



*Co-Champ Southern Magnolia - Macon County*

# Champion Trees

2012

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Ten trees have made the 2012 list of Alabama's Champion Trees. With the addition of these new trees, the state now has a total of 144 champions. This total decreased from last year because 17 of the 2011 champions had died by the time they were visited for their scheduled re-measurement, and three others were de-certified.

Of the ten new champions, seven trees were declared outright champions: blue ash (*Fraxinus quadrangulata*), Carolina buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), osage-orange (*Maclura pomifera*), longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), and witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). Five of these filled vacancies for species that did not have a current champion, while two other trees defeated 2011 champions. Three of the new champions are actually co-champions (trees whose total scores are within five points of each other) including two American hornbeam trees (*Carpinus caroliniana*) from Bibb and Talladega counties that both defeated the 2011 champion. The third, a Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) found in Macon County, was named co-champion with the existing champion from Calhoun County.

In addition to these new state champion trees, the state champion Alabama black cherry (*Prunus alabamensis*) located in Tuscaloosa County was declared a national champion tree in 2012!

For those unfamiliar with *Champion Tree*, the purpose of the program is to discover, recognize, and preserve the largest tree of each species in Alabama. Anyone can nominate a tree for Champion Tree designation; however, an AFC forester is responsible for collecting the tree's measurements.

When determining a champion, three of the tree's components are taken into consideration: circumference, height, and crown

spread. The formula used to determine the size of a tree is as follows: one point for each inch of circumference, plus one point for each foot of height, plus one point for each four feet of the average crown spread. Also, for a tree to be eligible for the Champion Tree program, it must be a species that is recognized as native or naturalized in Alabama. A naturalized tree is an "introduced" species that has established itself in the wild, reproducing naturally and spreading.

Once a new champion is identified, both its owner and nominator receive a certificate. The nominator is also presented with a permanent tree marker by AFC county personnel, placed in proximity to the base of the tree. New champions are added to the "Champion Trees of Alabama" publication which can be found on the AFC website at [www.forestry.alabama.gov/PDFs/ChampionTrees.pdf](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/PDFs/ChampionTrees.pdf).

If you know of a tree that you think might be the largest of its species in the state, you are encouraged to nominate it. Before sending in a nomination, you are strongly encouraged to review the measurements of the current champion to get an idea if the candidate tree has a chance of defeating it. After all, there are millions of "big" trees in Alabama, but to be a CHAMPION a tree must be THE BIGGEST. Although nominations may be sent in year round, for a tree to be eligible for Champion Tree designation in 2013 the nomination form must be received by the program coordinator no later than June 1, 2013.

To learn more about *Champion Tree* or to complete an online nomination form, visit the AFC website at [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov) and click on the "Champion Tree Program" fast link. ♣

TREE SPECIES	COUNTY	NOMINATOR	OWNER
Ash, Blue	Jackson	Jason Shelton	National Park Service
Buckthorn, Carolina	Talladega	John McBride	Camp Mac
Hornbeam, American	Talladega	John McBride	Margery B. McBride
Hornbeam, American	Bibb	Thomas Hogelin	Mead Stallings
Magnolia, Southern	Macon	Philip Pierce	Frank Pierce & Patricia Springer
Oak, Water	Montgomery	Katie McKeen	Kirk McKeen
Oak, Willow	Shelby	David R. Shaw	David R. Shaw
Osage-orange	Sumter	Eleanor Ward	Don Ward
Pine, Longleaf	Baldwin	Selena C. Vaughn	Vilai Marino
Witch-hazel	Randolph	Stan Roark	Stan Roark