

TREES SHOULD FIT THEIR GARDENS

By Tony Tomeo

UNITED STATES—A tree is a woody perennial plant with a single tall trunk and branches. However, several tree types can not conform with this overly simplistic definition. Palm trees and tree ferns are neither woody nor branched. Although branching, arboriform yuccas and dracaenas are no woodier than palms. Banana trees develop a few unbranched herbaceous trunks.

Actually, several types of trees do not conform with their own definition. Many Japanese maples, crape myrtles and olive trees develop multiple trunks. Many citrus trees are not as tall as big shrubbery. Papayas are merely large perennials that survive for only a few years. Banyans support their canopies with multiple aerial roots instead of conventional trunks.

Generally, though, trees are the most significant living components within their gardens. Not much else within home gardens

is as big or as permanent as its trees are. Some old oaks inhabited their gardens centuries before their gardens. Some old redwoods contain more lumber than their associated homes. Many trees influence adjacent home gardens.

Trees are long term commitments.

This is why proper selection is so important. Trees must be appropriate to their particular applications. They should remain proportionate to their particular situations, even if they live for centuries. They should not generate more mess than those living with them want to contend with. Also, they should not require more maintenance than they will likely get.

Shade trees near houses should be deciduous to allow sunshine through during winter. Evergreens at a distance can obscure unwanted scenery throughout the year. Evergreen vegetation is generally a bit messier than deciduous vegetation,

though. It sheds through the year instead of only in autumn. Utility cables and easements limit placement of trees.

Many municipalities have adopted strict tree preservation ordinances. Such ordinances protect heritage trees or trees that exceed a particular size. They often make it difficult or impossible to remove unwanted and problematic trees. Preemptive selection of the most appropriate tree varieties helps avoid such situations. Prevention is better than the cure.

Highlight: Coast Live Oak

Coast live oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, is more adaptable in the wild than in home gardens. It can grow in groves or mix with other tree species, particularly at the coast. Alternatively, it can grow solitarily in open grassland, particularly inland. Solitary specimens can be a few centuries old. They can grow as tall and wide as seventy-five feet, with a few trunks.

Within irrigated home gardens, though, coast live oak likely does not survive for as long. It is impossible to know because no home garden here is a few centuries old. With water, young specimens mature faster than they would in the wild. Once established though, no irrigation is needed. Mature wild specimens often succumb to root rot with new irrigation.

Coast live oak is more appealing in the wild than within home gardens anyway. It sheds foliar debris continually, particularly as new foliage emerges during spring. Although it is technically evergreen, it replaces its foliage annually. Its foliar debris is mildly herbicidal to delicate plants below, and stains pavement. Every few years, acorns are very prolific. Seedlings can appear in the oddest of situations.

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I LOVE LUNA (39)

By Grady Miller

UNITED STATES—Well, I've done it again. Just a few moments ago all bedlam broke out in our quiet little corner of Hollywoodland. I, Luna, once again defend my title of 'Princess of Chaos.' Also, I shall continue to live under the alias of Luna where press, television and vaudeville are involved.

My master was all tuckered out after a day wrestling with the digital beast, fraught with so many sinkholes, his innards were more twisted than a pretzel. Then bedtime, a little shut-eye after a frustrating afternoon which arrow should be pressed so the proper outcome would be a functioning printing apparatus at the end of the day. Master is old school, trusting paper more than pixels.

There were good parts, too, on May the 6th. And it felt good to at last lie down, sigh, and call it a day. Lights out. Then the Chihuahua went crazy and there were voices outside. I was barking and ramming my head against the door. There were people in the pathway. Master grabbed my chain collar, I danced around and strangled two of his fingers, and he let out a vile epithet. Filled with pain and anger, before releasing me.

"Who's out there?" my master called out.

"It's us," two voices called back from the shadows. "We lost our cat. And maybe it came over here. Is anybody homer?"

Master suggested they try the catch on the other back house gate. It seems like it's

been quiet and dark over there. The woman peered over the fence. Bathed in die Dunkelheit. (Forgive me for showing off the results of the online class, "Barking in German." My master's knuckles were still aching after getting caught in my chain. He was sore in every sense of the word.

"We're looking for our cat. She's never been out of the house, not in four years," said the young woman.

"She's black and white," said her companion.

"I'll be on the lookout," master promised. He is not insensible to the plight of animals in the wild moor of Hollywood, where rats, mice, possums, wildly unpredictable pit-bull labs and possums dwell.

It's a regular zoo. Somehow it's all beyond the pale for master, the digital sinkhole and animal husbandry.

"We've all been here a long time now," said the neighbors, parting empty handed.

"A long, long time," echoed my master. After living with me and the Chihuahua Baby DeVille he knows even the most obstreperous pet gets lodged in the human heart.

"I'll be on the lookout for the cat," said the master, hope mingled with sadness.

Maybe I, Luna will find the black and white cat and bring him to our doorstep so he can be the hero, for once. And not my victim.

To be continued...

LAKERS ADVANCE PAST ROCKETS

By Christopher Floch

HOUSTON, TX—After dropping the previous two games, the Houston Rockets were looking to send this series to a Game 7. LeBron James had other ideas, being aggressive early to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 98-78 drubbing at the Toyota Center on Friday, May 1.

The Lakers beat the Houston Rockets 4-2, advancing to the semifinals of the Western Conference playoffs. Their next opponent is defending NBA Champions, the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"It's not my style at all," James told ESPN after posting 28 points, eight assists and seven rebounds in the closeout victory. "I think me personally, the accepting and trying to be OK with the small victories."

James became the oldest player in NBA history to lead all players in a playoff series in total points scored, according to



LeBron powers past the Houston Rockets in Game 6 to advance to the second round of the NBA Playoffs. Photo by Jevone Moore.

NBA Analytics.

The series will start Tuesday. The San Antonio Spurs face the Minnesota Timberwolves in the other West semifinal.

Game 6 had no such headache. The Lak-

ers took a double-digit lead early in the second quarter and never let it get back down to single digits. They still didn't have their usual offense with Luka Dončić still out, but LeBron James kept doing what

he's done all series: turn back the clock.

Rui Hachimura (21 points) and Austin Reaves (15) were the only other Lakers players to score in double digits, but Deandre Ayton did have a huge game on the boards with 7 points and 16 rebounds.

The next round will be a different beast. OKC is a dynasty in the making. The Thunder obliterated the Lakers in all four matchups this season. Going 4-0, each victory by double digits.

Luka Dončić is still recovering from his Grade 2 hamstring, so he will be unavailable for at least the first two games versus the Thunder.

If LeBron and the Lakers are able to beat Oklahoma City, it will be by far the greatest upset of the NBA Playoffs.

Game 1 is Tuesday night at 5:30 p.m.