

Palm trees bring touch of Hollywood to Hollywood

By Charity Prater

What are those funny plants sprouting up in the Hollywood neighborhood? They conjure up beach parties, warm sunshine and rollerblading in bikinis. So why are they flourishing in Portland, a city better known for its rain?

"The Chinese windmill palm trees are a particular variety of palm that does quite well in our climate," said Ellen Bergstone Beer, executive director of Film Action Oregon (FAO), the organization responsible

to be replaced because they were raising the sidewalk, damaging the roof of the theater, and obscuring the theater's newly renovated sign, the Chinese windmill palm trees were planted.

Besides, back in 1926, when the Hollywood Theatre was built, the building was such an architectural hit that the Hollywood neighborhood was named after it. The recent planting of palm trees refers to that Hollywood past.

"People have forgotten about the neighborhood's heritage," said Ellen Bergstone Beer. "We wanted to use the trees to help remind people of that heritage."

for preserving the historic Hollywood Theatre. Recently, five Chinese windmill palm trees were planted in front of the theater on Northeast Sandy Boulevard.

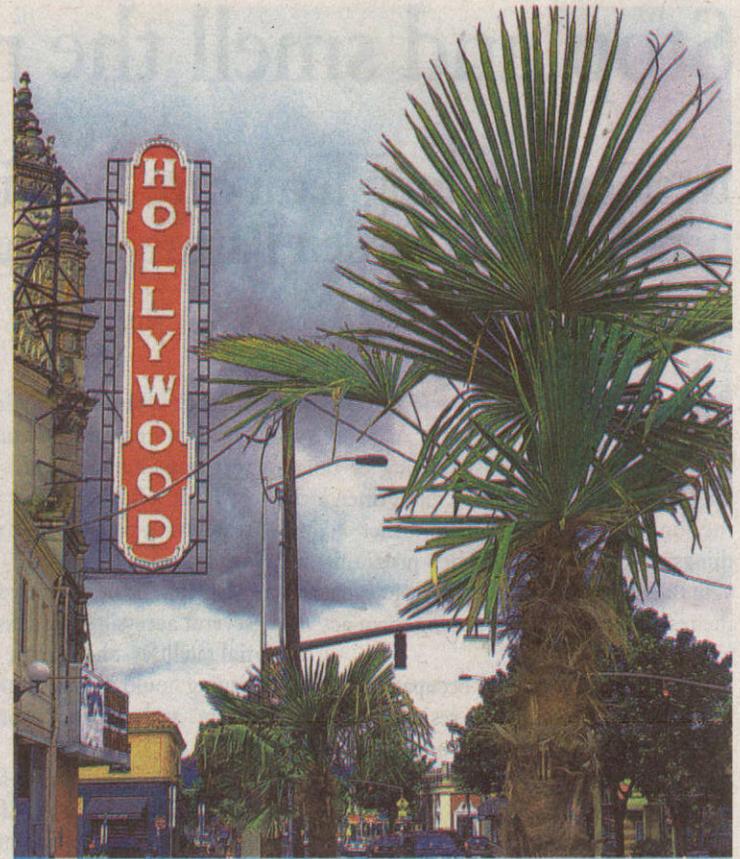
Why palm trees?

"We wanted the district to have a distinct look," explained Bergstone Beer. So when several large trees outside the building need-

ed to be replaced because they were raising the sidewalk, damaging the roof of the theater, and obscuring the theater's newly renovated sign, the Chinese windmill palm trees were planted.

In addition, she said, "I think that this is another way that we are making the Hollywood Theatre and the neighborhood a destination location."

Chinese windmill palm trees recently were planted in front of the Hollywood Theatre.
– Photo by Charity Prater



Both the city of Portland and FAO provided the money needed to plant the trees. Some passersby give the trees, which are unique to the area, little notice. Others scratch their heads in curiosity or find them amusing. According to Bergstone Beer, many people wonder how palm trees can survive in our climate.

In fact, Chinese windmill palms, with their fan-like fronds and fringed trunks, are one of the hardiest palms in the world. Native to central eastern China, they thrive in altitudes too high for other palms. That explains the tree's endurance in the Pacific Northwest. Its tolerance for moist winters means the palm even thrives in the Alaskan panhandle. ★