

## Will activism save the trees of Les Halles?

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On a recent trip to Paris, we returned to one of our favorite greenspaces, the garden of Les Halles, and were pleased to see that the trees which appeared endangered of succumbing to urban renewal in June 2009 (see photos) are still there. But their days are numbered. If Mayor Delanoë moves forward on plans for a new Forum des Halles, the trees will fall to make room for “improvements.” It will be interesting to see if the local activists can make the city planners realize what seems obvious to we ordinary people: these trees, this cool and living space, matter. They matter right now, every day. They matter to all of us who wander through, live nearby, or seek shelter in the shade. One need only visit the area on any sunny day to witness its significance for the population. What will it take for Paris to live up to an authentically environmental politics, and provide reliable, mature, and widespread greenspaces for its millions of inhabitants, as do London and New York? We applaud the participants of last weekend’s “vide grenier” in Les Halles, and second their efforts to save this garden. À bas les nouveaux bûcherons de Paris.

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