

Virginia Big Tree Program: Sharing Stories of Arboreal Giants

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Virginia Tree Stewards Annual Symposium

June 27, 2017

Richmond, VA



Presentation Overview

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

REGISTER

MEASURE

REPORT

GO HUNT!

TAKE HOME

- **Brief look at the history and organization of the Virginia Big Tree Program**
- **Quick tour of the Virginia Big Tree Register**
- **Key facts on big tree measurement and scoring**
- **Tips on how to report and hunt for big trees**



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Mission Statement

**To promote the care and
appreciation of trees – big and small**

**Document the largest specimens in the state and provide
resources to aid in their protection and care**

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July 10, 1969

Mr. William A. McElfresh
Extension Specialist, 4-H
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Blacksburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. McElfresh:

Having just returned to VIRGINIA FORESTS, Inc., from the Army, I have been assigned the project of working with you and 4-H Club workers on "Virginia's Big Trees." From the May '66 issue of "American Forests" magazine I learned that out of some 385 National Champion trees, Virginia has only two listed - post oak in Charlotte County and loblolly pine near Ammon, Virginia; so it does look like we have plenty of room to grow!

I have quite a few questions to ask and some ideas how VIRGINIA FORESTS, Inc., may be of some help in initiating the program. I'm wondering if you will be attending the Conservation and Forestry Educational Conference in Charlottesville July 21. If so, I will try to see you there, or if more convenient, I will try to get in touch with you sometime during the week before or following the meeting.

Looking forward to meeting and working with you.

Sincerely yours,

VIRGINIA FORESTS, Inc.

Charles F. Finley, Jr.
Assistant Director

CFF, Jr.:cds

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Dr. Jeff Kirwan
Professor Emeritus
Virginia Tech

Eric Wiseman named coordinator of Virginia Big Tree Program

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BLACKSBURG, Va., Dec. 5, 2013
— [Eric Wiseman](#), associate professor of urban forestry and arboriculture and a [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) specialist in the [College of Natural Resources and Environment](#), has been named coordinator of the [Virginia Big Tree Program](#).

"I will work very hard to ensure that everyone continues to enjoy and value the Virginia Big Tree Program," said Wiseman.

The Virginia Big Tree Program, which began as a 4-H and Future Farmers of America project in 1970, aims to increase the care and appreciation of trees. Based in Virginia Tech's [Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation](#), the program maintains a database of the top five largest trees of each species in the state.



Eric Wiseman

Tree Geek
Virginia Tech

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Tracey Sherman
Program Support
Virginia Tech



John Peterson
Database Programmer
Virginia Tech

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Big Tree Interns



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Big Tree Volunteers

Our New Website

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

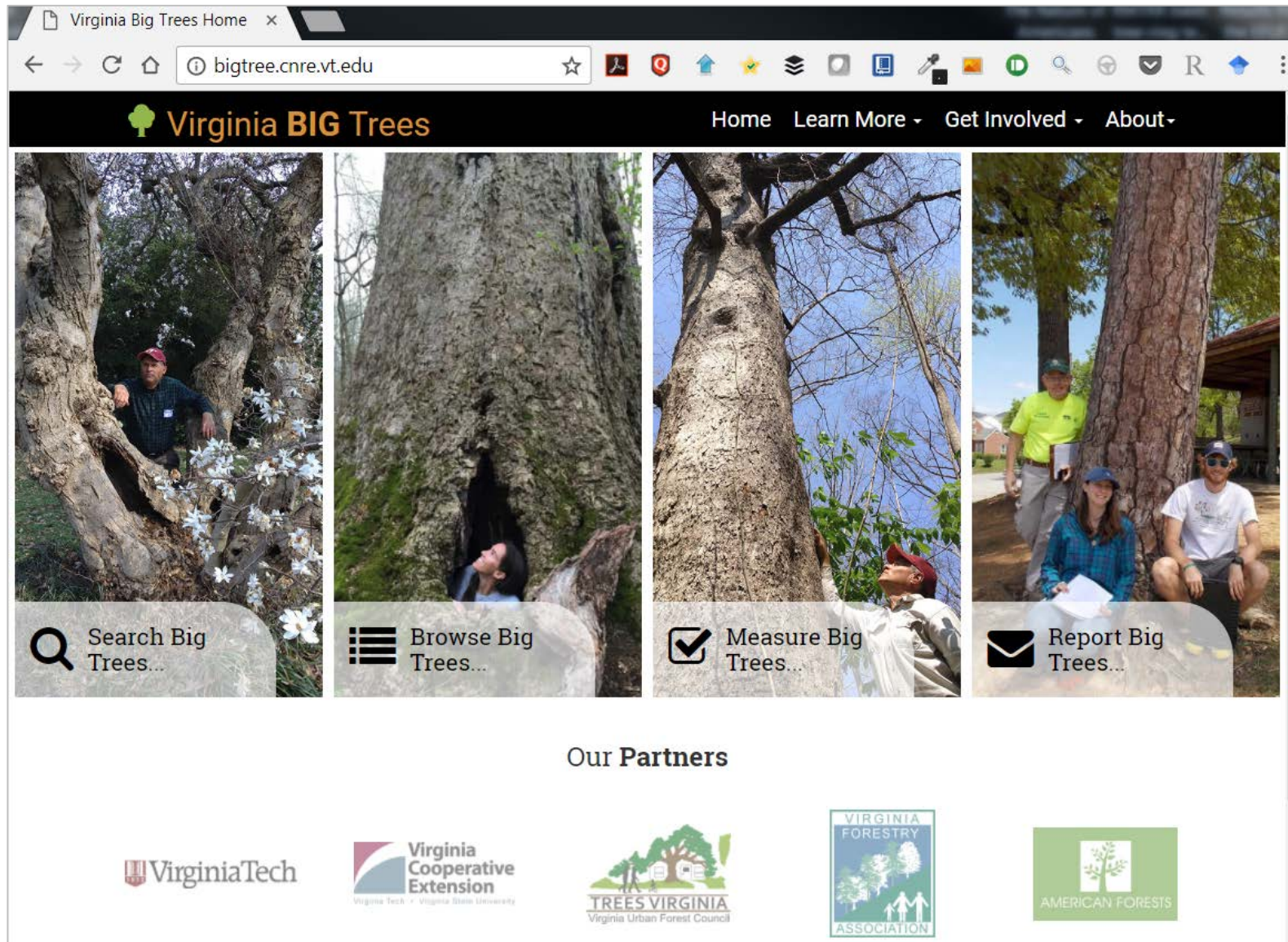
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Virginia Big Tree Register

