

Maryland Big Tree Program Report

In 2013, the MBTP volunteers measured, re-measured, or deleted 225 trees. There were 145 new trees added to the Register, 76 trees re-measured and 19 trees were reported deceased. There are currently 2624 registered trees on the Maryland database. It is the goal of the MBTP to measure/re-measure/delete 200 of the registered trees each year.

Highlights

In 2013, two new county big tree coordinators volunteered their services. They are: Matt Barto, Carroll County, and Ron Hendricks, Harford County.

The web site, www.mdbigtrees.com, became an important source of new big tree referrals, with most of the new trees being referred automatically from the web site nomination form.

The Maryland Forestry Board Foundation purchased a new laptop computer for the MBTP, with some financial help from the Cecil County Forestry Board. Patricia Valentine, Chair, Howard County Forestry Board, made the selection and purchase, and gave a tutorial on its use.

Members of the MBTP Measurement Team were able with the help of local volunteers to spend 3 consecutive days in the field on three different occasions. This practice is more cost and time efficient, but requires volunteers to provide a place to stay. In one case the Team stayed at a summer cottage belonging to Jim and Brenda Bardsley—Jim is the State Association President. In a second case, the Team stayed at the home of Joli McCathran, Montgomery County Forestry Board Treasurer.

Seven State Champion trees have died this year; two native species, and five non-native species:

Staghorn sumac – 54 points, native, Montgomery County
Devil's walkingstick – 36 points, native, Montgomery County
White poplar – 151 points, nonnative, Somerset County
Painted maple – 86 points, nonnative, Baltimore City
Amur maachia – 120 points, nonnative, Baltimore City
Italian maple – 46 points, nonnative, Baltimore City
Japanese black pine – 109 points, nonnative, Cecil County

Also the Kent County Champion American basswood, 305 points, had to be taken down due to poor health. This tree was a former State Champion and a well known fixture in Chestertown.

Two of Maryland's Bicentennial Trees identified as being alive in 1776 have been found as a result of volunteer and publicity in St. Mary's County, led by the Gracie Brady, the county's Big Tree Coordinator. In both cases, the original owner(s) had sold the property and the new owners were not aware that they owned a Bicentennial Tree until they read an article in the local paper. One is a willow oak, believed to be 269 years old; and the other an American beech, 243 years old.

One new native species was added to the MD list:

Symplocos tinctoria – Horse sugar/Common sweetleaf – This species was found in the Wicomico Demonstration Forest. It is native to the lower Eastern Shore. It is an understory tree.

One native species returned to the MD list:

Carya pallida – Sand/Pale Leaved Hickory – This species was found in the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Prince George’s County. It is native to southern MD. The last example, in Calvert County, was cut down in 2011 due to poor health.

Fourteen new native State Champions were crowned in 2013. These were new trees discovered that exceeded the points value of the current champion—not trees that replaced dead champions.

American Chestnut, 132 points, Montgomery
Baldcypress, 396 points, Wicomico, co-champion
Balsam Fir, 211 points, Wicomico
Horse Sugar, 51 points, Wicomico
Loblolly Pine, 250 points, Worcester
Northern Red Oak, 430 points, Montgomery
Overcup Oak, 234 points, Montgomery
Pawpaw, 56 points, Montgomery
Pecan, 320 points, Wicomico, co-champion
Red Maple, 319 points, Montgomery
Umbrella Magnolia, 55 points, Baltimore County
Virginia Pine, 210 points, Baltimore County
Water Oak, 271 points, Montgomery
White Fringetree, 34 points, Montgomery

The International Year of the Forest Geocaching Program continued in 2013. Information about this program, photos of the visitors to the Maryland State Champion Calvert White Oak in Cecil County, and comments from the visitors can be found at:

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?guid=c30ec022-8334-4a1f-837f-08bea856cbce.

The MBTP generated thirteen media articles/publications in 2013:

<http://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2013/06/13/horse-sugar-added-to-maryland-big-tree-database-2/>.

<http://bonsecoursvocations.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/RCC-News.pdf>.

<http://www.neighborsnw.org/ImpressiveTrees-1.htm>.

<http://www.salisbury.edu/newsevents/fullstoryview.asp?id=5402>.

http://www.cecildaily.com/features/article_dc10552f-b65b-5efd-89cc-f6f3f4048b0b.html.

<http://www.somdnews.com/article/20130724/NEWS/130729686/charles-county-x2019-s-big-tree-records-need-updating&template=southernMaryland>.

http://www.myeasternshoremd.com/news/article_6082fd08-36c0-5057-9ce5-021451832df6.html.

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/dectmpl.asp?url=/Content/dep/climatechange/treechampion.asp>

<http://www.vantagepointeast.com/view/201309championtrees.html>.

<http://montgomeryplanningboard.org/blog-news/2013/10/16/montgomery-parks-is-home-to-marylands-largest-tree-located-in-dickerson-conservation-park/>.

<http://www.pgscd.org/PDFs/Tour%20the%20Champion%20Trees.pdf>.

<http://www.somdnews.com/article/20131030/NEWS/131039807/bicentennial-oak-tree-has-gypsy-moth-eggs&template=southernMaryland>.

<http://www.somdnews.com/article/20131108/NEWS/131109258/1051/second-bicentennial-tree-located-in-st-mary-x2019-s-county&template=southernMarylandMobile>.