



Virginia Big Tree Program: Sharing Stories of Arboreal Giants

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Waynesboro Tree Workshop

September 16, 2016

Waynesboro, VA



Presentation Overview

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- **Brief look at history and structure 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 nominate and hunt for big trees**



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Virginia Big Tree Program Mission

To increase the care and appreciation of big trees

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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

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
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Our Brand-New Website

<http://bigtree.cnre.vt.edu>

Virginia Big Tree Register

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



Virginia Big Tree Register

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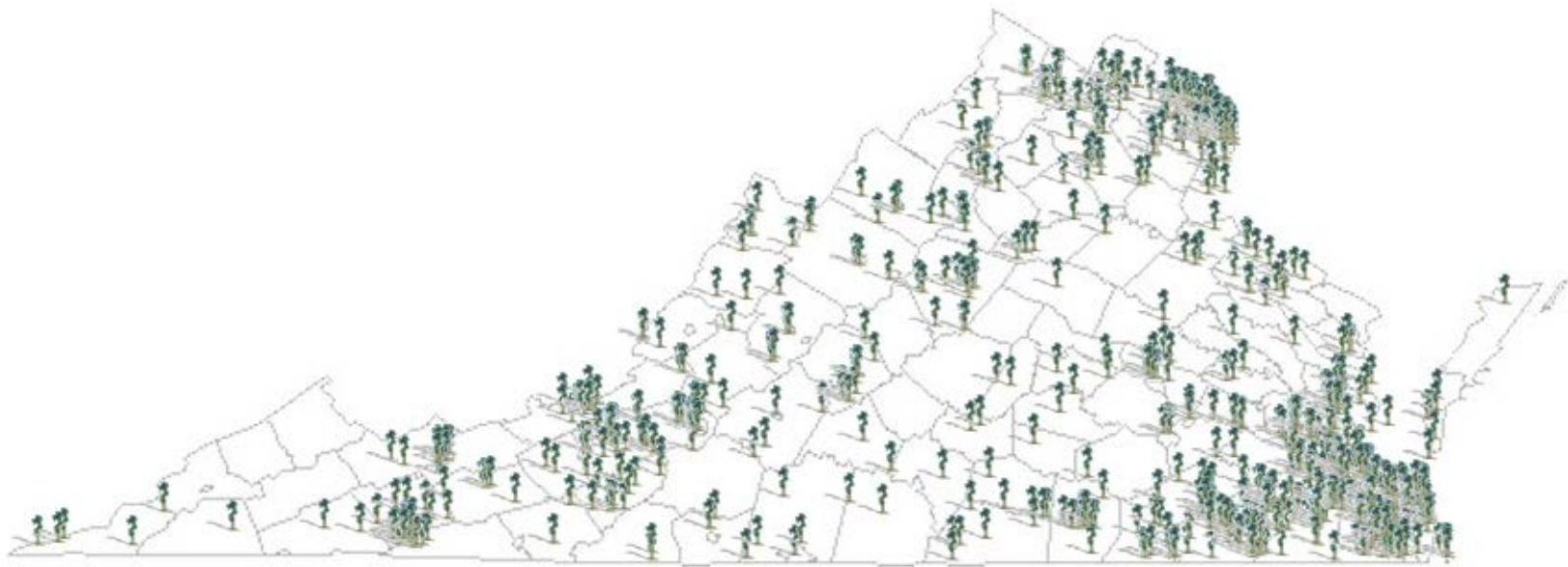
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- **1,337 top-five tree records**
- **117 counties & independent cities have 1 or more entries**
- **All but 10 entries have been recertified since 2006**



