

Background:

- Began in 1970 as a 4-H and FFA program to encourage youth to get engaged in forestry and natural resources
- Coordinated by faculty and staff in the Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation
- Affiliated with American Forests and the National Big Tree Program
- Mission is to document Virginia's largest trees and promote the care and appreciation of trees and forests throughout the state

Measuring and Scoring Big Trees:

- All species of native and non-native woody plants are currently eligible for the Virginia Big Tree Register
- To qualify, a tree must be at least 13' tall and have a trunk circumference of at least 9.5" measured 4.5' above ground level
- Trees are scored based on their height, trunk circumference, and average crown spread (see back page for details)
- The 3 largest specimens of each species are listed in the register

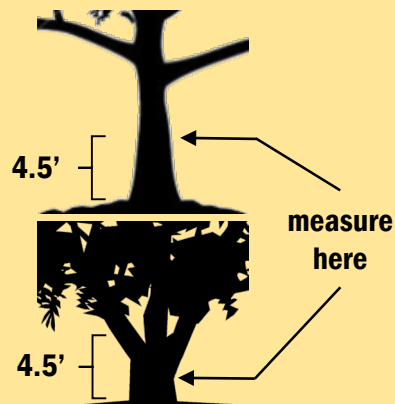
About the Big Tree Register:

- Number of living trees curated: _____ 1,729
- Number of living species curated: _____ 477
- Number of national champs & co-champs: _____ 79
- Number of counties and cities with living big trees: _____ 117
- Most living big trees: _____ 94 (Richmond City)
- Tree of greatest height: _____ 184' (tulip-poplar, Caroline Co.)
- Tree of greatest girth: _____ 43' (baldcypress, Southampton Co.)



Measuring Trunk Circumference:

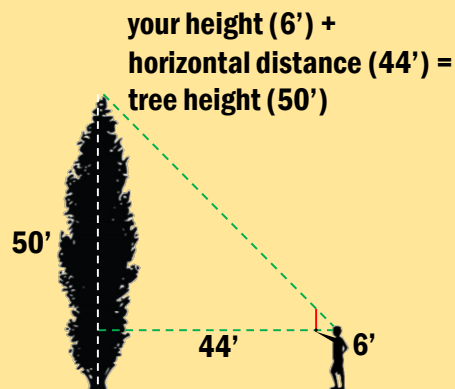
- On flat ground: wrap a reel tape around the trunk at a point 4.5' above ground level
- On sloped ground: wrap a reel tape around the trunk at a point 4.5' above the mid-slope point where the trunk emerges from the ground
- Branched or forked trunk: wrap a reel tape around the trunk base at the narrowest point below 4.5' height



1 big tree point per inch of trunk circumference

Measuring Tree Height:

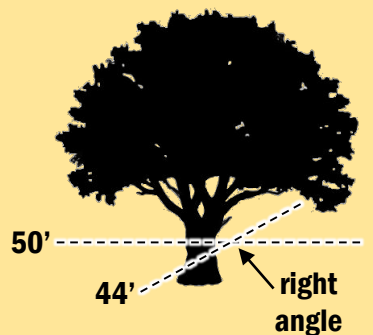
- Height is best measured with a precise instrument such as a clinometer or laser hypsometer
- The “stick trick” can be used for tree height when on flat ground and the peak of the tree is directly above the trunk
- Hold a yard stick vertically at arm’s length and sight the top of the tree to the top of the yard stick
- The tree height is your distance to the tree plus your height



1 big tree point per foot of tree height

Measuring Crown Spread:

- Walk around the perimeter of the tree and find the maximum crown spread (doesn't have to go through the trunk)
- Measure the horizontal distance between these two points
- Turn perpendicular to the maximum crown spread and measure the maximum crown spread in that direction (doesn't have to go through the trunk)
- Average the two values



Average crown spread = 47'

¼ big tree point per foot of average crown spread

Big Tree Score = trunk (in.) + height (ft.) + ¼ crown (ft.)