



Photo by Charles LeCroy

Shagbark Hickory



Southern Shagbark Hickory

2014 Champion Trees

By Brian Hendricks, Registered Forester, Champion Tree/FIA Coordinator
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The quest to find “champion” trees continued to be a high priority for many Alabamians in 2014 as a total of 45 new trees were nominated for this prestigious honor. Of the 45 nominations, 11 trees achieved the status of CHAMPION in 2014. One of the new champions, a southern shagbark hickory, has a good chance of being declared a national champion later this year!

With the addition of these new champion trees and the subtraction of champions that had died, Alabama now has a total of 147 champions distributed throughout 48 of its 67 counties. Baldwin County holds claim to the most champions in the state with 16, followed by Madison and Wilcox counties which have 12 champions each.

Of the 11 new champions, eight are outright champions while three are co-champions. Co-champions are trees whose total

scores are in close proximity of each other. The new 2014 champion trees, along with their nominators and owners, are listed below.

The purpose of the *Champion Tree* program is to discover, recognize, and preserve the largest tree of each species in Alabama. Anyone can nominate a tree for *Champion Tree* designation by completing an on-line nomination form; however, an Alabama Forestry Commission (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.



Photo by Tommy Lawler

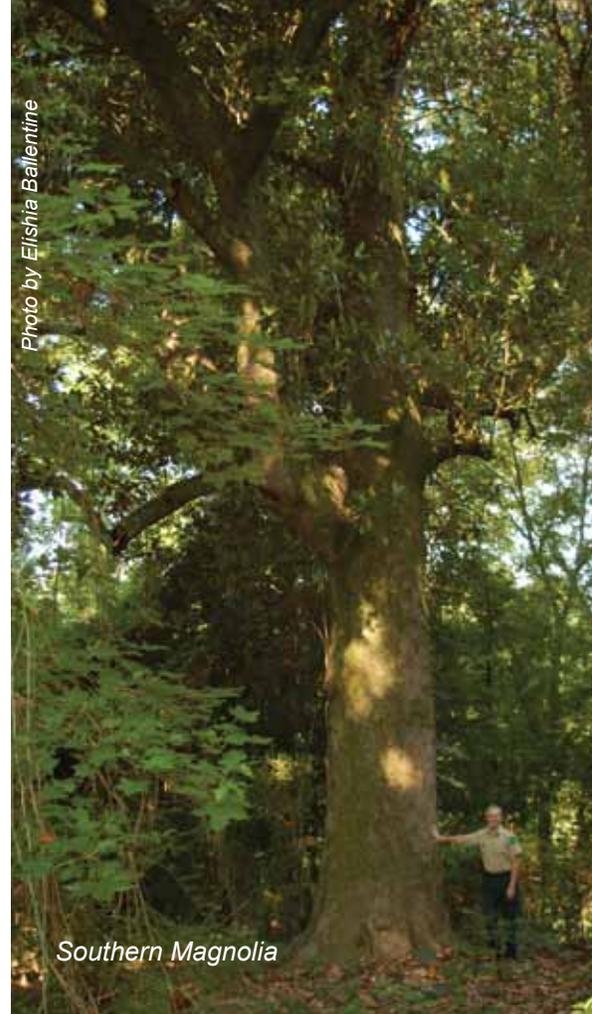


Photo by Elishia Balentine

Southern Magnolia

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 that is to be 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.

If you know of a tree that you think might be the largest of its species in the state, you are encouraged to send in a nomination.

To complete a nomination form on-line, visit the AFC website and click on the “Champion Tree Program” fast link found on the home page.

Due to limited AFC resources, a nominator is strongly encouraged to review the measurements of the current champion to get an idea if the candidate tree’s score has a chance of defeating it before sending a nomination. After all, there are millions of “big” trees in Alabama, but to be a CHAMPION, it must be THE “biggest!”

Nominations may be sent in year-round, but for a tree to be eligible for *Champion Tree* designation in 2015, the forms must be received by the program coordinator no later than June 1, 2015.☺

TREE SPECIES	COUNTY	NOMINATOR	OWNER
Birch, River	Lee	Patrick Thompson	Michael Murray
Elm, Siberian	DeKalb	Daniel Green	Joseph West
Hickory, Mockernut	Coosa	John Goff	John T. Goff Family LLC
Hickory, Shagbark	Blount	Charles LeCroy	Charles & Jamie LeCroy
Hickory, Southern Shagbark	Wilcox	Wayne Webb	Tommy & Jeanell Lawler
Magnolia, Bigleaf	Wilcox	Tommy Lawler	Tommy & Jeanell Lawler
Magnolia, Southern	Autauga	Teresa Lee	Reuben Gardner
Oak, Chestnut	Clay	Nick Jordan	Lamar Dewberry
Oak, Georgia	Lee	Patrick Thompson	Davis Arboretum at Auburn University
Pine, Virginia	DeKalb	Jason Shelton	DeSoto State Park
Yellowwood	Monroe	Wayne Webb	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers