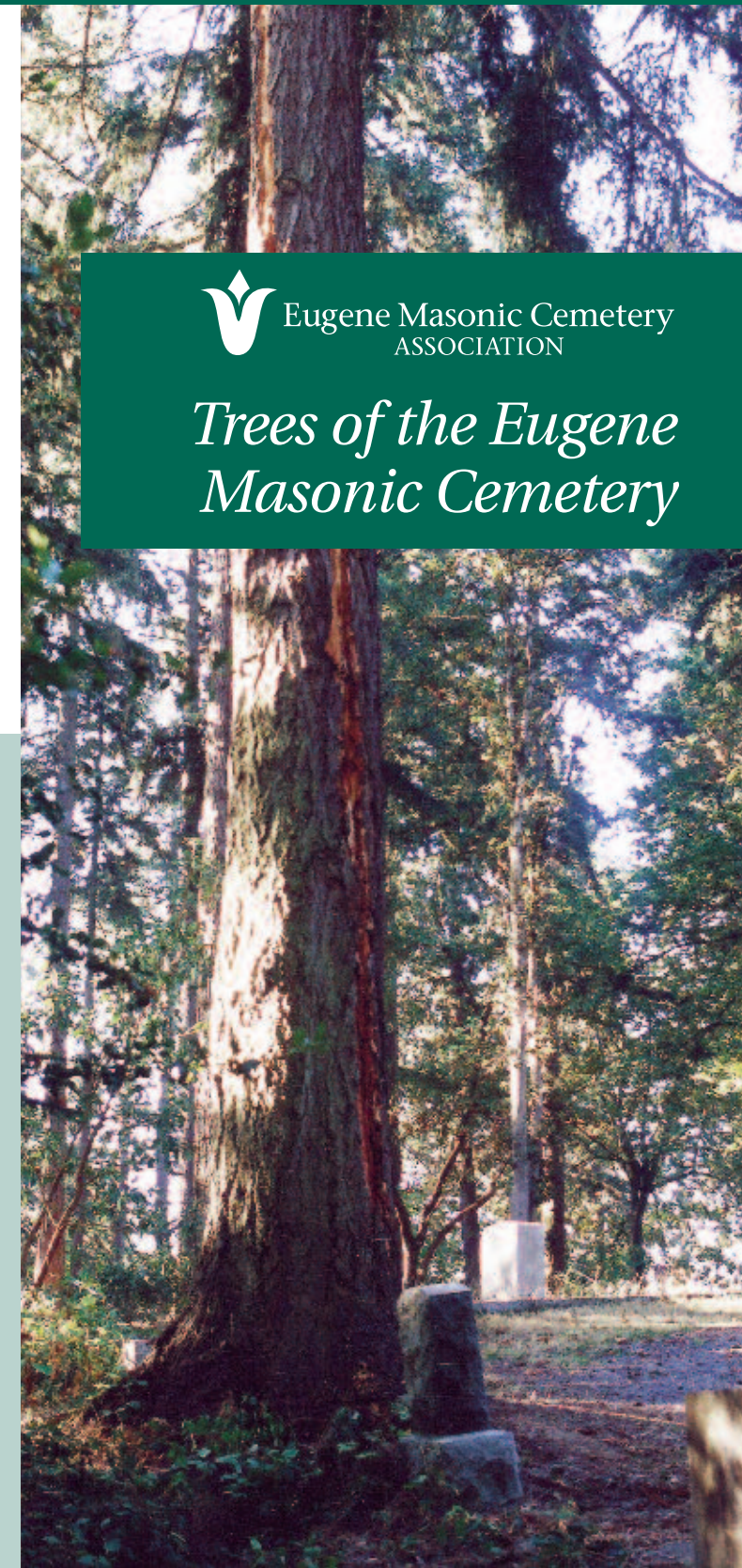
4. Does lichen hurt its host tree? No, a lichen is composed of an alga and a fungus, and it uses tree branches for support. When lichens fall

to the ground they decompose and provide nutrients for the tree.

5. Woodpeckers, such as the Downy Woodpecker, the Red-breasted Nuthatch, and the Northern Flicker create holes in trees called cavities. They hammer out the cavity in rotting wood in coniferous woodlands, and are called primary cavity nesters. Other birds, such as the Western Screech-owl, the Red-breasted Sapsucker, and the Black-capped Chickadee build their nests in existing holes and are called secondary cavity nesters. Other animals such as, raccoons, bats and honeybees also dwell in the cemetery's tree cavities.



