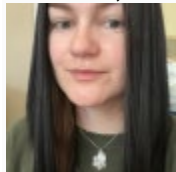


## Attendees branch out at Arbor Day Festival



Kathy Hughes and her grandson Henrey Radley, 8, enjoy the Arbor Day Festival in Oroville, California on Saturday March 16, 2024. (Molly Myers/Enterprise-Record)



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OROVILLE — Henrey Radley, whose favorite tree is a redwood, spent his eighth birthday at the Arbor Day Festival in Oroville with his grandma Kathy Hughes on Saturday.

The annual festival featured environmental education booths, food trucks and vendors, many selling a variety of plants.

Radley got his face painted to look like a character from the video game Minecraft. He said he really enjoyed seeing all of the rocks and minerals that were for sale.

Arbor Day was started by a [Nebraskan newspaper editor who greatly valued trees](#) and decided to implement a tree planting holiday in 1872. More than 150 years later, the holiday has grown into a sustainability focused organization, the Arbor Day Foundation.

Oroville is a “Tree City.” The Arbor Day Foundation deems a town a Tree City if there is enough tree cover in the area. The Arbor Day Foundation’s [website](#) lists the following benefits of being a Tree City: “Cooler temperatures. Cleaner air. Higher property values. Healthier residents.”

The Butte Environmental Council tabled at the Arbor Day Festival and offered free giveaways such as seeds and bookmarks. At the event they advertised their new subplots in the Oak Way Community Garden.

“We built smaller subdivisions of our big plots to create more accessibility to people who want to try their hand gardening ... just to create equity and access,” said Butte Environmental Council executive director Patrizia Hironimus.

Liz Barbar-Gabriel buys eggs from Elaine Burkart at the Arbor Day Festival in Oroville, California on Saturday March 16, 2024. (Molly Myers/Enterprise-Record)

A part of Hironimus’ main focus is to get the community civically engaged in fun and free ways that benefit the environment.

“I learned that people who are civically engaged are more likely to graduate, to graduate on time and be civically engaged later on in life,” Hironimus said.

The Chico Bonsai Society displayed and sold a variety of bonsai trees at the event. Martin Schwab, treasurer of the Chico Bonsai Society, said growing bonsai trees teaches “patience.”

He pointed to a bonsai tree with a thick trunk and large fuchsia flowers.

Greg O’Campo asks Martin Schwabe about a maple bonsai tree at the Arbor Day Festival in Oroville, California on Saturday March 16, 2024. (Molly Myers/Enterprise-Record)

“That one there is probably about 20-years-old ... somebody has had that in their care for that long,” Schwab said.

One of the bonsai trees he brought to the event was a juniper he’d been growing for one year.

“Bonsais are pretty low maintenance, but they require a lot of time,” he said.

On top of patience, Schwab said bonsais can teach about “understanding.”

“Every once in a while a tree will die,” Schwab said. “And so I guess you learn a little bit about mortality.”

An attendee at the event pointed at a maple bonsai tree and asked Schwab if the tree was “a marijuana plant.” The two laughed, and Schwab said that growing marijuana the way you grow a bonsai tree probably wouldn’t work too well.

Charlotte Freer, owner of Unique Gardens and Gifts, sold plants, earrings and garden decorations at the festival. Tomato plants were her top seller.

A tip she offers customers who buy tomato plants is to cut the bottom two leaves off of the stem, and then plant it deep in the soil.