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A day for West Commons

By *Sophie Braccini*



Star Thistle Photos provided

When naturalist Malcolm Sproul visited the park last October he was quick to point out the Bristly Oxtongue that covered most of an area that should be grassland in the 2.5-acre park. He recently added that it would be a good idea to start removing the perennial invasive now, and that another cleanup will be needed in the spring. As far as Star Thistle, another invasive plant present in the park, it is not visible now as it is an annual, but the seeds are in the ground. Sproul indicated that July would be the best time to remove these plants, before they spread the next seed generation.

Vice Mayor Teresa Onoda was delighted when resident Bobbie Preston came to the town council at the end of last year and made a case for the maintenance of the park, its grassland and its old pear trees. Onoda has been fighting for the very existence of this park since the project came to the planning commission as part of the Summerhill development of Harvest Court, off Camino Ricardo. She remembers how the vacant space was first scheduled to receive fill from the grading for the new homes, which would be 8 feet deep. As a planning commissioner at the time, she went onsite and created a visual simulation of what the fill would do to the old pear trees and asked her fellow planning commissioners to recommend the creation of an open space passive park instead. The developer finally agreed to take the fill off site; some of it went to the other Summerhill development off Rheem Boulevard.

Onoda will support every effort toward making her dream come true: creating an open space recreational area in the middle of town, not high up in the hills, where school children can go study the natural fauna and flora of our region, and where residents of all ages can enjoy a peaceful and beautiful space.



Bristly Oxtongue

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