OVERVIEW

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- **An online searchable database plus an historical hardcopy archive (kept at Virginia Tech)**
- **Top-five* specimens of native and non-native tree species**
- **Currently no species restrictions for register entry**
- **445 curated species and sub-species**
- **Minimum size of 9.5" trunk circumference and 13' height**



Virginia Big Tree Register

OVERVIEW

- **1,524 living specimens**
- **114 counties & independent cities have 1 or more entries**
- **All but 48 entries have been recertified in the last 10 years**

BACKGROUND

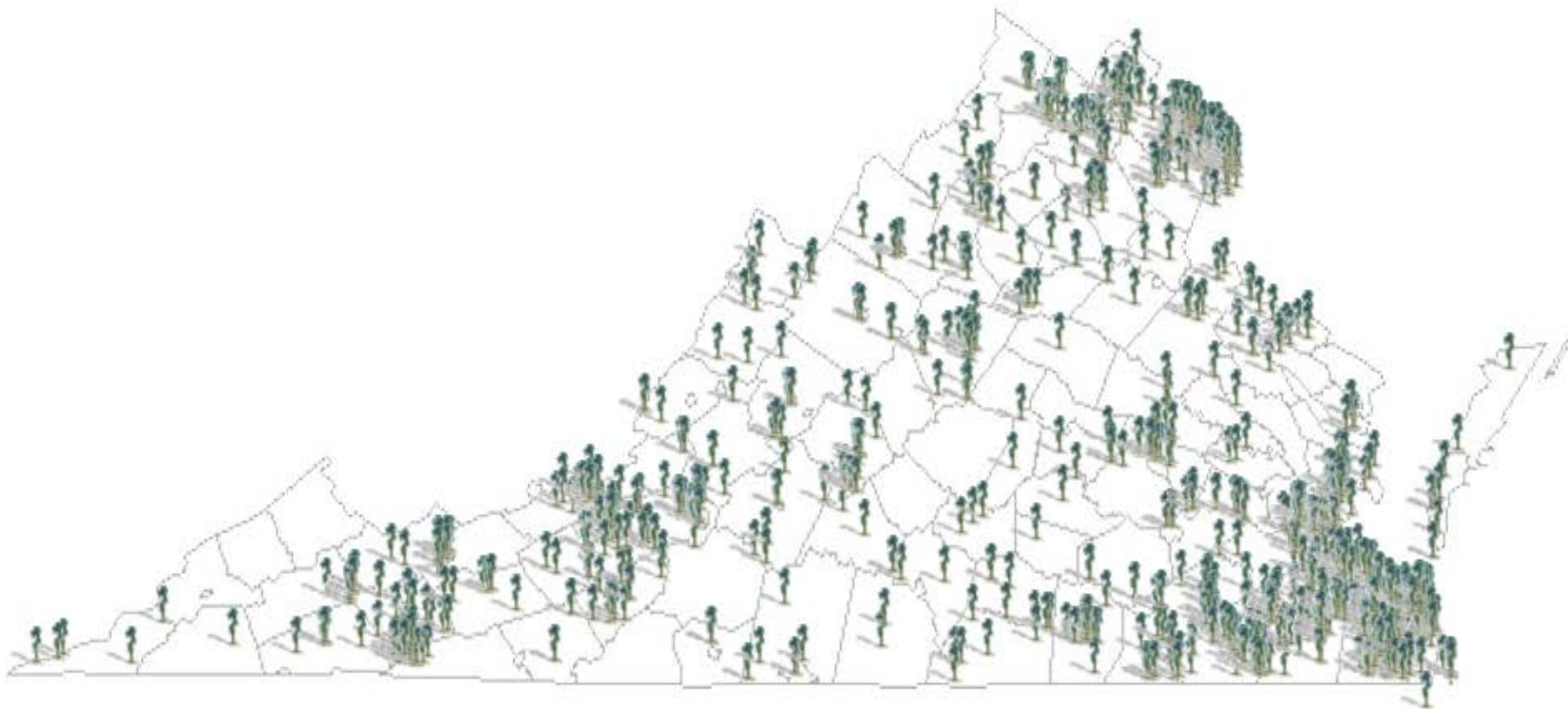
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Virginia Big Tree Register

