

# For Big Tree Hunters— Size Matters

2011 National Register of Big Trees released online

Every year, skilled hunters head into the woods, but they aren't tracking deer. They're stalking really big trees. The nation's Big Tree Hunters—whose ranks include retired teachers and insurance agents—monitor and measure in hopes of finding new national champions in the highly competitive world of big tree hunting.

They measure trees' height, circumference and average crown spread, and points are awarded for these dimensions, a system that determines which trees retain their top spots and which are dethroned. Winning champion trees are compiled annually in the National Register of Big Trees, organized by American Forests and sponsored by The Davey Tree Expert Company for 22 years.

How big are these monster trees? General Sherman, a giant sequoia in California and a champ since 1940, is a whopping 274.9 feet tall and its trunk weighs nearly 1,400 tons, roughly equivalent to 15 adult blue whales.

On July 1, [American Forests](#) launched the online 2011 National Register of Big Trees. More than 660 species will be represented, 30 more than last year, with trees in 46 states, including Alaska and the District of Columbia. Other 2011 highlights include:

- The 2011 National Register contains a total of 751 grand champion trees, including 18 new ones. Newcomers include the co-champion Osage-

orange trees in Virginia and Delaware, the Rocky Mountain Douglas fir in Texas, the Virginia pine in West Virginia, and the Eastern white oak in Indiana.

- Florida reigns as the state with the most champions, 106 to be exact, and is the only state with more than 100 national champions. Other states with the most champions are: Arizona (87), Texas (86), Virginia (76) and California (72).
- 108 previous champs have been dethroned in the 2011 Register.
- Five states have no national champion trees: Hawaii, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Wyoming, and North Dakota. Texas and Virginia have the most new champion trees with more than 20 new additions to the list.
- Indiana has eight new champion trees, dethroning some previously popular champions such as the Eastern white oak in Virginia and the Swamp chestnut oak in Maryland.
- The Lost Monarch is located in the Grove of Titans at the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park in Northern California. With a total of 1290 total points and a volume of 42,500 cubic feet, it ranks as the second biggest tree on the National Register.

Since 1940, American Forests' National Big Tree program has promoted the importance of planting and caring for trees and forests in helping to sustain the healthy ecosystems and life on earth. The program has campaigned to locate, protect, and save the biggest specimens of every native and naturalized tree spe-



*General Sherman, world's largest living tree, in Sequoia National Park, California, USA (the base is more than 40 feet in diameter)*

cies in the United States. It is a major feat for trees to survive disease and pests, the forces of nature, and mistreatment from humans, but Big Trees are universal symbols of what a tree looks like when it is properly cared for and allowed to live a full life.

Big trees are emblematic of what any tree can become if it is planted in the right place and is properly maintained. Every year, these majestic living giants are honored in the National Register of Big Trees. This year, with the support of American Forests' long-time sponsor The Davey Tree Expert Company, the Register will be published solely online, and will feature a searchable database and interactive features to view and locate each of the champion trees.

While the nation's most avid Big Tree hunters are equipped with hypsometers, relascopes and lasers, amateur tree hunters can get started in their own backyards with sticks and tape measures. To learn more about American Forests' Big Tree program and to view the 2011 National Register of Big Trees, visit <http://www.americanforests.org/our-programs/bigtree/>. 🌲

Scott Steen, FASAE, CAE, Chief Executive Officer at American Forests, will be speaking on "More than Just Trees: Protecting and Restoring the Urban Forest for a Healthier Planet" at the 2011 ASCA Annual Conference.