Virginia Big Tree Register

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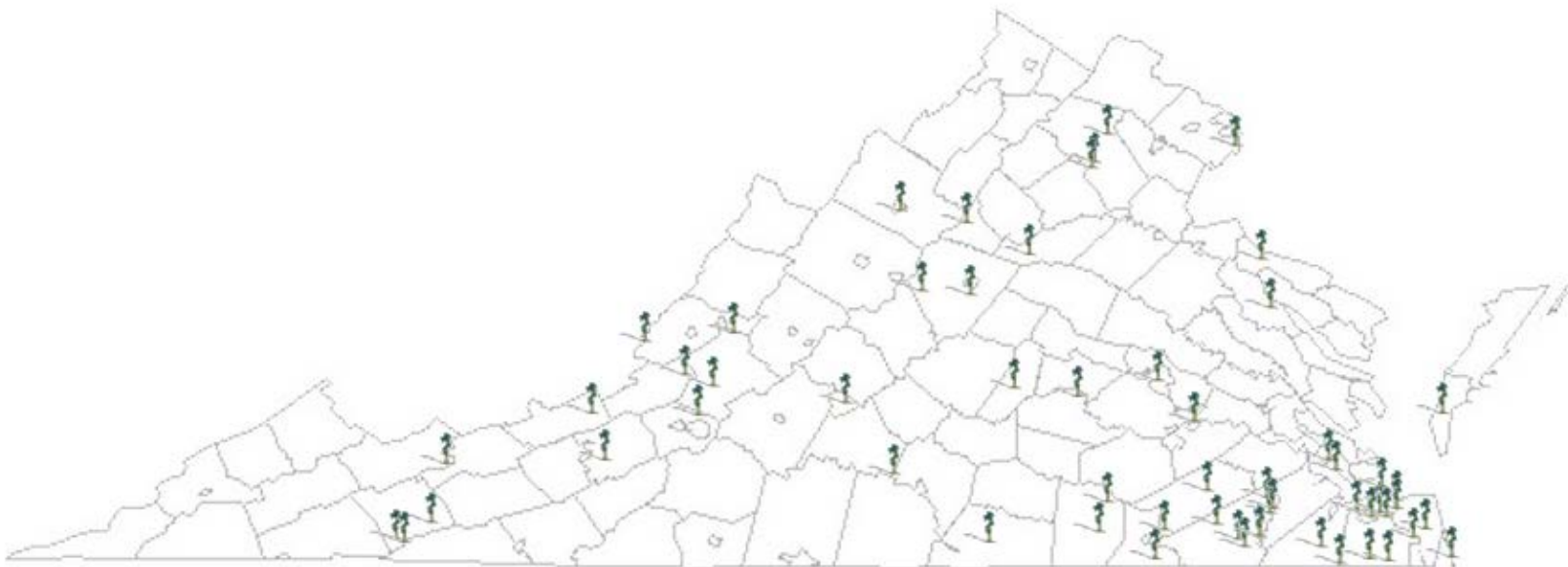
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- **61 national champions**
- **4th place nationally (CA, TX, FL, VA)**



Virginia Big Tree Register

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Abies fraseri
Acer barbatum
Acer negundo
Aesculus flava
Aesculus parviflora
Aesculus sylvatica
Albizia julibrissin
Amelanchier laevis
Baccharis halimifolia
Betula uber
Broussonetia papyrifera
Carya aquatica
Carya cordiformis
Celtis tenuifolia
Cornus foemina
Crataegus marshallii
Crataegus marshallii
Frangula alnus (syn. Rhamnus frangula)
Fraxinus nigra
Fraxinus profunda
Gleditsia triacanthos
Hibiscus syriacus
Ilex montana
Ilex opaca
Ilex opaca
Ilex verticillata
Ilex verticillata
Juglans cinerea
Ligustrum ovalifolium
Ligustrum sinense
Liriodendron tulipifera

Maclura pomifera
Magnolia grandiflora
Morella cerifera (syn. Myrica cerifera)
Morella pensylvanica (syn. Myrica pensylvanica)
Nyssa aquatica
Nyssa biflora
Oxydendrum arboreum
Persea palustris
Populus heterophylla
Prunus alleghaniensis
Prunus angustifolia
Prunus domestica
Prunus serotina var. serotina
Quercus alba
Quercus hemisphaerica
Quercus lyrata
Quercus pagoda
Quercus phellos
Salix caroliniana
Sideroxylon lycioides
Sorbus americana
Styrax americanus
Styrax americanus
Styrax grandifolius
Symplocos tinctoria
Thuja occidentalis
Ulmus alata
Viburnum lentago
Viburnum prunifolium
Viburnum rufidulum