OVERVIEW

- **54 current national champions**

BACKGROUND

- **4th place nationally (CA, TX, FL, VA)**

REGISTER



MEASURE



AMERICAN FORESTS

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TAKE HOME



Virginia's National Champions

OVERVIEW

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Abies fraseri
Acer negundo
Acer rubrum var. trilobum
Aesculus flava
Alnus serrulata
Baccharis halimifolia
Betula uber
Broussonetia papyrifera
Carya aquatica
Celtis tenuifolia
Cornus foemina
Crataegus calpodendron
Crataegus marshallii
Crataegus marshallii
Firmiana simplex
Hibiscus syriacus
Ilex montana
Ilex verticillata
Ilex verticillata
Juglans cinerea
Liriodendron tulipifera
Maclura pomifera
Morella caroliniensis (syn. Myrica caroliniensis)
Morella caroliniensis (syn. Myrica caroliniensis)
Morella cerifera (syn. Myrica cerifera)
Morella pensylvanica (syn. Myrica pensylvanica)
Nyssa aquatica

Nyssa biflora
Oxydendrum arboreum
Pinus taeda
Populus heterophylla
Prunus alleghaniensis
Prunus angustifolia
Prunus domestica
Quercus alba
Quercus hemisphaerica
Quercus laurifolia
Quercus lyrata
Quercus pagoda
Quercus phellos
Salix babylonica
Salix discolor
Sideroxylon lycioides
Styrax americanus
Styrax americanus
Styrax grandifolius
Symplocos tinctoria
Ulmus alata
Viburnum lentago
Viburnum opulus var. americanum
Viburnum prunifolium
Viburnum prunifolium
Zizyphus jujuba
Zizyphus jujuba

Virginia's National Champions

OVERVIEW

Tree Information

[Print this record](#)

Common Name: white oak

Scientific Name: *Quercus alba*

Native/Naturalized: Native to Virginia

Status: alive

National Champion: yes

Virginia Champion: yes

Circumference: 331 in.

Height: 90 ft.

Crown: 120 ft.

Points: 451

Date Last Measured: 2012

Last Measured by: Landon Webb

Date First Measured: 1993

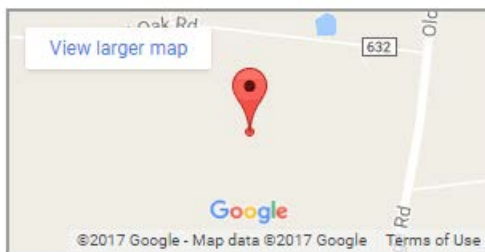
Location of Tree

Tree is located in: Brunswick

Land Owner: Paul Schneider

GPS Coordinates: 36.87593, -77.74152

Owner Email: bobkinsale@gmail.com



Nominators

Original Nominator(s): Frank E. McKeever

Contact Information

Contact Name: Paul Schneider

Contact Email: bobkinsale@gmail.com

Contact Address: P.O. Box 112

Contact Phone: 434-532-6890



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Eastern white Oak (Quercus alba)

[←](#) [→](#) [↺](#) [🏠](#) [www.americanforests.org/big-trees/eastern-white-oak](#) [☆](#) [📄](#) [🔒](#) [🏠](#) [🌟](#) [📁](#) [📷](#) [📺](#) [🔍](#) [🔄](#) [📶](#) [☰](#)

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CHAMPION TREE NATIONAL REGISTER

