

Nomination of a Tree to the Florida Champion Tree Record

General Information: The Florida Champion Tree program is patterned after the American Forests *National Register of Big Trees* (National Champion Trees) program. Certain species growing in this state may not be eligible for national champion status, but can be recognized as Florida Champions. All reigning National Champion Trees in Florida also hold the title of Florida Champion Tree until displaced by larger trees. Additional details about the national program can be obtained from the following website address: <http://www.americanforests.org/resources/bigtrees/>.

Eligibility: Nomination of a Florida Champion Tree is open to all species of trees that grow in Florida, whether native or naturalized. Palm trees are included. Species listed as invasive exotics by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council are not eligible for nomination.

Trees nominated for champion status must meet the following criteria:

1. Have an erect, woody main trunk that measures more than 9.5 inches in circumference (Diameter > 3") at 4 ½ feet above the average ground level (see Measurements section below for exceptions.).
2. Be more than 13 feet high, as measured vertically for a point level with the base of the trunk to the highest twig.
3. Have a definite crown of branches or fronds.

Procedure: Anyone may nominate a tree for champion status, with permission from the property owner. Species identification and measurements must be verified by Florida Forest Service personnel. To submit new trees for consideration to the Florida Champion Tree Record, contact your local FFS County Forester or Urban Forestry Coordinator in Tallahassee.

Measurements: Measurements are to be recorded to the nearest whole unit, rounding upwards from 0.5. The following measurements are required:

1. Circumference of the trunk in inches, 4 ½ feet above the average ground level. This also applies to trees with exceptional swelling at the base, such as baldcypress. If the tree forks below 4.5 feet, the circumference should be taken at the narrowest point below 4 ½ feet where knots, burls, or limbs do not interfere.
2. Height in feet.
3. Crown Spread diameter in feet. Measure the length of the greatest crown spread. Then measure the next greatest spread that occurs at a 90 degree angle to the first measurement. The average of these two measurements determines the Average Crown Spread.

Consult the *American Forests* website above for additional guidance on how to take measurements in exceptional situations.

Calculating Points: The tree with the largest point total will be recorded as the Florida or National Champion of its species. Required measurements are scored as follows:

1. Circumference – 1 point per inch.
2. Height – 1 point per foot.
3. Average Crown Spread – 1 point per 4 feet. $\{[(A+B)/2]/4\}$

The points calculated from each of the measurements are rounded to the nearest whole point before calculating the tree's total points.

When the total points of two trees are within **two percent** of one another, each tree will be declared a co-champion.

Photograph: Digital photographs should be submitted with each nomination. At a minimum, take photos of the trunk from four (cardinal) directions, plus one of the entire tree. Because these photographs may be used for publication, please try to achieve the following:

1. Good scenic contrast. The tree and any persons need to be very clearly depicted for printing processes.
2. Show some sense of scale and proportion (a person or object of known size near the base of the tree).
3. List the names of any persons included in each photograph from left to right.
4. Avoid scenic distractions such as power/telephone wires, trash on ground, vehicles, etc.
5. Consent must be provided on the Property Owner's Agreement (POA) by a legal guardian to show minors (children) in the photos online.

Recording GPS Coordinates: This is done to record each tree's location in the most precise manner so that it can be relocated at a future date. Record coordinates only in **decimal degrees format (to six decimal digits)**. A positive number indicates North latitude and a negative number indicates West longitude.

Property Owner's Agreement (POA): A POA is required for ALL privately owned trees. Owner contact information, photos, and specific locations of privately owned trees will be withheld from display on the website unless the property owner grants permission to display said information on the POA.

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