Virginia Big Tree Register

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Tree Information

Common Name: white oak

Species:

Scientific Name: *Quercus alba*

Native/Naturalized: Native to Virginia

Status: alive

National Champion: yes

Date First Measured: 1993

Comments: This tree is very healthy and is believed to be over 500 years old. It was the national champion white oak until a larger one was found in 2011. The new owner welcomes visitors!! (Easy access from I 85.)

State Champ!

Circumference: 331

Height: 90

Crown: 120

Points: 451

Date Last Measured: 2012

Last Measured by: Landon Webb

Location of Tree - **State Map**

Tree is located in: Brunswick

GPS Coordinates: N 36.87593 W 77.74152

Directions:

Rt 632 (Great Oak Road), Warfield, VA

Land Owner: Paul Schneider

Owner Email: bobkinsale@gmail.com

Map Tree

Owner Address:

2788 Great Oak Road

Warfield, VA 23889

Owner Phone: 434-532-6890

Contact Information

Contact Name: Paul Schneider

Contact Email: bobkinsale@gmail.com

Contact Phone: 434-532-6890

Contact Address:

P.O. Box 112

Contact Info: Alternative phone number: 434-949-7384.

Nominators

Original Nominator(s): Frank E. McKeever



National Big Tree Register

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Big Tree History

Search the Register

Like 208

The 2015 American Forests Champion Trees national register has 781 national champions, including 37 newly crowned champions and co-champions. The national database has basic and advanced search features that allow users to search by species, measurements, location and point total.

There are more than **200 species without a champion**. Become a big-tree hunter with an instant champion to your credit by finding one of [these](#) trees. You just need a measuring tape and a ruler to get started. Click [here](#) to see how.

Note: Interested in learning the location of a champion tree? Please visit our [FAQs](#) page for information on how to learn the specific location of national champion trees.

Search Results Page

Search

Search

Rows Per Page: 25

[Advanced Search](#) | [See full list](#)

Species	Common Name	Scientific Name	State	County	Points
Oak	Eastern white	<i>Quercus alba</i>	VA	Brunswick	451



National Big Tree Register

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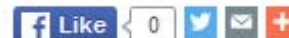
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Eastern white Oak (Quercus alba)



Tree Circumference:	331
Height:	90
Crown Spread:	120
Total Points:	451

Location: Brunswick, Virginia

Nominated By: Landon Webb
Year Nominated: 2012

This champion Eastern white Oak of Virginia made its debut on the list of American Forests Champion Trees in 2012, as it is the largest known tree of its species in the country. By recognizing these champions, we recognize the beauty and critical ecosystem services provided by our biggest and oldest trees. Search the register to find more champions.

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Help us protect and restore ecosystems where Big Trees thrive.

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Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