EASTERN WHITE OAK


QUERCUS ALBA

STATUS


CHAMPION

 TREE CIRCUMFERENCE

331

 HEIGHT

90

 CROWN SPREAD

120

TOTAL POINTS

451

LOCATION	Brunswick, VA
Nominated by	Landon Webb
Year Nominated	2012
Date crowned	2014-04-16

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

OVERVIEW

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bigtree.cnre.vt.edu

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Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

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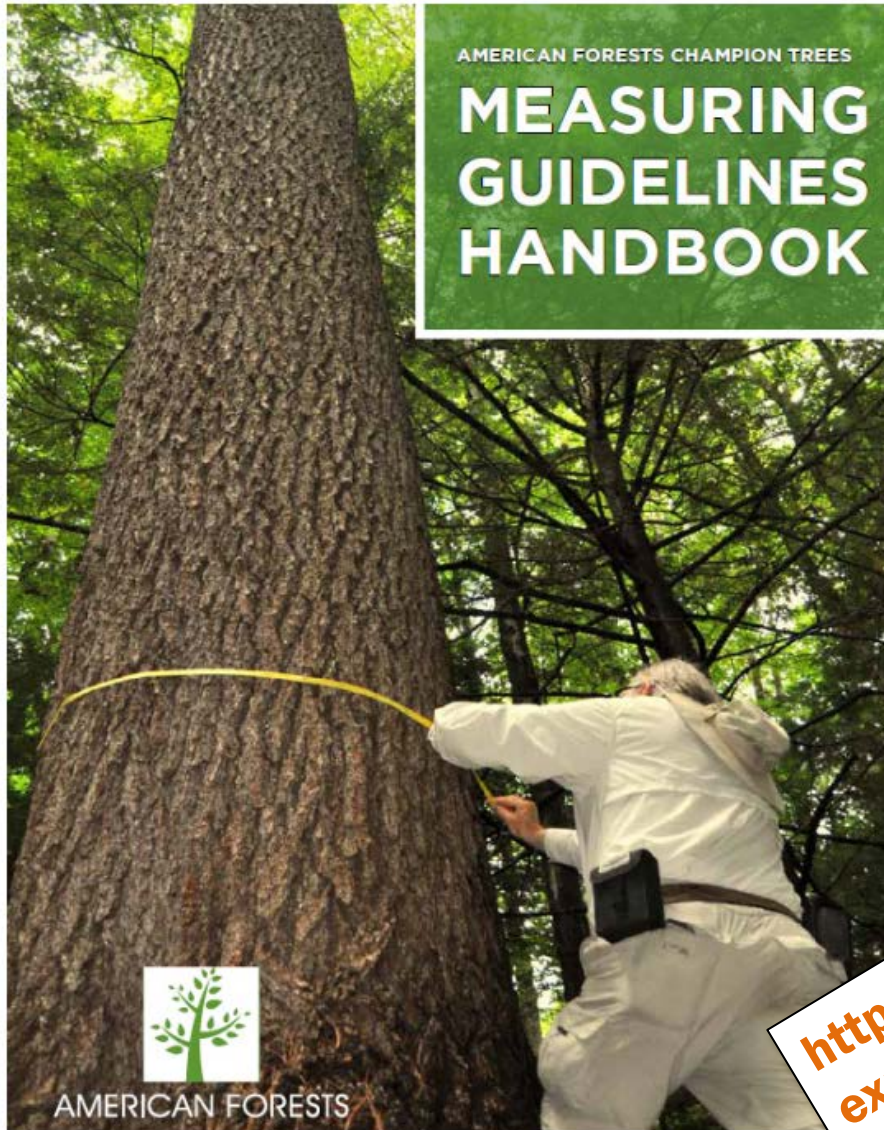
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AMERICAN FORESTS CHAMPION TREES

MEASURING GUIDELINES HANDBOOK



[http://www.americanforests.org/
explore-forests/americas-biggest-
trees/nominate-a-tree/](http://www.americanforests.org/explore-forests/americas-biggest-trees/nominate-a-tree/)

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

OVERVIEW

- **Eligible tree: $\geq 9.5''$ trunk circumference & $\geq 13'$ height**

BACKGROUND

- **Trunk circumference @ 4.5' above ground line (inches)**

REGISTER

- **Vertical height from ground line to highest branch (feet)**

MEASURE

- **Average crown spread in two perpendicular planes (feet)**

REPORT

Circumference (1 point per inch)

GO HUNT!

