

The Ranch Tree

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grade 7

Each state in the United States has symbols representing it. Examples of these are: the state capital, the state seal, the state song, flag, bird, flower, and tree. Rancho Santa Fe, also has similar symbols. The eucalyptus is a good example of a symbol well known to the Rancho Santa Fe populace. These tall, thin trees are scattered in clumps throughout the whole of Rancho Santa Fe. People know them by sight, smell, and mere touch of their bark. But, do you know why they are here?

In 1906, a caballero, Juan Osuna, sold 9,000 acres of his choice land to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Co.. At the time they were in desperate need of railroad ties, and found their new property, Rancho San Diego, later to become Rancho Santa Fe, the perfect place to experiment. The Santa Fe Railway Co. planted thousands of eucalyptus trees, but soon found their wood too soft

to use for railroad ties. Thus, they abandon thousands of trees and seedlings. No longer threatened by the woodman's blade, the eucalyptus trees grew on; now, along with the company of citrus orchards planted also by Santa Fe for commercial production. The population of Rancho grew and although its character took on a different note, the eucalyptus tree was ever present on the horizon.

Today, there are still many trees in existence. Some are old and gnarled, and some are still young and just getting ready to begin life, as the Ranch tree.