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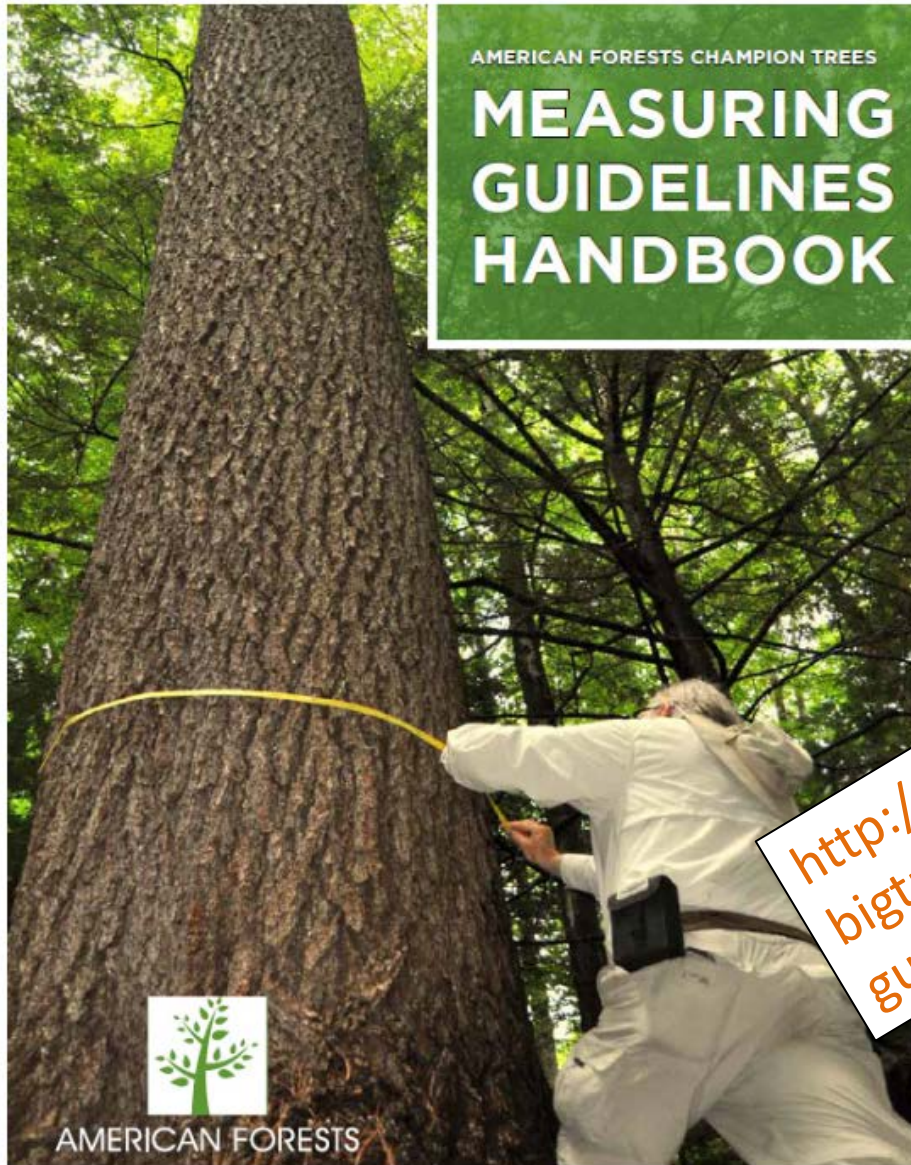
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<http://www.americanforests.org/bigtrees/big-tree-measuring-guidelines>

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- **Eligible tree: $\geq 9.5''$ trunk circumference
 $\geq 13'$ height**
 - **Trunk circumference @ 4.5' above ground line (inches)**
 - **Vertical height from ground line to highest branch (feet)**
 - **Average maximum crown spread in two perpendicular planes (feet)**
- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Circumference | (1 point per inch) |
| + | Height | (1 point per foot) |
| + | Crown Spread | (1/4 point per foot) |