+ Height (1 point per foot)

TAKE HOME

+ Crown Spread (1/4 point per foot)

Big Tree Score =

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

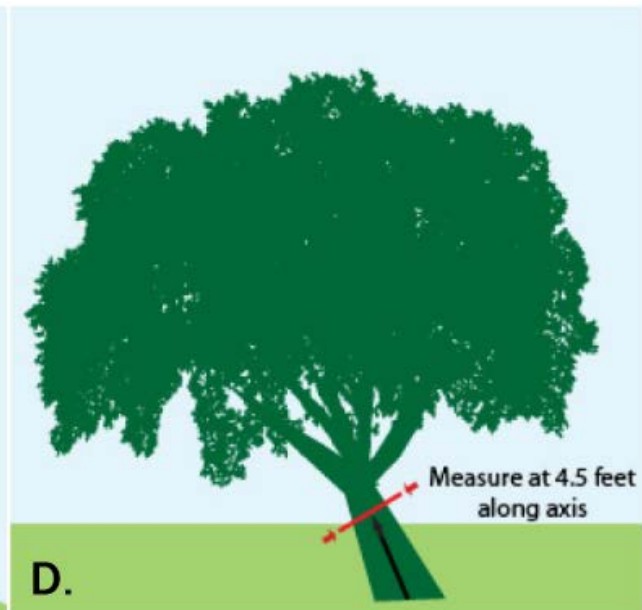
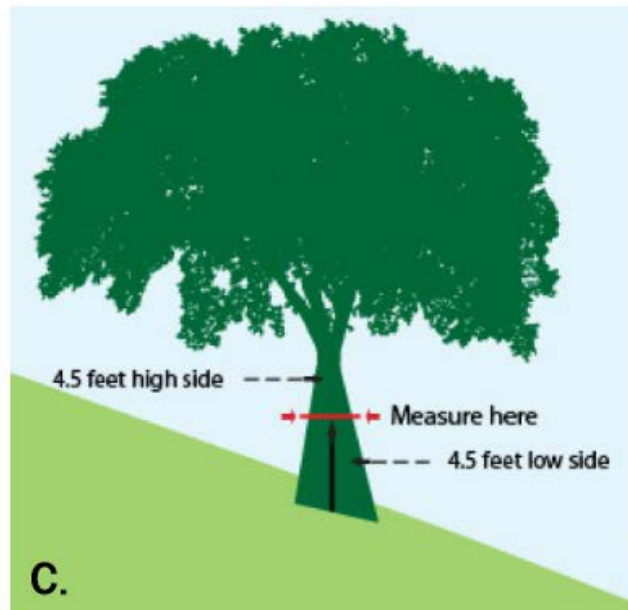
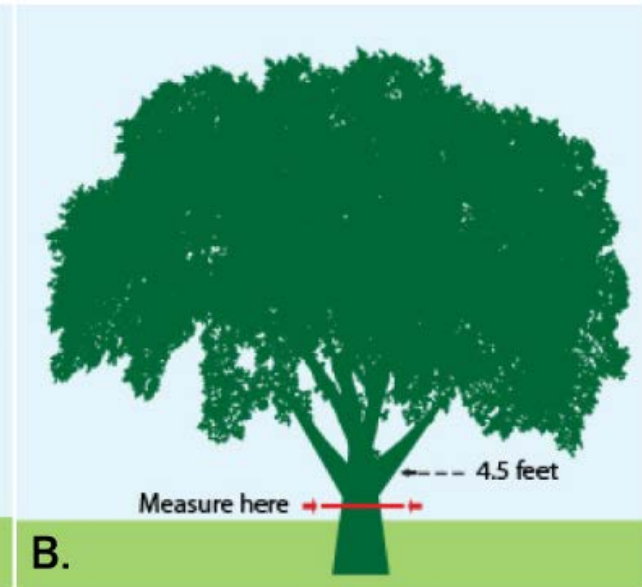
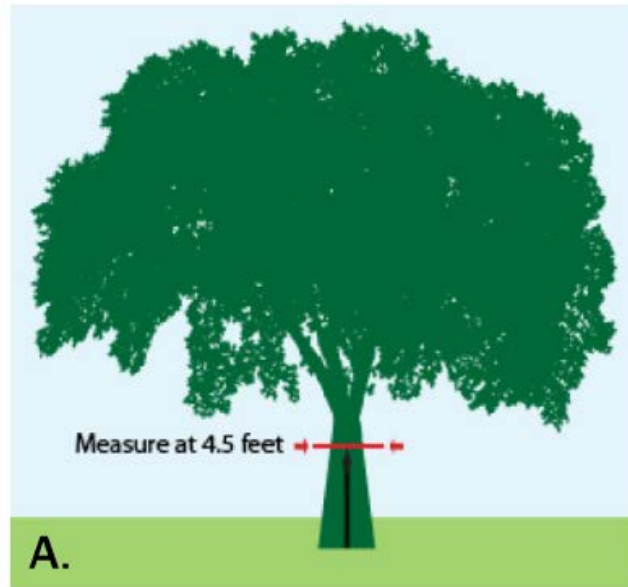
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Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

OVERVIEW

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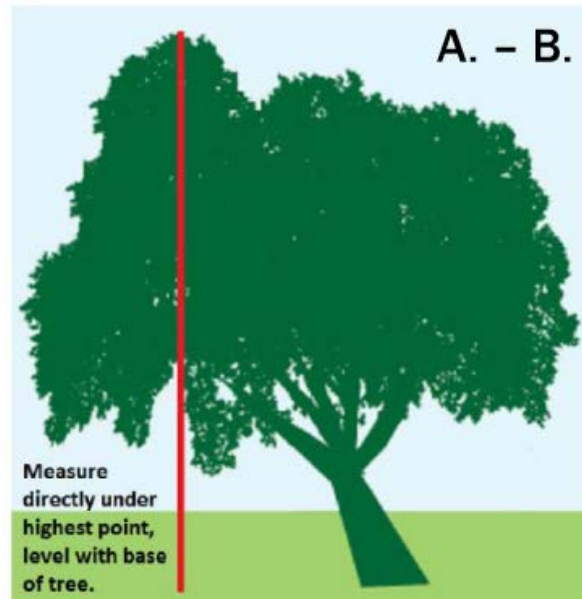
REGISTER

MEASURE

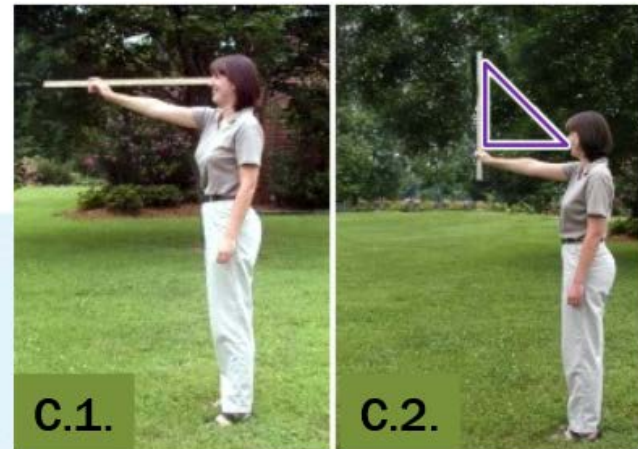
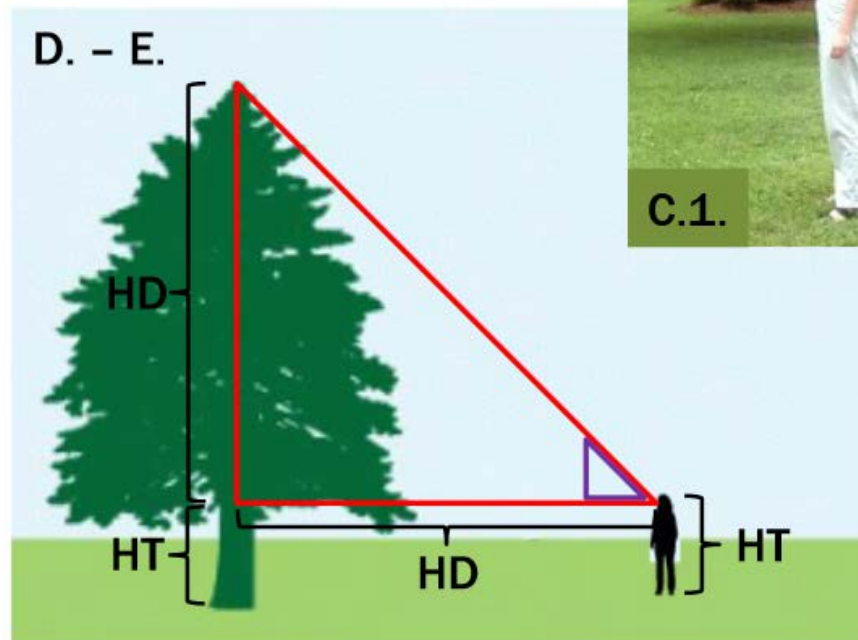
REPORT

GO HUNT!

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Note: This technique is most accurate for straight trees on flat ground.



This technique works because the red and purple triangles are similar right triangles.

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

OVERVIEW

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Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

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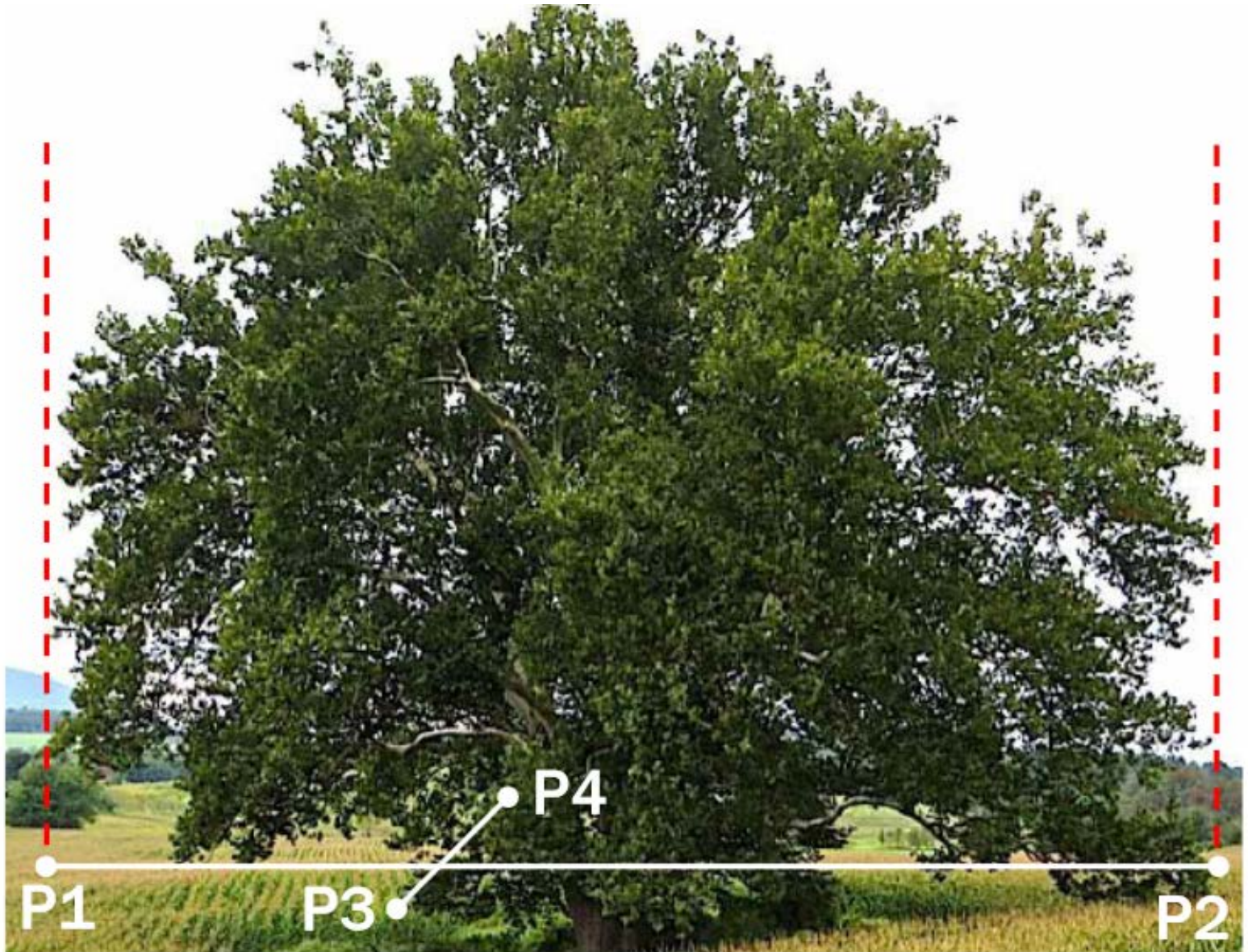
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Reporting a Big Tree

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "https://vce.az1". The page header features the Virginia Cooperative Extension logo and the text "Virginia Tech • Virginia State University". The main heading is "Virginia Big Tree Program Personal Information". Below this, a section titled "Please provide the following information about yourself (*required information):" contains four input fields: "First and last name*", "Email address*", "Phone number", and "Mailing address". At the bottom, there is a section titled "May we have permission to display your information on our website?" with three radio button options: "Yes", "No", and "Only the following information may be displayed:". A text input field is provided for the third option. A progress bar at the bottom indicates 0% completion.

VA Big Tree Program

Secure | https://vce.az1

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

**Virginia Big Tree Program
Personal Information**

Please provide the following information about yourself (*required information):

First and last name*

Email address*

Phone number

Mailing address

May we have permission to display your information on our website?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Only the following information may be displayed:

0% 100%

- **Species name**
- **Measurements**
- **Locality name**
- **Address or GPS**
- **Owner info**
- **Measurer info**
- **Nominator info**
- **PHOTOS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Reporting a Big Tree

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Virginia Big Tree Program Nomination Form

1. Name and address of nominator/measurer: _____ Date: _____
Phone and email of nominator/measurer: _____
Is the nominator/measurer or the owner the contact for this tree? _____
Name and address of tree owner: _____
2. Kind of tree (common name): _____ (scientific name): _____
3. Comments about tree (is it healthy, is it endangered by development, does it have historical significance?):

4. Dimensions of tree (measurement guidelines on page 2):
Trunk circumference: _____ (inches) Measurement height: _____ (ft) Trunk circumference: _____ (1 pt. per inch)
Vertical tree height: _____ (feet) (if other than standard 4.5') + Height: _____ (1 pt. per foot)
Average crown spread: _____ (feet) + Avg. crown spread: _____ (¼ pt. per foot)
Method of vertical height measurement: _____ = Total points: _____
5. Directions to tree (describe using major roadways or landmarks that are nearby):

6. County or city
where tree is located: _____
7. GPS coordinates (please use decimal degrees):
N _____ W _____
8. May this nomination be shared publicly?
Yes: _____ No: _____
9. Sketch map of tree location on owner's property:
North: ↑
10. Mail nomination to:
Virginia Big Tree Program

Go Hunt for a Big Tree!

