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Fagus sylvatica (European Beech) ID #1053

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Rachael Tyner

April 20th, 2020

Bio 140 Lab: Humans and their Environment

Salve Regina University



European Beech Tree

Fagus sylvatica

ID Number 1053

In the Spring 2020 Bio Lab 140 class, my peers and I all chose a tree that was a part of the Salve Regina campus Arboretum to observe, study and learn about. I chose a tree marked 1053, a grown European Beech tree located between and behind McKillop Library and Gerety Hall. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, I was unable to watch my tree as it came to spring time- but I followed its growth for the winter months until March. In February my European Beech tree just had a couple of brown and almost dead leaves left from the green 30 foot canopy of leaves this tree had a couple of months prior.



Figure 1: February 14, 2020, Tree 1053.

In the Gilded-Age, wealthy people built many mansions in Newport, RI. They surrounded their houses with exotic trees, a favorite being the European Beech. Now, the streets and gardens of

Newport are lined with Beech trees which have a planting age around 180 years ago. These trees are native to southern Europe, alongside other native trees like the Larch, Spruce, Pine, and Poplar trees. The European Beech grows best in woodlands, and its peak season is in the winter.

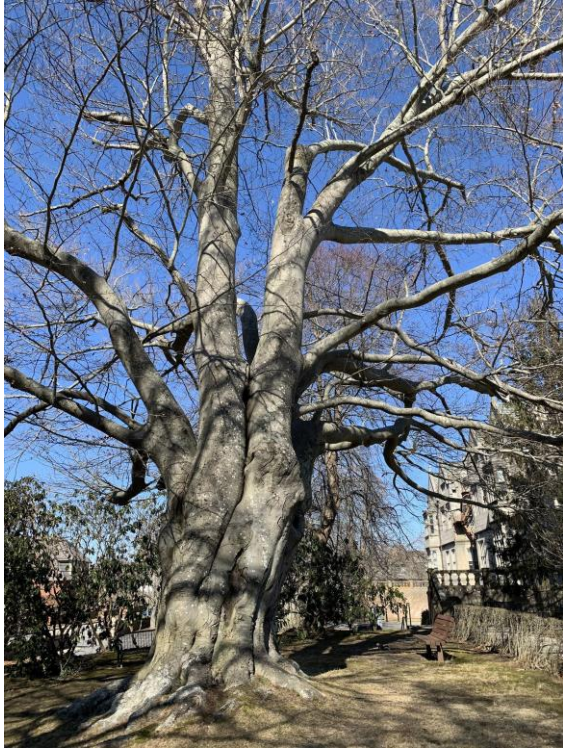


Figure 2 and 3: February 21, 2020, Tree number 1053. Leaves have almost fully fallen.

The European Beech tree flowers when it is between 50-80 years old. The seeds are called Beechnuts, there are two nuts in each capsule. These nuts are consumed by rodents and birds. In the past the beechnuts were consumed by humans, but no longer are. In 19th century England, the nuts were pressed for oil. This oil was used in cooking and lamps. They were also ground to make flowers.

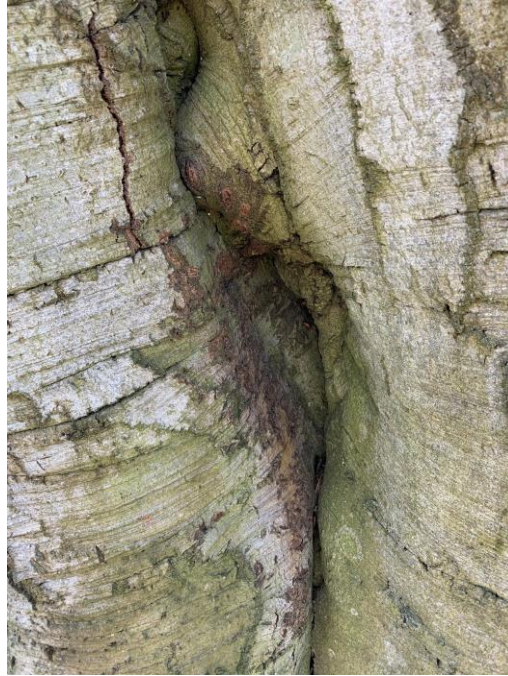
Historians say that the first European written script was written on a Beech tree in Sanskrit. In modern Dutch, the word Book translates to Boek, and Buek means Beech Tree, and in Swedish these words are the same.



Figures 4 and 5: April 20th, 2020, Tree number 1053. Buds on trees are about to leaf out.

For most of the time I spent observing my European Beech tree, I noticed very little changes due to the winter climate during the time of observation. Yet as it was nearing Spring, the buds have begun to form and are almost ready to pop. These buds are small and a light pink color, as seen in figure 5. The European Beech tree number 1053 is classified as large on the ArborScope website, and is of mature age. Its assets are estimated to cost about 59 hundred thousand dollars. At breast height, tree 1053 spans 75 inches around.

From watching this European Beech grow through the season and watch as the leaves fell and new ones began growing I learned a lot about trees and how different each one is. Major concerns around Tree 1053 to the Salve Regina community is the exposed roots, rotting sides, and cavities. Tree 1053 is currently on the decline of health as it is of old age. The efforts to stop or slow this decline have been to use wires to tie roots down and keep the tree together.



Figures 6 and 7: March 2nd, 2020. Pictured here are the exposed and rotting roots which are tied and the cavity and rot on the side.

The Newport community has been making efforts to keep the European Beech population steady by replacing mature declining trees with new Copper beeches. They are also treating diseased trees in order to preserve the glamor of the large spanned European Beech.

I have learned a lot about the history of the tree 1053 on Salve Regina's Campus from this project. I am left to wonder what the history is behind the different varieties of trees in Salve's expansive arboretum. The European Beech has such a rich history and Salve has a beautiful mature one right on campus. I am thankful that this project has left me with a deeper appreciation and regard for the trees on our campus and their history and heritage and the story of what may have brought them to Newport, Rhode Island.

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