Big Tree Score =

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

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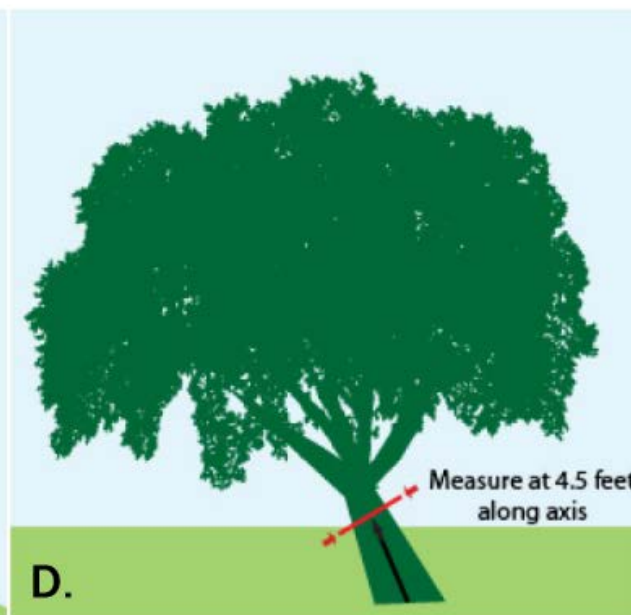
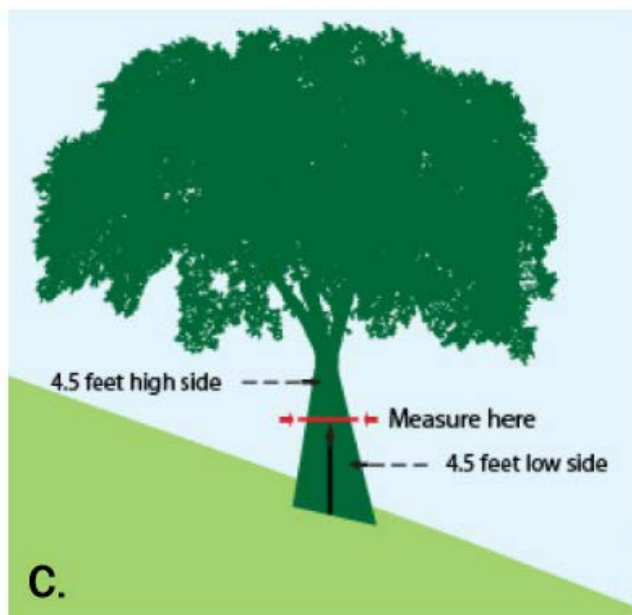
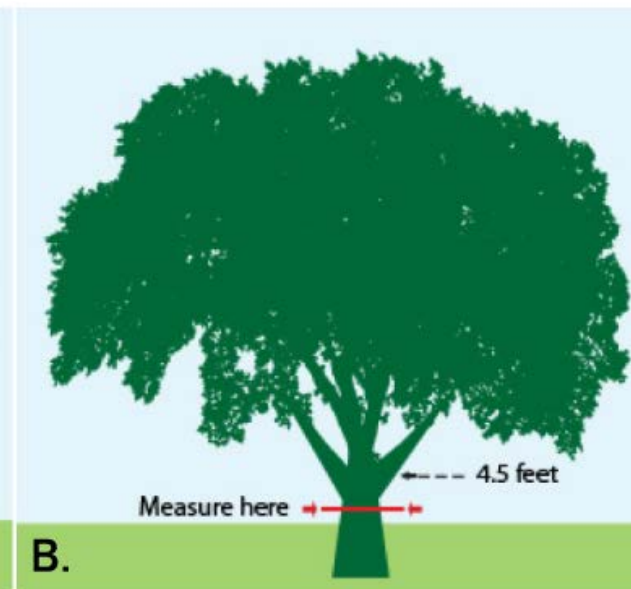
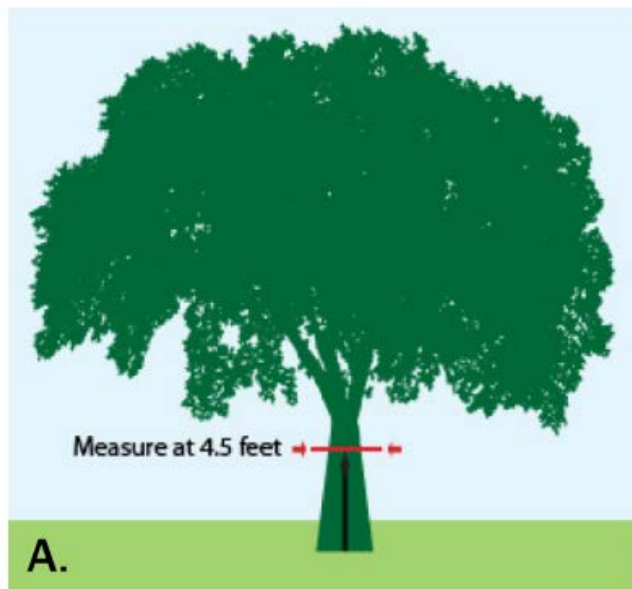