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Virginia Big Trees Home


bigtree.cnre.vt.edu


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Search- VA Big Trees

bigtree.cnre.vt.edu/search.cfm?mode=a

 **Virginia BIG Trees**

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Search the Virginia Big Tree Register

Customize your search using the fields and filters below. Terms may be entered into one or more search windows (search "oak" in Tree Name and "Suffolk" in Location and you will get results for 4 oak trees in city of Suffolk). Leaving the search terms blank will display all trees in the register that have the "status" selected in the search options below.

Go back to the [simple search](#)

Tree Name

Location

People

Show:

- ☐ National Champs
- ☐ State Champs
- ☐ Trees with pictures

Status:

- ☐ Alive, top 5 in points
- ☒ All living trees
- ☐ Dead Trees
- ☐ Any status


Output table information:

- ☒ Common Name
- ☒ Latin Name
- ☒ City or County
- ☒ Total Points
- ☒ Status (Living/Dead)
- ☒ Last Measured
- ☒ Measurements

Related Links

- [Browse VA National Champions](#)
- [Browse VA State Champions](#)
- [Browse Common Native State Champions](#)
- [Report a Big Tree](#)
- [National Big Tree Register](#)

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Virginia BIG Trees

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Search Results

Back to [advanced search](#)

You searched for:

Species: *Acer nigrum*
Status: All living trees

4 records were found for your search.
* = State Champ, ** = National Champ

[Map results](#)

Click the column header to sort the table

Common Name	Latin Name	City or County	Total Points	Status	Last Measured	Height (ft)	Circumference (in)	Crown Width (ft)
black maple*	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Rockbridge	257	alive	2012	83	155	75
black maple	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Montgomery	243	alive	2015	76	148	74
black maple	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Fairfax	228	alive	2010	115	96	66
black maple	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Fairfax	180	alive	2010	100	66	56

Related Links

- [Browse VA National Champions](#)
- [Browse VA State Champions](#)
- [Browse Common Native State Champions](#)
- [Report Big Trees](#)
- [National Big Tree Register](#)

Go Hunt for a Big Tree!

OVERVIEW

- Tree ID Manual

BACKGROUND

- Camera

REGISTER

- Map/GPS Unit

MEASURE

- Tape measurer

REPORT

- Yard stick

GO HUNT!

TAKE HOME

<http://tinyurl.com/VBTPwanted>

Most-Wanted VA Big Trees				
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Ac Comments Share				
fx hazel alder				
	A	B	C	D
1	Common Name	Latin Name	State Rank	Points
2	balsam fir	Abies balsamea	1	220
3	balsam fir	Abies balsamea	2	
4	balsam fir	Abies balsamea	3	
5	balsam fir	Abies balsamea	4	
6	balsam fir	Abies balsamea	5	
7	Amur maple	Acer ginnala	1	76
8	Amur maple	Acer ginnala	2	
9	Amur maple	Acer ginnala	3	
10	Amur maple	Acer ginnala	4	
	Amur maple	Acer ginnala	5	
	striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	1	94
	striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	2	89
	striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	3	
15	striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	4	
16	striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	5	
17	Ohio buckeye	Aesculus glabra	1	203
18	Ohio buckeye	Aesculus glabra	2	100
19	Ohio buckeye	Aesculus glabra	3	
20	Ohio buckeye	Aesculus glabra	4	
21	Ohio buckeye	Aesculus glabra	5	
22	red buckeye	Aesculus pavia	1	
23	red buckeye	Aesculus pavia	2	
24	red buckeye	Aesculus pavia	3	
25	red buckeye	Aesculus pavia	4	
26	red buckeye	Aesculus pavia	5	

Take Home Messages

OVERVIEW

- **Virginia has a vibrant history of big trees from the Chesapeake Bay to the Cumberland Gap**

BACKGROUND

REGISTER

- **The Virginia Big Tree Program strives to document the state's largest trees and educate the public about trees**

MEASURE

REPORT

- **There is a network of dedicated staff and volunteers who can help you locate, measure, and nominate big trees**

GO HUNT!

TAKE HOME

- **Spread the word about these Arboreal Giants...maybe there is one in your neighborhood**



Questions and Comments

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30th Annual Master Gardener College

June 23, 2017

Blacksburg, VA



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