



## Legacy Trees by Dan Zimmerman

Do you have a legacy tree in your woodland or property? You should! Yes, you read that correctly, you should have a legacy tree on your property!! A legacy tree adds another dimension to your woodland ownership and enjoyment. Woodland owners are bombarded with much information on forest management, conservation, taxation, ecology, wildlife, and timber but how often do we consider something as personal and hence unique as a legacy tree? In my opinion, a legacy tree is a tree that has special value to you, the forest owner. The tree can exhibit a significance that you place on it, a unique importance or a set of values that reflect upon you, the owner.

Some organizations further subdivide legacy trees into subcategories such as heritage, landmark, public resource, preservation stand, and champion. Heritage trees seem to have a connection or association to an important or noteworthy historic event, building, or historic district. In addition, heritage/legacy trees may have been planted by a historically significant person or have an age generally greater than 50 years and be distinctive in size and or form. Landmark/legacy trees are generally accepted as unusual trees in form, branching patterns, flowers, size, or species (rarely found in present location). Public resource/legacy trees can create a canopy or covering over a public right of way in groupings or stands exhibiting common size, shapes, forms, age, and health. Preservation/legacy trees are usually found in stands with six or more individual trees occurring within one hundred feet with similar species, age, and form. Champion legacy trees usually are largest tree occurring within a geographic area.

If one goes to the New York State Department of Conservation web site and clicks on the "Big tree register " one can get a pretty good idea of just what a champion legacy tree is. Taken from this website is the following:

“The Big Tree Register lists only native and naturalized species and does not include hybrid species. The authority for determining eligible species is American Forests (leaves DEC website). In order to be a champion, the tree needs to have been measured or confirmed to exist within the last 10 years. To determine if a nominated tree is a champion for its species measurements of the tree are taken and used to calculate a total point score. The formula is the sum of the tree's height in feet, the trunk circumference in inches at 4 1/2 feet off the ground, and one quarter of the tree's average crown spread in feet.

Total Point Score = Height in feet + Trunk Circumference in inches + 1/4 Average Crown Spread in feet

Figuring the Crown Points: This component of the above formula causes the most confusion. There are two ways to determine this figure:

- (maximum + minimum crown spread in feet) divided by 2, and multiplied by .25.
- (maximum + minimum crown spread in feet) multiplied by .125.”

([www.dec.ny.gov/animals/5248.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/5248.html))

The website also discusses how to nominate a big tree and also how to obtain additional information on the national big tree register through American .

I have what I feel is quite an impressive legacy tree growing on my forest property in Verona, NY that I affectionately call "King Kong"! What a tree!! I have not taken measurements of this tree as it seems something is always coming up that interferes with my plans! Not a good excuse, but I will get to it someday! I have included in this article pictures of this huge tree. It stands out from quite a distance, massive in size and height, easily distinguishable on the horizon as it dominates its position. I do not know the age but a guess would be in excess of one hundred years, maybe two hundred? This tree was left to me by the previous owner whom I am sure did not recognize the intrinsic value of this impressive specimen. I intend on leaving this tree as a legacy to future owner(s) to be appreciated and valued as it so richly deserves!

The species of my legacy tree is Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*. A member of the white oak family, the Bur Oak can be difficult to identify correctly! The leaves can be distinguishing in that the two center sinuses divide the leaf in two almost equal parts with the lobes descending in length remarkably as they approach the petiole. Being part of the White Oak family, the Bur shares many characteristics found in other white oak species. The acorn can also aid in identification in that it rests in a characteristic fringe-margined cup.

I have noticed that there is a lack of reproduction of my Bur Oak, only a few saplings existing anywhere on my property. I will be studying ways to propagate this species in the near future – an interesting project I can't wait to start! I believe the most significant or the most limiting factor (yes, I remember my wildlife management) is white-tailed deer. The acorn of White Oaks when offered, are highly sought after. This tree has an extensive, broad crown and in good mast years produces a very large crop of acorns. I have noticed in said good years that this tree actually serves as a magnet, attracting a wide array of animal and bird species! Just sitting nearby with a camera yields many good pictures of differing species.

