

# GROWING THE URBAN FOREST IN NORTH FAIR OAKS



**North Fair Oaks (NFO)** has significantly lower tree canopy cover than surrounding neighborhoods, and even within NFO, canopy cover is not equitably distributed. There are huge block-by-block disparities and this disparity matters (see map on back). The shortage of trees leads to higher temperatures and poorer air quality. The Stanford Future Bay Initiative found that some areas of NFO are, on average, 10 degrees hotter than neighboring communities, such as Atherton. Community members have proudly fought for improved living conditions and socioeconomic and environmental justice for decades. Individuals can make a difference in ensuring community voices are amplified and trees are part of the solution to making NFO more resilient to climate change.



*Above: Fuyu Persimmon tree, an edible fruit tree with low maintenance needs ideal for NFO yards*

## Benefits of Trees

Trees offer a wide variety of benefits, and different kinds of trees provide different services.

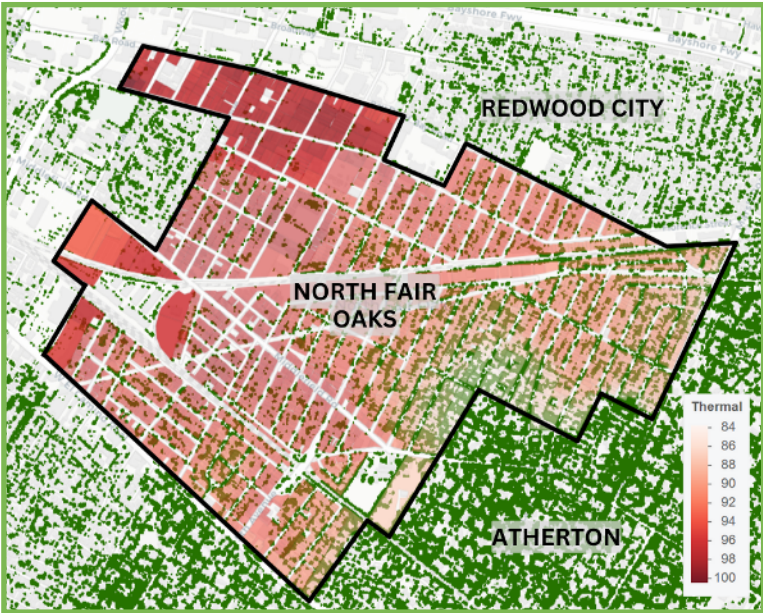
- 🌿 **Trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide and other pollutants**, releasing oxygen back into the air and trapping particulates, thus reducing air pollution.
- 🌿 **Trees provide shade**, making it easier to take a walk and be outside. We have learned that heat is a major concern for residents in NFO. Shade trees, which grow larger, reduce extreme heat and improve health impacts related to heat.
- 🌿 **Fruit trees provide healthy food options** which can be shared with neighbors. Fruit trees can be kept small so that maintenance is not too burdensome. However, small trees do not reduce heat very well or clean the air as effectively as larger trees. Having both fruit and shade trees is essential for a strong urban forest.
- 🌿 **Trees promote greater physical activity and reduce stress.** Studies have shown that urban greenery slows heartbeats, lowers blood pressure, and relaxes brain wave patterns.

## What You as a Resident Can Do!

Often, it feels like there are too many problems to address and we can easily fall into hopelessness. However, there are many things you can do to support the urban forest in NFO, whether you're a homeowner or a renter.

- 🌿 **Talk to your family about trees and the outdoors!** Share with them about how you feel when you're in an area with a lot of trees.
- 🌿 **Talk to staff at your child's school about the trees on the campus.** Are there enough? Ask that they prioritize students' health and learning by creating more shade and green space.
- 🌿 **Talk to your neighbors** about planting more trees in the community.
- 🌿 **Contact Canopy.** We can help you decide on the right tree for your yard, taking into consideration above and below ground utilities, proximity to the house, and sidewalk.
- 🌿 **Engage with the County.** As an unincorporated community, NFO is governed by San Mateo County. Advocate for trees by commenting on development proposals or working with Canopy's Advocacy Committee.

**Enjoy the shade - go out and enjoy what trees have to offer!**



Above: Thermal heat imaging with canopy coverage in NFO and the surrounding wealthier, more treed neighborhoods. Image by Stanford Future Bay Initiative 2021

Below: Volunteers and Canopy's Teen Urban Foresters plant trees in NFO



Canopy has planted **104 trees** throughout the community.

**Did You Know?**

- 🌿 NFO is named for the historic large oaks that cover the south eastern neighborhoods bordering Atherton. Oak trees can store about 50 lbs of CO2 every year, and they significantly reduce pollutants and particulate matter.
- 🌿 Research shows tree planting can reduce runoff by 20-30%, and the removal of impervious surfaces makes a big difference.
- 🌿 Shade from street trees can keep neighborhoods up to 6-10 degrees cooler than those without.
- 🌿 One study found that Midpeninsula residents living in historically redlined communities have lower canopy coverage and live 4-5 fewer years than those living in affluent, shaded communities.
- 🌿 Trees can return more than \$5 in benefits for every \$ 1 spent on their care.



**Healthy Trees, Healthy Communities:**  
 Canopy plants and cares for trees where people need them the most.  
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