

# NASA "MOON TREE" UPDATE (From Fall 2025 Crows Nest)

In the Winter 2020 Crow's Nest, Mary K. Fredericks wrote about the Ginkgo Biloba tree now residing in Wilson park that had been to space!

China's native Ginkgo Biloba tree, a deciduous tree famous for its height (100 ft.+), heavy smelling nuts of the female tree only, leaves annually dropping all in one day, long life, and each tree having its own individual DNA, dates back some 270 million years. Once an endangered species, considered a "living fossil," it is still used in China for medicinal purposes, and is remembered as "The Maiden Hair Tree."

Ferndale's Wilson Elementary School, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, played a unique role in current efforts to maintain the Ginkgo Biloba species. Students at Wilson responded to a request by NASA astronauts to submit seeds of unique trees and shrubs to a space project aimed at attempting to discern how or if seeds would germinate in space.

The students located Ginkgo Biloba seeds from a dealer supplying rare seeds and sent them to NASA. Ultimately these seeds from Wilson Elementary resulted in a two-foot high tree-begun in space. NASA donated this tree to Wilson School. A special ceremony was held the day it was planted there.

Several years later, the former University High School wanted a driveway placed where the Ginkgo tree was planted. A neighbor asked that, for its safety, the tree should be carefully moved out of the planned driveway space to another location in the immediate area, a request which at first was denied but later approved. Then, later, the tree was moved again, ending up between two pine trees in Wilson Park, during construction of new housing on University in about 2017.

On October 13, 2024 Ferndale Parks & Recreation Department held a ribbon cutting at Wilson Park to celebrate recent improvements. A featured speaker was Mary K. Fredericks who provided several onlookers (some of whom were residents in the new homes constructed in the area) the history of this important tree. The tree is a bit stunted, and fragile from multiple moves early in life, but will hopefully flourish in Wilson Park!



Wilson Park Moon Tree & Mary K. Fredericks  
Oct 13, 2024 (Museum Photo)