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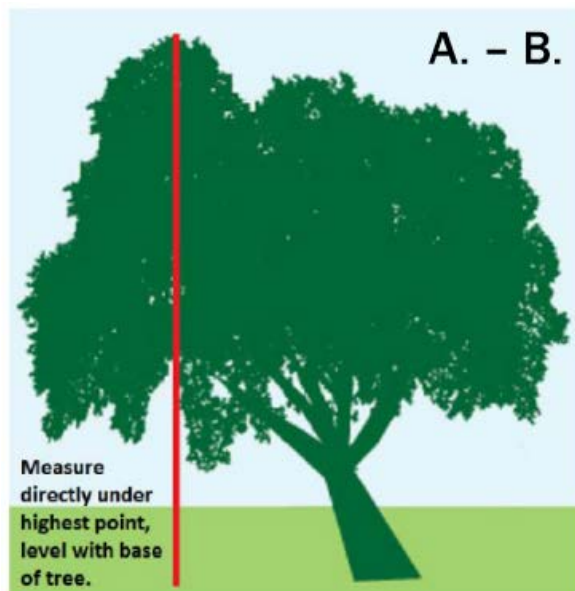
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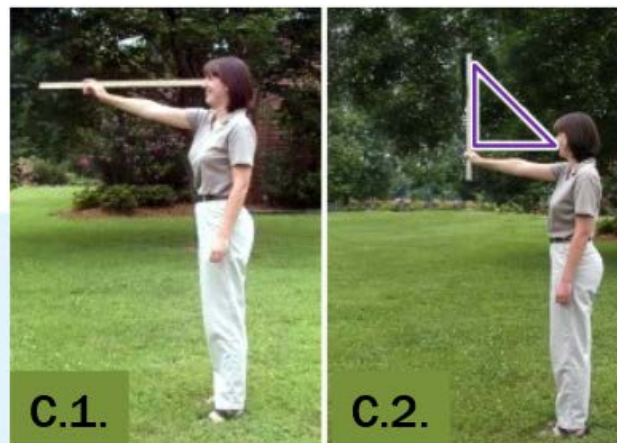
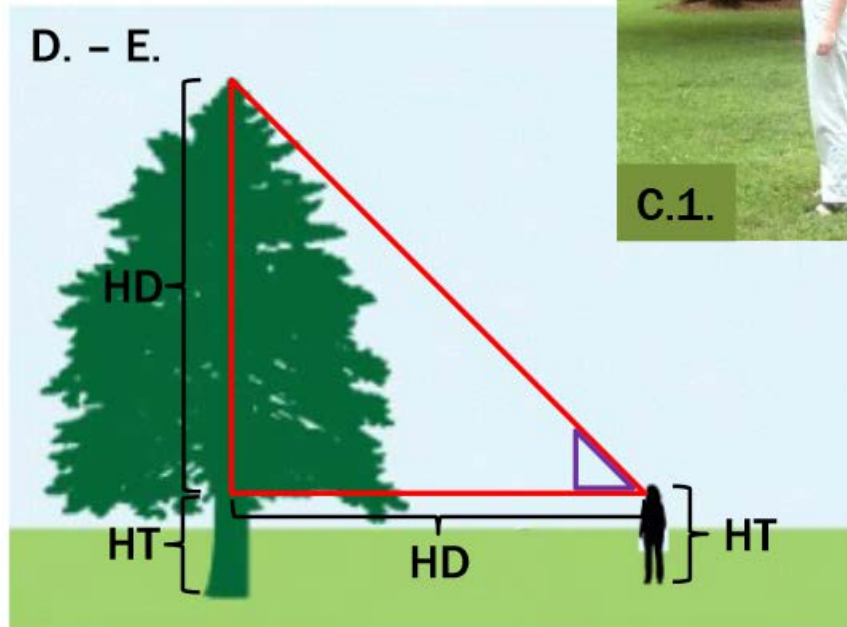
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Note: This technique is most accurate for straight trees on flat ground.