I enjoy listening to my Bur Oak on days that have wind. Depending on the nature of the wind, listening to my oak is an interesting venture, as in my opinion my Bur produces a differing set of unique sounds when the foliage is present on the tree crown. The unique leaves on this tree resonate differently when the wind originates from the prevailing westerly direction and is steady when contrasted to the reverberations produced from differing wind compass directions, speeds, and gusts. I also have a small developing stand of Quaking Aspen adjoining my Oak that also produce a differing melody of sounds than those created by the Oak.

Having a legacy tree that was left to me is not enough! I have to develop my own legacy tree to leave for the future of my property. I have selected a crab apple tree growing among Ash and Red Maple saplings (about two to three inch in diameter) that remarkably is showing vibrancy while competing with the other trees. The Crab Apple is four inches in diameter having good form and health but is being overtopped by the competing Ash and Maple. Last winter I girdled all competitors within a radius of 15 to 20 feet. This summer I noticed mortality on close to 50% of trees so girdled. Hopefully more will succumb in the near future. My plans are to each year slowly increase the radius of the circle that encompasses the girdling. This way, I'll be slowly releasing my Crab Apple to flourish and to eventually dominate its position.

The Crab Apple hopefully will be a legacy in several ways. One will be obviously a result of my efforts to enhance the diversity of my woodland. Another will be the impact this species of tree has ecologically on many forms of wildlife. Maybe another would be the enjoyment of the apples it actually produces. Neighboring wild apple trees on neighboring stands and properties all seem to produce a viable, edible fruit though nowhere near commercial grade.

Legacy trees represent differing sets of values, importance, and meanings that are as unique as the forest owner that supports them. Recognizing, propagating, and supporting your special, legacy tree (s) can add much more to your enjoyment of your property.



Legacy Bur Oak



Dan and his Legacy Tree



*Hunting season is here and while deer are the prime target, we know that many people target coyotes as well. No doubt there are many opinions on whether that is a good or bad idea. This editor finds it a disturbing practice and recommends the following article from Oregon State which evaluates its effect on livestock. The study relates to sheep farmers, but perhaps other farmers and even hunters who want to maintain a deer population, would see the same relationship with coyotes.*

***"Using Coyotes to Protect Livestock. Wait. What?"***

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/animals-livestock/sheep-goats/using-coyotes-protect-livestock-wait-what?>

November is often considered a dreary month in the woods - but spots of color or interesting shapes appear that one does not notice at other times of year when nature is more flamboyant. Here are a few from my woods....



>>>>Digital READING CORNER <<<<<

2018 Summer New York DEC Stumpage report can be found at  
[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands\\_forests\\_pdf/sprsummer18.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/sprsummer18.pdf)

*Peter Cann informs us of the program "Wood the Building Material of the Future" by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) including presentations on all-wood buildings (including high rise) and carbon sequestration.*

*<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/102318timber>*

NEW tool for predicting climate change on the county level  
*<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2018/10/31/climate-change-on-the-county-level/>*

Cover the U.S. In 89 percent trees, or go solar -- *ScienceDaily*  
*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180907091523.htm>*

Fewer biofuels, more green space: Climate action researcher calls for urgent shift -- *ScienceDaily*  
*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180928131317.htm>*

Species-rich forests better compensate environmental impacts -- *ScienceDaily*  
*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180822082651.htm>*

Deer prefer native plants leaving lasting damage on forests -- *ScienceDaily*  
*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/10/171006142158.htm>*

Forest carbon stocks have been overestimated for 50 years -- *ScienceDaily*  
*<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/10/181016110100.htm>*

A low-tech method for combating climate change  
*[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldpost/wp/2018/09/11/agroforestry/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.18e15b1fcc62](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldpost/wp/2018/09/11/agroforestry/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.18e15b1fcc62)*

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CNY-NYFOA

NYFOA is always looking for NYFOA members who would be willing to have an article written about them and their land be in an New York Forest Owner Profile section of the NYFOA magazine...To volunteer go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OwnerProfile>

CNY-NYFOA is still looking for a volunteer for the Vice Chairman position. Also, if you have announcements, photos, articles, suggestions etc. of general interest to share, please send them to [danielzimmerman57@yahoo.com](mailto:danielzimmerman57@yahoo.com) OR [randi.starmer@gmail.com](mailto:randi.starmer@gmail.com) OR any of the Officers listed on the first page OR other Steering Committee members Ralph Meyer and Carl Stearns