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Wilder things: sidewalks, parking, and an easementAt last, redwood trees removed from Orinda mini park

By Sora O'Doherty



Workers remove redwood trees from beneath high voltage lines. Photo Sora O'Doherty

A number of redwood trees that have been worrying PG&E owing to their placement directly under the high voltage power lines behind Theatre Square were removed during the week of April 15 by a crew from A Plus Tree. The trees had been slated for removal for some time, and the city has plans to relandscape the mini park with plants that will present less of a fire danger.

Cesar Hernandez, A Plus Tree crew chief, said that in the past the company has been the subject of negative attention when removing trees, but now, with the greater awareness of fire safety, that has stopped. PG&E brought in a bucket vehicle and checked the trees for nesting birds and bees. According to PG&E spokesperson Megan McFarland, here were no bird nests or nesting birds in any of the trees removed. There was an active bee nest. Apiary enthusiast Brandon Drew of B&B Family Farms was called upon to help relocate the bees.

Drew advised waiting until early morning to remove the nest, which was actually located in an old squirrel's nest - a first for Drew. Early in the morning, all the bees would very likely be in the hive, as they don't fly when the temperature is cool. Using the bucket vehicle, the nest was removed and placed in a bee box in the morning. In the evening, it was transported to another location. It will be relocated back into the same area in about two to three weeks. By that time, the old worker bees will have died, as their natural lifespan is about three weeks, and so the bees won't try to return to the original location. Drew said that the bees had not been traumatized by the tree removal and were likely out foraging over their two- to three-mile flight pattern. The team responsible for the tree removal included an arborist.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

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