



Hunting Down the Big Trees

You're on a Quest!

There are patterns of tree growth that will cause trees to increase in height. This, in turn, will create more shade, which keeps the soil moist. The species of trees that are shade-tolerant grow more slowly, but they live for many years in shaded forests. Learning about trees will allow us to learn more about how trees impact our air, water, and public lands.

Investigate with your family!

- What is the largest tree any of your family members has discovered? In which state was the tree located?
- Where might you and your family find big old trees in your state?

Materials needed:

- Computer with Internet access
- Pen and paper for notes
- Local map showing parks or wilderness land (optional)
- String or measuring tape

Here is a list of helpful official **Champion Big Trees** lists that you can find on the Web:

The Big Trees of Vermont

<http://www.vermonttreesociety.org/listnoframes.htm>

Champion Trees by Species

<http://www.championtrees.org/champions/champions.htm>

Smithsonian Magazine

To be a champion, a tree must measure up to high standards that introduce the search for champion trees.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues96/oct96/bigtrees.html>

Michigan Botanical Club: Information on Trees and State Champion Lists

http://michbotclub.org/big_trees/champion_list.htm

Big Trees Across America

http://www.l.br.cc.va.us/murray/Urban_Forestry/Big_Trees/default.htm

Now, make a plan to hunt down the biggest old tree!

1. Think about the places where you've seen large trees in your own neighborhood, in your town, or in your region. **Locate the tree** – and be sure to bring a measuring tape or ball of string.

2. Record the following information about the tree:

■ What kind of tree is it? If you can't get your hands on a field guide – either at home or at the library – you can always collect a twig with leaves on it, or a few leaves from the ground, and use the field guide at school to identify your tree. _____

■ Describe the soil, landscape, and moisture where the tree is located. For example, is the soil wet, damp, or dry? Is the landscape mostly natural or mostly human-designed? Is it in the open or in a forest?

■ Describe the types of plants and animals near the tree. _____

■ Measure the circumference of the tree. You can do this using either a measuring tape or a ball of string: Wrap the string once around your tree; then use a ruler or yardstick to measure how long the string is. Do you have any idea how old the tree might be? _____

Electronic Quest!

You may want to submit information about your tree if it seems really spectacular!

To download an official nomination form, visit <http://www.americanforests.org/resources/bigtrees/>. click on "Download the Nomination Form." Then complete the form and submit your proposal. Good luck!



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