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

Measuring and Scoring a Big Tree

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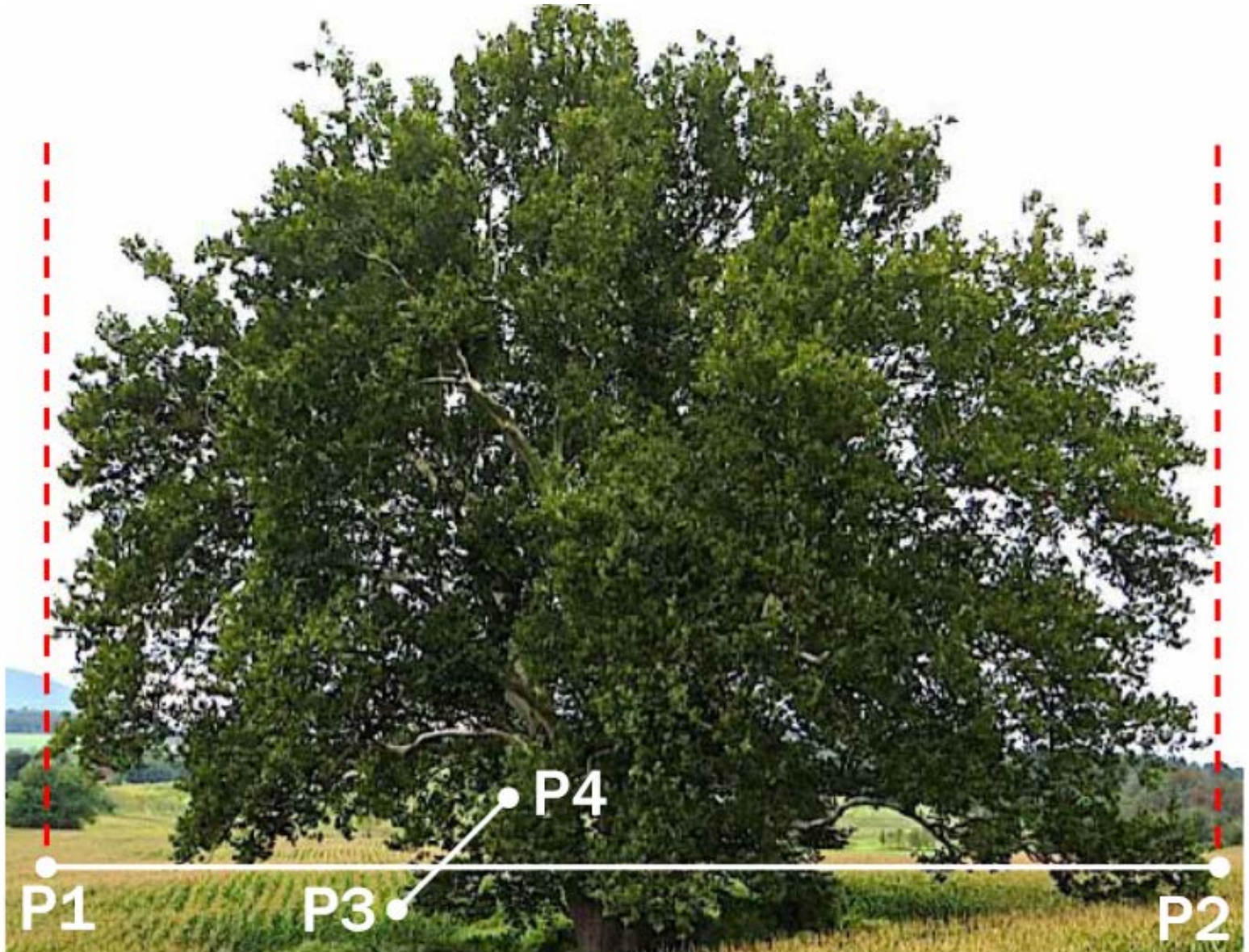
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Nominating a Big Tree

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Nominating a Big Tree

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Before nominating your tree, please review the [tree measurement guidelines](#) so you can accurately complete the nomination form.

