

## **Old Growth/Historic and Champion Tree Identification..**

We have been working with the Scott Wade, an ISA Certified Arborist and State Coordinator of the Champion Tree Program of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, to establish an inventory of the old growth, historic and PA Champion trees in our community. This will be an ongoing process and we need your help.

In the Historic or Old Growth category, our township has one documented Penn Charter tree, the White Oak located on Cheney Road. We feel there are more to be found. A Penn Charter tree is best described using the language from the [www.pabigtrees.com](http://www.pabigtrees.com) website. "William Penn came to Pennsylvania in 1682. Pennsylvania was a great woodland at this time. Recognizing this, Penn included a rule in his grants of land that a portion of each tract was to remain native forest. Many new land owners did this, which has given us several trees that remain from this time". Those trees are called Penn Charter trees. To bring this in to perspective, a tree planted in 1682, would be 328 years old in 2010.

Our township also has one listed PA Champion tree, a Shagbark Hickory located on Station Road. Again.....we feel there are more to be found. Registers of National and State Big Trees are lists of the largest living specimens of each tree variety found in the continental United States, or in a particular state. Trees on these lists are often called Champion Trees. (Wikipedia definition)

What do we ask of you? We would like you to help us find our specimens. The end result of the search will be a Historic and Champion Tree inventory. This will be yet another historical asset and learning tool that will set our township apart from our surrounding communities.

To help you identify old growth forests and trees, Scott prepared a list for us.

Look for areas containing:

Native trees that are 35 inches in diameter or greater (Oak, Hickory, Beech will be the majority, Tulip, Black Cherry, White Ash will be the minority

Trees), that are believed to be 100 years old or more, a parcel of forest that is believed to have never been cut or altered, native wildflowers that exist on the forest floor in Spring (trout lily, spring beauty, toothwort, etc.), dead trees standing and laying on ground, hollow trees and mature trees with storm damage and broken stubs, moss growing high up into the tree, or very large native vines (grape, Poison ivy).

Of course, there will also be some stand-alone trees. We found one last month while out walking a property. A Tulip Poplar, based on our preliminary calculations, to be over 215 years old. No one knew it was there till we spotted it.

Also from Scott, remember that trees grow at different rates in different settings. The oldest trees are typically smaller in diameter. Several Penn trees have been ring counted after their demise, and were found to be a lot younger than believed. One tree in Media, a red oak, was over 20' in circumference, almost 7' thick. It would be 294 years old by some formulas. At 37' up the trunk, the ring count was 151 years. (hollow to that height) Whereas Scott ring counted the rings on a white oak stump in Yeadon which was only 10' in circumference and was 247 years old. Out in Cook Forest the white pine and hemlock are believed to be 400 or so years old, and the fattest ones are only 4' thick.

Once you contact us, we will make an appointment, convenient to your schedule, to see your specimen (s). We have the basic training to identify old growth and if yours turns out to be just that, we will then schedule an appointment to bring out a professional to scientifically document the tree or trees.

If you feel you have an old growth tree, please contact us anytime. Call the township, or 610 637 2016 or email [emiller@thornbury.org](mailto:emiller@thornbury.org). If you have any other questions regarding the Historic Commission, please feel free to call or email me as well.

For much more in depth information on Old Growth and Champion Trees visit [www.pabigtrees.com](http://www.pabigtrees.com) We have been to many websites on this subject and have found this one to be the easiest to navigate and most informative.

*“When the well is dry, we know the worth of water” .....Ben Franklin*