*The Western Screech-owl's streaked plumage resembles tree bark.*



 Eugene Masonic Cemetery  
ASSOCIATION

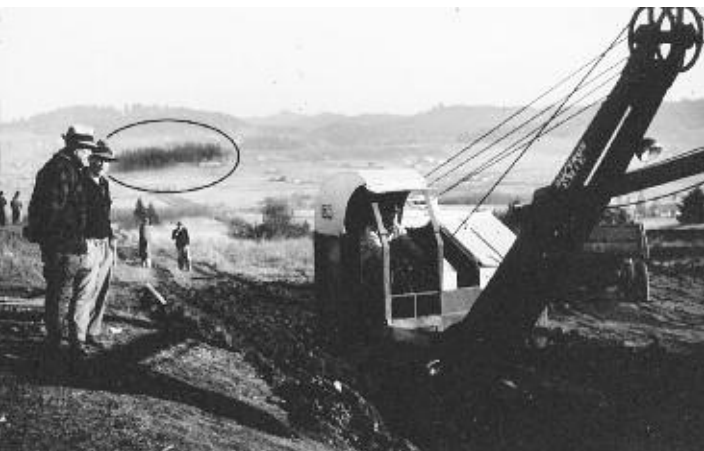
*Trees of the Eugene  
Masonic Cemetery*

## The Past Landscape

### What did the cemetery originally look like?

When visiting the Masonic Cemetery and wandering along woodland paths, it is difficult to imagine that only 150 years ago this promontory of Eugene's east hills was covered with a prairie of grasses and wildflowers. Indeed, it is likely that the site was virtually treeless for many centuries before the arrival of Euro-American settlers. This was due to frequent fires set by the native peoples of our region. The fires, which facilitated hunting and gathering, burned across the valley floor and into surrounding hills preventing the growth of trees.

By the mid-nineteenth century, with the cessation of burning, seeds from scattered trees grew in the nearby hills and the indigenous trees naturally took hold. Early photographs of Eugene illustrate a grove of young conifers at the Masonic Cemetery with some scrubby oaks along the west and south edges.



Above: The Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey viewed from the College Hill Reservoir in 1938.



Right: The big leaf maple produces fragrant male and female flowers on the same graceful stem.



Two miles of trails course through the cemetery's mature dry fir forest.

## The Present Landscape

### What might a visitor see today?

The cemetery is now dominated by a stand of mature Douglas-fir trees with a middle canopy of bigleaf maple and madrone. The west and south edges have developed into a mixture of oak woodland, where tree canopies touch each other, and oak savanna, where trees are more widely spaced.

Most trees in the cemetery are native to the upper Willamette Valley. Native conifers include Douglas-firs, valley ponderosa pine, Port Orford cedar, and a recently planted incense cedar. Western hemlock, western red cedar, and Pacific yew, planted on the moist slope of the cemetery's northeast corner, are also recent introductions.

The cemetery has two non-native conifers. One is a juniper. The other is an Irish yew planted by descendants to ornament the Thomas Condon burial plot.

Native deciduous broadleaf trees include bigleaf maple, Oregon ash, Oregon white oak, and a single California black oak on the east side of the Public Square. Pacific dogwood and cascara have recently been planted in the stand of firs along the cemetery's north ridge.

The cemetery has one native broadleaf evergreen, the madrone. The cemetery's other broadleaf evergreen species, the laurel and the holly, like the yew, were deliberately planted in the cemetery for memorial purposes. Since the holly was first introduced, birds have been dining on its striking red berries and spreading it in the same manner as the cemetery's deciduous non-native broadleaf trees: the cherry, the plum, and the apple.



Several acres of oak woodland and savanna lie east of the mausoleum.

## The Future Landscape

### What do we want the cemetery to look like fifty or a hundred years from now?

The cemetery is a diverse landscape and it will continue to change and evolve into the future. Trees age and die, or are damaged by disease, insects, lightning and wind. New trees arrive by seed or are intentionally planted to ensure that the cemetery will always have a tree canopy. The site managers are committed to making management decisions which will maintain this island of native woodland.

With an eye toward the future every effort is made to maintain the existing variety of habitats rather than let the cemetery become all woodland or dominated by non-native trees that might colonize the site naturally. For example, in the sunny southwest corner of the cemetery is one of south Eugene's best examples of an oak savanna. With this in mind, the cemetery's landscape management plan stipulates that the grassland and savanna habitat be mowed annually to prevent the establishment of new trees which, if left to grow, would shade out established wildflowers.

Cemetery Landscape Advisory Committee from left: Steve Kuchera, Justine Lovinger, Roz Slovic, Allan Kluber, Barbara Cowan, Wendi Bondeson. Not shown: Sally Dietrich.



Our trees are an important part of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery's legacy to future generations.

### How You Can Help.

1. Volunteer your time and service during our monthly work parties.
2. Make a monetary gift by mail or by paypal found on our website.
3. Make a lasting donation to the cemetery's Landscape Endowment.

### Contact Information:

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association, P.O. Box 5934, Eugene, Oregon 97405

website: [eugenemasoniccemetery.org](http://eugenemasoniccemetery.org)

