

Chemung County Big Tree Registry

Chemung County is starting its own Big Tree Registry. If you live, work or play in Chemung County and think you know of a tree that might be the biggest of its species growing in our county, we want to hear from you!

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has a Big Tree Registry that tracks the biggest trees from across the state. Chemung County currently does not have any trees listed on that registry. **WE WANT TO GET IN THE GAME!**

To earn your bragging rights for one of Chemung County's biggest trees, get outside and start exploring your neighborhood, nearby trails and our scenic country roads. If you find a monster of a tree- after getting any required permissions for entering private property of course- get out your tape measure to measure the circumference (around the tree trunk) and the other measurements listed below and on the application form.

Chemung County Environmental Management Council (EMC) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will collect the applications from now until September 30. Then staff will go out to verify the largest contenders for each species of tree submitted. If your tree is the biggest tree submitted, you will be listed on the first ever Chemung County Big Tree Registry!

We'll also compare your tree to the New York State Registry, to see if your tree can challenge a current place holder. If we find you have the points needed, we'll help you contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to get your tree registered in the state program! You could be the first Chemung County tree to appear on the New York State Big Tree Registry!

Big Tree Champion Requirements

Nominated trees are measured to calculate a total point score, which is the sum of the tree's height in feet, the trunk circumference in inches at 4.5 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

Champion trees must be remeasured every 10 years to remain on the list, although a small grace period will be afforded when champions cannot be remeasured right away. If two or more trees of the same species score within a certain number of points of each other, they are considered co-champions.

- For champion trees that are at 100 or fewer points, co-champions must be within 3 points.
- For champion trees that are more than 100 points, co-champions must be within 3% of the larger tree's total.

How to Nominate a Big Tree

Measure your tree's circumference at 4.5 feet from the ground. It will be compared to other nominated trees of the same species. A large chunk of a tree's total points often comes from the circumference, so it is a good way to gauge whether your tree has a fighting chance. Complete the Chemung County Big Tree Application Form and submit it to Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District for verification. Since 2024 is our first year to create a Chemung County Registry, every big tree should be registered for this year's title matches!

Please make sure all parts of the nomination form are filled in and record the GPS coordinates using NAD 83 to ensure trees can be located easily for remeasuring. Private addresses, emails, and phone numbers are used only for the purpose of verifying nominated trees and are never released to the public. Whenever possible, please also submit photos of the tree.

The Big Tree Champion list will be updated once a year in the fall/winter and released in January. For the best chance to have your tree make it onto the NYS Registry update, plan to submit any state nominations before September 1.

For help identifying tree species, we suggest using the free PlantNet app for both android and apple phones. You can search tree species by taking pictures of leaves, flowers, fruit and bark. You just submit the photo in the app and it will give you the most likely species.

There are also a wide variety of tree identification websites and books available, easily found by searching the internet or any local bookstores.

HOW TO MEASURE A TREE

Circumference: Tree circumference is measured at 4.5 ft. height on the trunk. It is easiest to measure with a flexible tape measure, but a string can be used to mark the circumference and then measured with a ruler or rigid measuring tape. Wrap the tape measure around the girth of the tree, trying to keep the tape 90 degrees to the natural lean of the tree.



Tree Height:

Using a straight limb or yard stick

video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDy5OjfMfZ8>

Using a ruler- Two step method: Stand a distance away from the tree where you can see the entire tree in your field of view. Hold the ruler upright in your hand with your arm extended out fully. Line the ruler up with the tree so the top of the ruler aligns with the highest point of the tree; mark on the ruler with your thumb the tree base.

STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 2: Keeping your arm extended, turn the ruler 90 degrees. Have your measuring assistant stand at the point on the ground out from the tree where you see the ruler end (or note a landmark where the ruler ends). Measure the distance from the person (or landmark) to the tree base, this distance is equivalent to the trees total height.

Crown Spread

To measure the spread of a tree's crown, have two people stand at opposite extents of the crown directly under the furthest extent of growth. Measure the distance between the two using a measuring tape. A minimum of two measurements are needed to determine the average spread. You will use the distance of the widest part of the crown and the distance of the shortest part of the crown.



$(\text{Measurement \#1} + \text{Measurement \#2}) \times .125 = \text{one quarter of crown spread}$

Chemung County Big Tree Application Form

MAIL TO: Big Tree, 851 Chemung St, Horseheads, NY 14845 or

Email form to: emc@chemungcountyny.gov

Common Name		County	CHEMUNG
Scientific Name		DEC Region	8
Circumference		Inches	
Height		Feet	
Crown points		= (Max ____ + Min ____) x .125 OR = [(Max ____ + Min ____) divided by 2] x .25 *One quarter of the averaged crown spread	
Total			
Tree Condition			
Location details address if different from owner info below, public or private property, landmarks, etc.			
-OR IF IN REMOTE AREA OF CHEMUNG COUNTY-			
Coordinates Latitude and Longitude	Google Earth or other Lat/Log mapping source Lat (North) Long (West)		Does the public need permission to visit tree?
Measured by		Date	
Owner		Phone	
Address		Email	
Nominator		Phone	
Address		Email	
Confirmed by (EMC / SWCD)		Phone	
As owner/manager of the property, I give permission to EMC / SWCD or a designee to measure the above Big Tree and to obtain the above information.			
_____		_____	
Owner Signature		Date	