1. Tree Nominator Information

Date:

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

☐ Check here if the nominator is the contact for the tree.

2. Kind of tree (Refer to this [tree ID guide](#) if you are unsure of your big tree's identity)

Common name:

Scientific name:

3. Tree Owner Information

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

☐ Check here if the owner is the contact for the tree.

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

Nominating 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: _____ (scientific name): _____
2. Kind of tree (common 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)
Vertical tree height: _____ (feet) (if other than standard 4.5')
Average crown spread: _____ (feet)
Method of vertical height measurement: _____

Score calculation:
Trunk circumference: _____ (1 pt. per inch)
+ Height: _____ (1 pt. per foot)
+ Avg. crown spread: _____ (¼ pt. per foot)
= 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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
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Go Hunt for a Big Tree!

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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

Go Hunt for a Big Tree!

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You searched for:

Species: shingle oak

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)
shingle oak*	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Augusta	276	alive	2007	96	158	88
shingle oak	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Lee	247	alive	2009	73	151	92
shingle oak	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Orange	229	alive	2013	82	126	84
shingle oak	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Floyd	218	alive	2006	43	166	37

Go Hunt for a Big Tree!

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- **Tree ID Manual**
- **Camera**
- **GPS Unit**
- **Tape measurer**
- **Yard stick**

<http://tinyurl.com/VBTPwanted>

Most-Wanted VA Big Trees				
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last e				
fx				
	A	B	C	D
1	Common Name	Latin Name	State Rank	Points
2	Fraser Fir	Abies fraseri	1	223
3	Fraser Fir	Abies fraseri	2	187
4	Fraser Fir	Abies fraseri	3	108
5	Fraser Fir	Abies fraseri	4	100
6	Fraser Fir	Abies fraseri	5	
7	Black maple	Acer nigrum	1	257
8	Black maple	Acer nigrum	2	228
9	Black maple	Acer nigrum	3	180
10	Black maple	Acer nigrum	4	
11	Black maple	Acer nigrum	5	
12	Striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	1	159
13	Striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	2	94
14	Striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	3	89
15	Striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	4	
16	Striped maple	Acer pensylvanicum	5	
17	Mountain maple	Acer spicatum	1	67
18	Mountain maple	Acer spicatum	2	48
19	Mountain maple	Acer spicatum	3	
20	Mountain maple	Acer spicatum	4	
21	Mountain maple	Acer spicatum	5	
22	Hazel alder	Alnus serrulata	1	85
23	Hazel alder	Alnus serrulata	2	60
24	Hazel alder	Alnus serrulata	3	
25	Hazel alder	Alnus serrulata	4	
26	Hazel alder	Alnus serrulata	5	
27	Downy serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	1	155
28	Downy serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	2	125
29	Downy serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	3	
30	Downy serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	4	
31	Downy serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	5	

Take Home

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- **Virginia has a vibrant history of big trees from the Tidewater to the Cumberland Gap**
- **Virginia Big Tree Program strives to document the state's largest trees and educate the public about trees**
- **There is a network of dedicated staff and volunteers who can help you locate, measure, and nominate big trees**
- **Spread the word about these Arboreal Giants...maybe there is one in your neighborhood**



Questions and Comments

Eric Wiseman, PhD

Associate Professor of Urban Forestry

**Dept. of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation
Virginia Tech**

arborist@vt.edu

<http://urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu>

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